



Volume 62, Issue 12

St. Mark Connection

9999 Ferguson Road Dallas, TX 75228 214-321-6437

saintmarkchurch.org



December 2015



"Love Came Down at Christmas"

Sanctuary & Handbell Choir Christmas Program

December 13, 2015

Afternoon Reception, 4:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.



Special music during the reception by
Gerald and Ian Jones and the
St. Mark Children's Choir

Reception Menu

Savory: *An assorted collection of meats, cheeses, fruits and vegetables*

Sweet: *A variety of baked scones, cakes and pastries*

Beverages: *A selection of Winter favorites*

Following the reception we will move to the sanctuary where the Handbell and Sanctuary Choirs will present special Christmas music.

Childcare will be provided for children 5 years and younger during the program.

Please make reservations with Marilyn Jackson or the church office.

There will be no charge for the reception but a Love Offering will be accepted.

St. Mark Care Core Christmas Party

Thursday, December 10th

6:30 p.m. in the parlor



Please bring a finger food to share with the group.

We will be preparing gift bags for the St. Mark shut-ins. Please look at the list on the bulletin board next to the church office and sign up for any items you would like to donate.

The gift bags will include a small loaf of banana (or other such type) bread, a dozen homebaked cookies, a small package of hard candies, a night light or punch light, and a pad with a magnet. We will need 15 of each item. We will assemble the gift bags at a Christmas party.



Please contact Donna Simes if you have questions.

Special Christmas Offering

St. Mark members are asked to open their hearts for our Special Christmas Offering. Half of the funds received will go to the Joy Offering and half will go to the Ministry of Hope in Malawi, Africa.

The **Joy Offering** provides support for retired and active pastors and church workers and their families, as well as support for the racial-ethnic schools and colleges of the PC(USA).

The **Ministry of Hope** serves orphans, infants and widows in rural Malawi, Africa. Our offering this year will be used to provide scholarship support for children from the villages served by the Ministry of Hope who are attending high school, college and vocational trade schools.

The Session has set a goal of \$5,000 for this year's offering. Please prayerfully consider your gift to the offering as a reflection of your gratitude for the multitude of blessings that you have received.



Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

Thursday, December 24th at 6:00 p.m.

Reception and Fellowship in the parlor at 5:30 p.m.



I have countless heroes in the Christian faith. The season of Advent begins when we ask God to "stir up our hearts" in

preparation for the fulfillment of His promise: a Son who will be called the Prince of Peace, the "great light" for those who walk in darkness. The observance of Advent can be traced to as early as the end of the fourth century, based on a sermon preached by Bishop Maximus of Turin where the concept was introduced to the liturgy. Later, Advent was mentioned specifically at a gathering similar to our General Assembly, the Council of Tours in the year 567. So, we can see that observing Advent has a long standing in the life of the church, complete with its own particular characteristics.

The meaning of Advent is best expressed as one of longing for deliverance from oppression coupled with anticipation of the coming of the Messiah. Preparing us for Christmas, Advent has its own particular spirit. It is not a season of fasting, as is common during Lent; rather, it is a season of prayer. The mood of the Advent season is best described, it seems, in the 11th century hymn with which we are so familiar:

O come, O come, Emmanuel
And ransom captive Israel
That mourns in lonely exile here
Until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice~ Rejoice~ Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel

During Advent, we anxiously anticipate the birth of the Christ child, the birth of our King. This season reminds us that the child we await is the King of Grace, humanly descended from the royal house of Israel and divinely descended from the Court of Heaven. So, we prepare to welcome Heaven's royalty into our hearts.

Every Advent season, we at Saint Mark Presbyterian Church watch for our King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Watch and pray~

Blessings, Pastor Rick

**St. Mark Dog Park Christmas
Saturday, December 12th
1:00 - 3:00 p.m.**

Dress (and dress your dog!) in holiday style and come to welcome our neighbors at the Dog Park. Come for music, refreshments and a Christmas Celebration! (Please sign sheet in the hallway).



Bar Tuinstra, Dog Park Committee

Sunday Sermons, Scriptures and Events

December 6

"While We Wait"
Isaiah 40:1-8; Isaiah 2:1-5
2nd Sunday of Advent
Celebration of The Lord's Supper



December 13

"Worth The Wait"
Isaiah 35:1-10; James 5:7-12
3rd Sunday of Advent

December 20

Service of Lessons and Carols
4th Sunday of Advent

December 24

Christmas Eve
Fellowship 5:30pm
Worship 6:00pm

December 27

"Star and Stable"
Isaiah 49:5-7; Matthew 2:1-12

Our Sympathy to . . .

Jo Farley upon the death of her son, Terry Burnley on November 1, 2015. Services for Terry were held on November 4th in Ft. Worth.



Rick and Teri Brooks and family upon the death of Rick's mother, Dorothy (Dot) Brooks on November 10, 2015. A Memorial Service for Dot was held at St. Mark on November 21st.



**White Rock Center of Hope
Sunday, December 13th**



Bring your donations and place them in the baskets in the hallway.

Food Needs

Macaroni & Cheese, Jelly

Urgent Clothing Needs



Coats & Jackets,
Socks & Underwear

Directory Update

Dick Waters
Dallas, TX 75232

Bunty Taylor
Springhill, TN 37174

(Complete contact information is available from the church office.)

God Bless You On Your Birthday

December 2
Phyllis Miller

December 3
Trey Curry
Collin Stephen

December 6
Voni Robinson

December 7
Leigh Taylor

December 9
Pam McGuire

December 10
Randall McGee

December 11
Mary Moffit



December 13
Alex Crawley

December 14
Becky Page

December 15
Ron McMahon

December 21
Jana McIntosh

December 27
Clint Taylor

December 29
Sheila Wahl

December 31
Julia Holloway
Diane Thornton

Support Our Mission Partners When You Purchase From AmazonSmile

An easy way to support most, if not all, of our mission partner agencies is simply to shop on **AmazonSmile**.

Here is how it works: AmazonSmile is a simple and automatic way for you to support your favorite charitable organization every time you shop, at no cost to you. When you shop at smile.amazon.com you'll find the exact same low prices, vast selection and convenient shopping experience as Amazon.com, with the added bonus that Amazon will donate a portion of the purchase price to your favorite charitable organization.

You can choose from nearly one million organizations to support, including Presbyterian Children's Homes and Services (PCHAS), Presbyterian Communities and Services (retirement villages and hospice care), the Ministry of Hope, and the White Rock Center of Hope.

Please consider signing up on AmazonSmile and supporting our mission partners with your purchases. Please contact Marilyn Jackson or Bill Grayson if you would like more information (they use it).



Newsletter Staff:

Kat Hutchings office@saintmarkchurch.org
Cecilia Grayson

*Articles and information for the newsletter
can be mailed to these addresses.*



**Newsletter Deadline is
December 15th**

St. Mark Emmaus Groups

The St. Mark Presbyterian Church Emmaus groups have been working to revive the Care Core that existed in the past for our congregation. We would love for you to roll up your sleeves and join us in our efforts to be the hands and feet of Jesus through helping our St. Mark family when needed. We all know that we get to know each other when we unite in a common cause. We already are a caring congregation . . . so let's all get involved in a inclusive outreach to demonstrate our love for each other. Choose your place among the following area of outreach:

1. Help with receptions for funerals and meals for the bereaved. Contact person, Pauline Millender
2. Visit the homebound, ill and lonely. Contact person, Sue Duncan
3. Provide transportation for doctor visits. Contact person, Marilyn Jackson
4. Assist with small household tasks or simple repairs. Contact person, Charlene Taylor
5. Make prayer shawls. Contact person, Sue Duncan
6. Help put together care packages or gifts for college students. Contact person, Cecilia Grayson
7. Help with Christmas bags for shut-ins. Contact person, Donna Simes

There will be a sign-up sheet available in the church or you can notify the contact person for each area. Many hands make work easier!

Grace Presbytery Mission Initiative Grant

We are delighted to have received the Presbytery grant of \$3,000 awarded to the Dog Park project!

Our sincere thanks to Randall McGee for his guidance and our gratitude to Grace Presbytery for their gift.

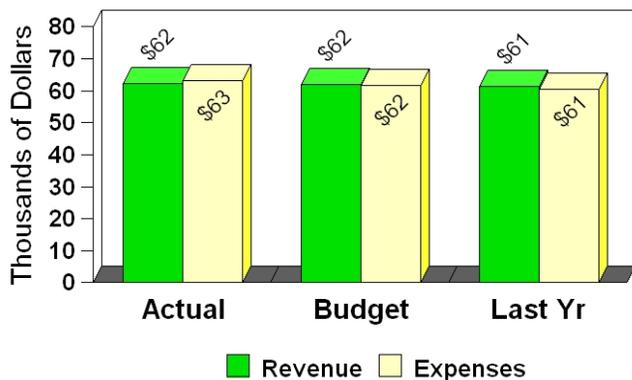
Bar Tuinstra, Dog Park Committee



*For Unto Us a Child is Born
Unto Us a Son is Given*

Operating Fund

4 Months Through Oct 31, 2015



Treasurer's Report for the four months ending 10/31/2015

- ⇒ Operating Fund income was \$200 above budget and expenses were \$1,700 above budget.
- ⇒ Capital & Facilities Fund income was \$700 below budget and expenses were \$1,200 below budget.
- ⇒ Our Combined Fund Balance is up \$400 from the beginning of year.

Detailed financial statements are available for any member to review. Please contact the Treasurer, John Carver, or Bill Grayson if you would like to see more information.

ATTENTION LADIES OF ST. MARK!

You are INVITED

Women's Retreat

Hosted by
First Presbyterian Church
Garland



February 19-21, 2016
Camp Gilmont in Gilmer, Texas

Theme for the retreat is "Forgiveness"
Our speaker is the Reverend Nancy Willet.

Plan on a weekend filled with fun, fellowship,
great camp food, relaxation and spiritual renewal.

Scholarships are available.

Please see Kat in the church office
for registration information.

Randall's Pen

Advent is here again. That season of reflection and preparation for the celebration of Christmas.

I don't know about you but in some ways Advent slipped up on me this year.

Prior to Advent I found my attention focused on the violence in Paris, the Middle East and elsewhere. In addition there have been all of the discussions about refugees and the most appropriate ways to deal with them.

In the midst of all of the turmoil of the season preceding Advent someone reminded me of something often repeated by the late Fred "Mr." Rogers:

"My mother would say to me, 'Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping.' To this day, especially in times of disaster, I remember my mother's words, and I am always comforted by realizing that there are still so many helpers — so many caring people in this world."

It dawned on me that this could be a great discipline for the Advent season. In the midst of everything else that you may be doing, look for the helpers you see each day. Watch for them. Take note of them. Make a list of them either mentally or physically with paper or device. Take some time each day to give thanks for all of them. Give thanks to God each evening or morning for all of the tasks that they are willing to do.

I hope that you all have a meaningful Advent and a Blessed Christmas.

Randall McGee, Director of Christian Education





*What a blessing it is to be
a part of the ministry at St. Mark.
The staff wishes you peace, love,
and joy this Christmas
and throughout the coming year.*

Pastor Rick Brooks

Gary O'Neal

Rev. Dr. Randall McGee

Kat Hutchings

Bob King

Elaine Burgess



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9999 Ferguson Road
Dallas, TX 75228
Non-Profit Organization