



St. Mark Connection

9999 Ferguson Road

Dallas, TX 75228

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saintmarkchurch.org

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I'm guessing that I'm not alone when feeling frustrated after scrapping earlier efforts and starting over on a project - a violation of what has become known as the Protestant work ethic or "waste not, want not." This Protestant work ethic - a term coined by sociologist and economist Max Weber in the 20th century - has its roots in the Reformation, where hard work, frugality and diligence were outward

examples of a person's salvation in Christ. So I'm loathe to admit that I purposely erased my earlier version for the January Pastor's Corner, wasting the time and energy I spent in trying to write about the New Year. But after reading a prayer that Billy Graham wrote a few years ago, I realized that he expressed much more effectively what I wanted to say. My hope for 2014 is that this prayer blesses our St. Mark family throughout the year. Welcome to the New Year, *Pastor Rick*

"Our Father and our God, as we stand at the beginning of this new year we confess our need of Your presence and Your guidance as we face the future.

"We each have our hopes and expectations for the year that is ahead of us—but You alone know what it holds for us, and only You can give us the strength and the wisdom we will need to meet its challenges. So help us to humbly put our hands into Your hand, and to trust You and to seek Your will for our lives during this coming year.

"In the midst of life's uncertainties in the days ahead, assure us of the certainty of Your unchanging love. In the midst of life's inevitable disappointments and heartaches, help us to turn to You for the stability and comfort we will need. In the midst of life's temptations and the pull of our stubborn self-will, help us not to lose our way but to have the courage to do what is right in Your sight, regardless of the cost. And in the midst of our daily preoccupations and pursuits, open our eyes to the sorrows and injustices of our hurting world, and help us to respond with compassion and sacrifice to those who are friendless and in need. May our constant prayer be that of the ancient Psalmist: 'Teach me, O Lord, to follow your decrees; then I will keep them to the end' (Psalm 119:33).

"We pray for our nation and its leaders during these difficult times, and for all those who are seeking to bring peace and justice to our dangerous and troubled world. We pray especially for Your protection on all those who serve in our armed forces, and we thank You for their commitment to defend our freedoms, even at the cost of their own lives. Be with their families also, and assure them of Your love and concern for them. Bring our divided nation together, and give us a greater vision of what You would have us to be. Your Word reminds us that 'Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord' (Psalm 33:12).

"As we look back over this past year we thank You for Your goodness to us—far beyond what we have deserved. May we never presume on Your past goodness or forget all Your mercies to us, but may they instead lead us to repentance, and to a new commitment to make You the foundation and center of our lives this year.

"And so, our Father, we thank You for the promise and hope of this new year, and we look forward to it with expectancy and faith. This I ask in the name of our Lord and Savior, who by His death and resurrection has given us hope both for this world and the world to come. Amen." - Rev. Billy Graham

May God Bless You On Your Birthday

January 1

Bobby Husted

January 4

Vickie Lall

January 5

Selina Cantu

Sue Duncan

January 14

Susan Marshall Heye

January 15

Cody Robinson

Travis Stephen

January 17

Paul Pennington



January 23

Jennifer Grayson

Pat Hamilton

January 25

Patsy Neale

January 26

Clive Duncan

January 27

Mary Crawley

January 30

Marie Chambers

January 31

Marilyn Jackson

Directory Update

Rusty & Julie Holloway
Mesquite, TX 75150

Christmas Special a Success!

The Women of St. Mark thank you for supporting the Christmas program given by the Women of Faith. Special thanks to Bill Grayson for his tireless effort in getting the program presented.

Your support of the college students from the Presbyterian Children's Home and Services was outstanding. We sent the students Christmas cards with an encouraging message and \$604 in gift cards was distributed to help with their expenses. These young people will be ecstatic! Since we will be giving these 12 students our support over their college years we will have many more opportunities to help.

Donna Simes

Mini Work Day January 11, 2014

9:00 a. m. - 12:00



The Property and Maintenance Committee would like to offer you an opportunity to help with upkeep and repairs of our church building and property.

Newsletter Staff:

Pat Bilger office@saintmarkchurch.org

Cecilia Grayson

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

Sunday Sermons, Scriptures and Events

January 5

"In Search of Perfect Peace"

Isaiah 26:1-13; Luke 1:68-80

Celebration of the Lord's Supper

Rev. Sidney Beale, Oak Cliff Presbyterian Church



January 12

"Burn Notice"

Philippians 3:10-14; 1 Kings 19:19-21

Service for Wholeness, 6 pm

January 19

"How Desperate Are You?"

Genesis 22:1-2; Luke 7:36-50

Commitment Sunday

January 26

"Standing On the Promises"

Matthew 16:15-18; 1 Samuel 14:1-10

Second Sunday at Six Service

A Service of Wholeness



January 15th at 6:00 in the Gleaners Classroom. Join us for a time of prayer, scripture meditation, anointing of oil and the Celebration of the Lord's Supper.

White Rock Center of Hope

Sunday January 12th

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



Food Needs

Tuna, Macaroni & Cheese, Hamburger Helper, Tuna Helper, Chicken Helper, Canned Meats & Fruits, Canned Vegetables & Soups,

Other Needs

Men's - jeans & pants, socks & underwear, coats, sweats, pajamas, belts & shoes;

Women's - robes, sleepwear, underwear, socks & shoes, winter coats

Children's - clothing (all kinds, all sizes), shoes, coats

Linens - blankets, sheets, towels, pillows, comforters

Newsletter Deadline is January 15th



The Church Pantry Urgently Needs:

Pork & Beans and canned fruit.

Please, pull-tops only!



Randall's Pen



Well, 2013 is now behind us and the days of 2014 stretch out in front of us. Who knows what adventures and opportunities for ministry God may have in store for St. Mark in these 365 days?

Here are some things that are on my mind as we start this year.

* "If 1950 were to return my congregation would be ready." This is not a quote from a St. Mark member but maybe it could have been. It is a line in Peter Stienke's article "Back to the Future." Someone said it at a workshop he led. He was helping congregational leaders explore how they might be the church in a society where it seems that the old reliable "Attractional Model" doesn't work like it did decades ago. The entire article can be found on the "Odds and Ends" bulletin board across from the parlor. There are a few highlights lifted out in bold type along with copies for you to take if you don't want to stand in the hall and read. I'd be interested in what you think about what he has to say. Let me hear from you.

* As we start a new year I am wondering what spiritual disciplines or devotional practices you may have found helpful through the years. Does the same

thing work for you year after year? Or do you have to adapt your practices depending upon the season of your life? Let me hear from you.

* Is there something new about the Christian faith you would like to explore this year? Or maybe there is something old you would like to revisit? Let me hear from you.

* The "Odds and Ends" bulletin board is my attempt to share with you things that I find interesting and hopefully you find them intriguing to. Most of the items will deal with church and ministry in our contemporary culture. Some of the items will be seasonal. What would you like to see included with the "Odds and Ends?" Let me hear from you.

I'll close by offering some words to ponder as we start a new year. These are the opening line and a couple of lines from the end of the PC(USA) "Brief Statement of Faith":

**In life and in death we belong to God.
With believers in every time and place,
we rejoice that nothing in life or in death
can separate us from the love of God
in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

This is good news to claim and to hold onto as we move deeper into the unknowns of 2014 and beyond.

Randall McGee, Director of Christian Education

Join Us for Movie Night

Saturday, January 18th @ 7:00 p.m.



Bring snacks to share and join your friends in the cozy confines of the "Gleaners Cinema" for a showing of the classic movie, "Hoosiers".

Special Christmas Offering

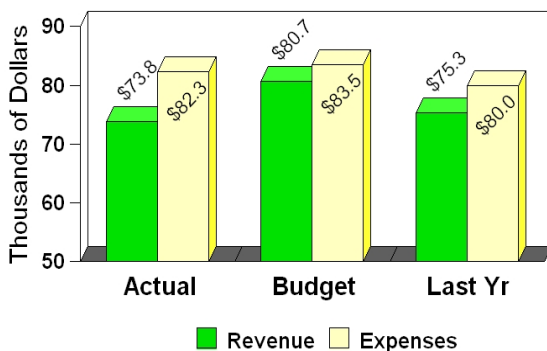
As of December 29th we have received more than \$3,500 toward our goal of \$5,000.



Your generous contributions this year are going to the Presbyterian Joy Offering and to the Scholarship Program of the Ministry of Hope in Malawi, Africa. Contributions will be received through Jan 5, 2014.

Operating Fund

5 Months Through Nov 30, 2013



Treasurer's Report

for the Five months ending 11/30/13

- ⇒ Operating Fund income is \$7,000 below budget and \$1,500 less than last year. Expenses are \$1,200 below budget and \$2,300 above last year.
- ⇒ Capital and Facilities Fund income is \$300 above budget and expenditures are \$1,100 below budget.

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

Commitment Sunday — January 19th

The Session of St. Mark invites you to continue your participation in "Stewards for Life" with an opportunity to make or renew your Faith Promises to the Operating Fund, the Capital and Facilities Fund and the Mission and Outreach Fund, and also to volunteer for various church responsibilities and activities on Commitment Sunday, January 19th.



The Operating Fund is the recipient of our tithes and provides funding for all activities, worship, utilities and salaries at St. Mark, as well as our support for all PC(USA) and other mission and outreach ministries, including the White Rock Center of Hope, Presbyterian Children's Home and Services, Grace Presbyterian Village, and the Ministry of Hope in Malawi, Africa.

The Capital and Facilities Fund provides funding for all improvements and maintenance of the church property, as well as paying the note on the front parking lot (our only debt). This fund is of increasing importance as our facilities become older, and your Faith Promise will help in this effort.

The Mission and Outreach Fund helps provide support for the agencies that we assist through the Operating Fund. If you wish to provide additional assistance to this area of our congregation's ministry, please consider a Faith Promise to this fund.

Look for more information and a Faith Promise card coming in the mail soon and please join us on Sunday, January 19th as we recommit to the future of St. Mark.



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Non-Profit Organization