



St. Mark Connection

9999 Ferguson Road

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Volume 62, Issue 1

saintmarkchurch.org

January 2015

Commitment Sunday - January 18th

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 18th.

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. This fund is of increasing importance as our facilities become older and your Faith Promises will help in this effort. Several remodeling and updating projects are planned for the coming year.

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 18th as we join together once more to commit to the future of St. Mark.

Special Christmas Offering

As of December 28th, we have received more than \$6,800 in contributions to the Special Christmas Offering, far exceeding our goal of \$5,000!

Your generous contributions this year are going to the PC(USA) Joy Offering and to the Scholarship Program of the Ministry of Hope in Malawi, Africa. Contributions will be received through January 4.

Movie Night at St. Mark

Saturday, January 24th @ 7:00 p.m.

(Note - 4th Saturday - this month only)

Bring snacks to share and join your friends in the cozy confines of the Gleaners Cinema.

The Church Pantry Urgently Needs . . .

Peanut Butter & Jelly



St. Mark Women of the Church

Thursday, January 15th at 6:30 p.m.



Please bring a finger food snack for 6 people. Kim Price, Marilyn Jackson and Nikki Guinee will bring our devotional and program. There will be an update on the remodeling work being done in the Family Center ladies restroom.

If you have pictures of our home bound members receiving their 'goodie bag' please bring them.

Wednesday Bible Study

St. Mark Wednesday Bible Study will resume on January 7th at 10:30 a.m. in the parlor.

Flower Calendar for 2015

Thanks to Ellen Roberts for our new flower calendar. If you wish to donate flowers for the sanctuary on Sunday mornings, please sign up. The calendar is located on the wall outside of Pat's office.





As we at St. Mark enter a new year, what a wonderful opportunity we have to remember the one who holds our future.

I'm excited about what God will do in our midst in 2015, confident that he has planned and prepositioned all the resources needed to accomplish his goals.

Jehoshaphat - the powerful King of Judah - sometimes forgot that God could meet any needs, including those of an entire army. When Jehoshaphat's troops and livestock were exhausted and thirsty during a war campaign, the king faced great doubts. That is when the Prophet Elisha stepped forward, providing hope through a reminder that the Lord would provide:

"For thus says the Lord, 'You shall see neither wind nor rain, but the wadi shall be filled with water, so that you shall drink, you, your cattle, and your animals.'" 2 Kings 3:17

Early the next morning, as the King's army prepared to break camp, all were stunned to discover that water had appeared, ready for drinking. There had been no stormy winds or rain to herald its arrival. God had quietly diverted water from the nation of Edom into the streams around the army's encampment.

Miracles like the one King Jehoshaphat and the army of Judah experienced are not something to merely believe in but also to depend upon. Miracles are powerful evidence for those times when we lose heart, helping us to recall that God will do for us what we can't do for ourselves. My prayer for St. Mark in 2015 is for us to grow in our dependence on God. I pray that God will delight in our spiritual growth and show off.

Blessings, Pastor Rick

Sunday Sermons, Scriptures and Events

January 4

"This Time, No Overs"
Psalm 103:8-12; Esther 4:11-17
Celebration of the Lord's Supper



January 11

"Detours and Decisions"
1 Corinthians 15:51-58; Ruth 1:1-8, 16-18

January 18

"Chicken and Pig"
Ephesians 4:11-16; Ezekiel 37:1-10
Commitment Sunday

January 25

"Speaking Truth to Power"
Psalm 63:1-9; Daniel 6:10-16

God Bless You On Your Birthday

January 1

Bobby Husted

January 4

Vickie Lall

January 5

Selina Cantu
Sue Duncan

January 14

Susan Wood

January 15

Cody Robinson
Travis Stephen

January 17

Paul Pennington

January 23

Jennifer Grayson
Pat Hamilton

January 24

Norma Murray

January 26

Clive Duncan

January 27

Mary Crawley

January 30

Marie Chambers

January 31

Marilyn Jackson

Directory Update

Suzanne Presley
Milton, FL 32570

Rebecca & Robbie Moore
Dallas, TX 75228

Ann Gordon
Dallas, TX 75228



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

Received in Baptism . . .

Jayden Stephen



Newsletter Staff:

Pat Bilger office@saintmarkchurch.org
Cecilia Grayson

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



It's a new year. A time when some of us ponder both all that happened in the past year and what the new one will bring.

If you have been reading my newsletter articles for very long you know that I love to quote Church Confessions and Catechisms. And you know that I am particularly partial to the first line of the *Brief Statement of Faith*: "In life and in death we belong to God." That's a good thing to remember whether we are reviewing last year or looking towards the future.

But as we step into the New Year I want to remind you of something else that is in the same *Brief Statement*. This passage reminds us of what it means to belong to God and how that can make a difference in how we live our lives:

In a broken and fearful world
the Spirit gives us courage
to pray without ceasing,
to witness among all peoples
to Christ as Lord and Savior,
to unmask idolatries in church and culture,
to hear the voices of peoples long silenced,
and to work with others for justice,
freedom, and peace.

In gratitude to God, empowered by the Spirit,
we strive to serve Christ in our daily tasks
and to live holy and joyful lives,
even as we watch for God's new heaven and
new earth, praying, Come, Lord Jesus!

I wonder what opportunities in 2015 I might have to pray, witness, unmask, hear, and to work. I wonder how I might serve in my daily tasks. I wonder about what ways my life will be holy and joyful. I wonder how I might be given courage and empowered by the Spirit.

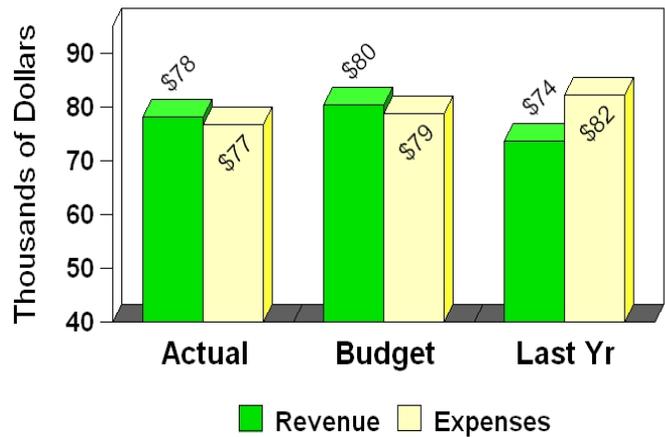
Are you wondering the same things? I hope you are. If we take this affirmation of faith seriously then 2015 could be quite an adventure.

(If this article sounds familiar that may be the fact that it is a slight revision of my article from January 2010.)

Randall McGee, Director of Christian Education

Newsletter Deadline is January 15th

Operating Fund 5 Months Through Nov 30, 2014



Treasurer's Report

for the five months ending 11/30/2014

- ⇒ Operating Fund income is \$2,200 below budget and expenses are \$2,100 below budget. Both are much better than last year after five months.
- ⇒ Capital and Facilities Fund income is on budget and expenses are \$1,700 below budget. The parking lot loan has now been paid off, five months early!
- ⇒ Our Current Fund Balance (all funds combined) is up \$2,300 from the beginning of the year, and up \$13,200 from the same month last year.

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

White Rock Center of Hope

Sunday, January 11th

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



Urgent needs

Winter coats, jackets in all sizes, pajamas for children and blankets

Food & Pantry Needs

Macaroni & Cheese, Canned Tomato Products, Canned Corn & Green Beans, Jelly, Hamburger Helper, Suddenly Salad, Potatoes, etc.

Personal Hygiene Items

Adult toothbrushes, Toothpaste, Deodorant, all sizes of Diapers & Feminine Hygiene products