



St. Mark Connection

9999 Ferguson Road

Dallas, TX 75228

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saintmarkchurch.org

June 2015

Vacation Bible School - Hometown Nazareth

June 22 - 25th

6:00 p.m. - 7:45 p.m.

"Hometown Nazareth: Where Jesus was a Kid" will be hosted at St. Mark from June 22 - June 25. We will transport kids back to Nazareth where they'll learn firsthand what it was like when Jesus was a kid. Kids and adults will experience what daily life was like in Nazareth, sing catchy songs, play teamwork-building games, dig into Bible-times snacks, and make fun crafts to remind them of God's Word. Each day begins and concludes at Celebration - a time of upbeat worship that gets everyone involved.

Tribes will visit Mary, the mother of Jesus, at her house where she shares stories about Jesus when he was a kid. They will go to the Synagogue where the Rabbi will teach them about charity and collecting for the poor. The marketplace includes a Shepherd Shop, Olive Oil Shop, Farmers Field, and the Farmers Market where they will taste foods from Jesus' time.

Kids and adults at Hometown Nazareth VBS will collect canned and boxed food items to be donated to White Rock Center of Hope.

Please bring your kids, grandkids, and neighbor kids, ages 3 years through 5th grade, to VBS! There will be lots of fun, feasting, and friendship!

→ **We need help with some supplies.** Can we borrow a couple of mortar & pestles, 2 small fancy jars with lids, a foam finger (sporting event type), some Mexican blankets, and a couple of baby name books?

POOL PARTY
Sunday, June 28th
7:30 - 9:30 p.m.



Town East Pool
2525 John Glenn Parkway
Off Town East Blvd. between
Hwy. 80 and Gus Thomasson,
behind McDonald Middle School

We have *exclusive* use of the pool on this evening. Bring lawn chairs, snacks, & drinks in non-glass containers and enjoy swimming and/or visiting in the shade. Only U.S. Coast Guard approved floatation devices are allowed.



The Church Pantry Needs . . .
Peanut Butter Crackers

White Rock Center of Hope
Sunday, June 14th

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



Urgent Food Needs

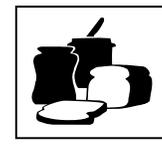
Canned Tomato Products — totally out
Boxed Shelf Items

Hamburger Helper, Suddenly Salad, Potatoes, etc.

Personal Hygiene Items

Toilet Paper, Small & Medium Toothpaste,
Deodorant,
Diapers sizes 4, 5, & 6, Feminine Hygiene products

Just a Reminder . . .
Sandwich Sunday
is May 31st





A report recently released by the nonpartisan Pew Research Center states that the number of Christians in the U.S. are declining. Based on interviews with more than 35,000 Americans, the study found that those identifying as Christian declined from 79 percent to 70 percent since the last study in 2007. That decrease apparently represents a group that researchers classify as "nones," who claim no affiliation with organized religion. The decrease probably also includes another group now called "dones," which signifies those who previously had a religious affiliation but are now done with any organized religion.

Most of those in the nones or dones categories have not turned to atheism, although some certainly have chosen that path.

The same survey also documents that some claim to be spiritual, but not religious. I've written about that growing phenomenon before. The upshot is that about 56 million American adults now are unattached to any religious organization. These numbers paint a grim picture, but don't tell the whole story - because God has the final word. God will provide.

One of my classmates in seminary was from Korea. His great-grandparents came to know Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord through the missionary efforts of Presbyterians. Presbyterianism was a family tradition. Did he plan on returning to Korea after completing his seminary education? No. He felt called by God to evangelize to Americans. It appeared to him that our nation is lost, in desperate need of the Good News, just as much as Korea had been four generations ago. He said he was here "to return the favor" in appreciation of Presbyterian mission work. He's heeding the words of the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 2:1-5:

When I came to you, brothers and sisters, I did not come proclaiming the mystery of God to you in lofty words or wisdom. For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I came to you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling. My speech and my proclamation were not with plausible words of wisdom, but with a demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith might rest not on human wisdom but on the power of God.

My prayer for St. Mark is not that we ignore these declining numbers, but focus our attention toward God who has the last word. That same God equips us with the transforming power of the Holy Spirit to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ to all - including the nones and the dones. May we live as a light to the world.

Blessings, Pastor Rick

Sunday Sermons, Scriptures and Events

June 7

"What He said"
Ephesians 4:29-31; Matthew 5:21-26
Celebration of The Lord's Supper



June 14

"It's Simple"
Deuteronomy 10:12-22; Matthew 22:36-40
Ruling Elder Ed Blair

June 21

"The Best Policy"
Deuteronomy 23:21-23; Matthew 5:33-37

June 28

"Nonresistant Love"
Leviticus 24:19-20; Matthew 5:38-42

Directory Update



- Vicky Monroe
Dallas, TX
- Diane Thornton
Dallas, TX
- Becky Page
Sachse, TX
- Jeanette Sanders
Wylie, TX

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



Where did you meet God today?

Those of you who have been reading my column for a while know that every so often I come back to this question. Every year or so I adapt one of my first columns. It's time to ponder the question once again.

Years ago I ran across that question in this passage from Dorothy Bass's "Receiving the Day: Christian Practices for Opening the Gift of Time":

"How was your day?"

The question, asked by someone who cares, is a kind one. Often, though, it throws me. The day has passed in a whirl, and I have to grope for an answer. "Not bad," I reply vaguely. How was my day? Most days I forget to notice.

A mother I know has a different way of asking the same question. As she tucks her children into bed each night ... she asks them a question: "Where did you meet God today?" And they tell her, one by one: a teacher helped me, there was a homeless person in the park, I saw a tree with lots of flowers in it. She tells them where she met God, too. Before the children drop off to sleep, the stuff of this day has become the

substance of their prayer.

Where did you meet God today?

It doesn't have to be a question just for children. What might happen if we took up a daily practice of asking ourselves that question? It's something different but it's not incredibly complicated. And it just might be meaningful as we think about all the interesting places where we met God. Here's something else Bass wrote:

Where did you meet God today? The length of a day- a turn from darkness to light and back again- fits our human capacity for taking stock, our ability to be in the present but also to take a larger more reflective view of things. And so activities have arisen that teach us to set aside some time to notice each day, embracing it as one in which God is present. In these activities we receive the day as a gift.

Where did you meet God today? I need to remind myself to ask and answer this question on a regular basis. Why don't you give it a try as well? And if you have ever taken up this practice I'd really like to hear about it.

Randall McGee, Director of Christian Education

God Bless You On Your Birthday

June 1
Harriett Anderson
June 3
Jacob Price
Margie Sivess
June 4
Danny Robinson
June 7
Steve Duncan
June 9
Eric Arthur
Tim Guinnee



June 14
Victoria McCaslin
June 16
Earlyne Chesser
June 17
Natasha Waldrop
June 24
Richard Robinson
June 25
Ruth McGowan
June 29
Gabe Cantu
Dee Robinson

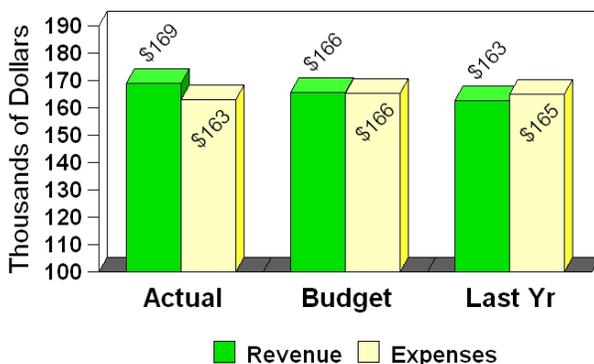
Hot Diggity Dog Day



Due to the rainy weather, the Membership/Evangelism and Fellowship Committees postponed Hot Diggity Dog Day until the fall. We were concerned that even if it didn't rain, the messy, muddy grounds would not be suitable for a good time. We hope the short notice didn't cause any inconvenience. We will announce the new date as soon as it is determined.

Operating Fund

10 Months Through Apr 30, 2015



Treasurer's Report

for the ten months ending 4/30/2015

- ⇒ Operating Fund income is \$3,300 above budget and expenses are \$2,600 below budget.
- ⇒ Capital and Facilities Fund income is \$1,100 below budget and expenses are \$1,600 above budget.
- ⇒ Our Combined Fund Balance is up \$10,300 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.

The Spirit in Hindsight

Faith Journal - Bar Tuinstra

Fred Abney, our former pastor, once asked me to write my own faith journal. He said, "I've made an attempt to chronicle, briefly, something of my religious history. I hope you will do the same and I hope it will be enlightening." I wrote in 2010, in my journals the following:

My first faith memories are of a strict household. "Honor" and "obey" were the passwords of my young life. A first catechism book asked: "Who is God?" The answer: "God is the Father, Son and Holy Spirit." I don't think that meant much to me at an early age. When the answers were properly recited, I was allowed freedom to play. I learned quickly, therefore, to say the right words and to say them "sincerely" whether I believed them or not.

On Sundays we attended church in the morning, studied our catechism in the afternoon, and attended church again in the evening. We read scripture and prayed before and after meals and responded positively to elders who came for "church visitation". I was to walk the Pilgrim's straight and narrow" road. But I was a rebellious teen and left home after tumultuous years in high school, by which time I had learned to live two very separate lives and had many questions.

At Calvin College I was taught that by supralapsarianism God's elect were chosen before creation and The Fall, that to be saved was to obey God's will, to be truly repentant for one's sins, to strive to do right. When I married and moved to Chicago, we still attended the Christian Reformed Church and, because of a promise unwillingly extracted at my mother's deathbed, we also made (with little faith) our profession of faith.

We moved often, eventually leaving the CRC behind, and joined St. Mark as Bill Tiemann arrived. I found him to be warm and caring. He wrapped us in bear hugs and always had time to talk with me. With

foster kids and our own four, we were involved in choirs, Sunday School, Women's Retreats, Vacation Bible School, and were an integral part of an active church. I became an elder, committee member, and VBS teacher. Our family of seven filled a pew on Sunday mornings. The church gradually changed and we lost many good people — Bill Tiemann, the Mulls, the Bradshaws, the Maines, and Blancatos, the Dudleys, Jean Rosenkrantz and John Gracey. Each left their indelible stamp on me.

I count as a blessing those who love me at St. Mark because it was love that finally turned me around. What an important lesson that is! When we think about the children, friends and family, those who visit our church and those who don't, how important our patient love seems then! I learned that "being a Christian, being a believer" is not just believing in God and knowing the Bible well, but about entering into a relationship *with* God.

My faith continues to grow, more solitary now, a closing in, a hunkering down, day-by-day learning to trust. Like clouded skies, my faith is nebulous, sometimes stretched thin across space, at other times a changing, drifting storm cloud - always changing, but always *there* and *unchanging* too - and isn't that what God and faith are all about?

Often I say "thank you" to God for a life of privilege and peace, for a wonderful family and mostly, for His patient love. The "Hound of Heaven" follows, follows, always at my heels and yet I see the glory of the morning skies, the beauty of well-written words and thoughts, the love from those around me and I can only say, gratefully, thank you, Lord for loving me and giving me so much to love.

And thank you, Fred, for those coffee talks and the push I needed to journal my thoughts and consider all of the above.

Newsletter Staff:

Pat Bilger office@saintmarkchurch.org
Cecilia Grayson

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

Newsletter Deadline is June 15th

Movie Night at St. Mark

**Saturday, June 20th
7:00 p.m.**



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