



St. Mark Connection

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



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saintmarkchurch.org

November 2015

The Eastern Dallas County Cluster of Presbyterian Churches . . .

is hosting a joint Thanksgiving Service on Sunday, November 15th at 5:00 p.m. at the First Presbyterian Church in Garland.



Hanging of the Greens Sunday, November 29th at 4:00 p.m.

Come join in the fun of getting the church ready for the Christmas season. On this first Sunday in Advent, starting at 4:00, we will begin decorating the outside of the building, the sanctuary, narthex and parlor. Later, we will stop and have a short worship service with carol singing.

Disaster Assistance for Flooded Areas

The Southeast U.S. coast has experienced severe and unprecedented flooding this fall. South Carolina has borne the brunt of the devastation, enduring what has been described as a thousand year flood. While South Carolina was hit the hardest, other parts of the country, including Texas, are struggling to recover from massive floods that impacted many counties and left numerous Presbyterian churches damaged.

Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA) is asking local congregations to assist the recovery effort with cash donations. If you wish to help, please designate your contribution to "PDA Flooding."

St. Mark Choir & Handbell Christmas Program

Sunday, December 13, 2015

Afternoon Reception, 4:00 PM - 5:00 PM

An assorted collection of meats, cheeses, fruits and vegetables, a variety of baked scones, cakes and pastries, and a winter selection of favorite beverages.

After the reception we will proceed to the sanctuary to hear the Handbell Choir perform music of the season. The Sanctuary Choir will perform the cantata "Love Came Down at Christmas".

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 free will offering will be accepted.

St. Mark to Host a Joint Handbell Concert Sunday, November 22nd at 6:00 p.m. in the sanctuary

The Handbell Choir from St. Mark will join with the bell ringers at First United Methodist Church, Mesquite on Sunday, November 22nd. There will be a reception in the Parlor after the concert.



Sandwich Sunday is November 29th See page 5 for details

New Pulpit and Pew Bibles to Be Purchased

The Session has approved the Worship and Music Committee's recommendation to purchase a new Pulpit Bible and new Pew Bibles in the English Standard Version (ESV).

The ESV Bible preserves cadences and poetic diction of poetic portions, such as characterized in the King James and Revised Standard versions of the Bible. The language is easier to read and the text closely matches the text in our new Hymnals. Here are two endorsements from the Westminster Bookstore website.

"I am so impressed with the clarity, beauty, and power of the ESV that I feel that I am reading the Bible again for the first time. From now on the ESV will be my Bible of choice. I simply don't have the words to say how thankful I am for the ESV, its faithfulness to the original, and its beauty."

- Steve Brown, Professor of Preaching, Reformed Theological Seminary, Orlando, FL

"Meticulous care and passionate research make the ESV a crisp, accurate, and valuable translation."

- Max Lucado, Minister, Oak Hills Church of Christ

We are offering the congregation the opportunity to contribute to the cost of the new bibles, which are \$10.00 each. We will be accepting donations until November 30th for a December purchase. Because we always plan to donate and distribute our retired bibles, there will not be any dedication plates placed in the new bibles.

Thank you,
Annie Blair, Chair of Worship and Music Committee



I have countless heroes in the Christian faith. Usually, when I'm studying a particular subject, one or more of

them will come to mind. My current research topic is shepherds and sheep as I continue to prepare the sermon series "The Good Shepherd" around the notions of leading and following. Inspiring me in this time of study is Eugene H. Peterson, a Christian author whom I greatly admire and is the originator of my favorite definition of faith: "a long obedience in the same direction" (which also happens to be the title of his book on discipleships in an instant society. By the way, I think that yielding to instant gratification is an even larger issue in our culture today than when Peterson's book was published in 1980.)

One of the many reasons that I admire Peterson is that he writes from personal experience as a pastor, having led a Presbyterian congregation for 29 years. Peterson's church didn't reach mega status on his watch. As he explains, leading a church with a big budget and rapidly increasing membership was not what God had called him to do. Rather, he believed he was called to be a faithful shepherd of the flock. Period.

Peterson is a prolific author, whose writing and teaching makes him a pastor to pastors as well as a

spiritual guide for us all. He is possibly best known for "The Message: The Bible in Contemporary Language," which paraphrases the Bible in everyday English. He produced "The Message" in segments, completing it only four years before retiring in 2006.

Now retired in Montana where he grew up, Peterson still writes. He has authored books over the last few that cover a range of subjects, including pastoral theology, spiritual theology, and praying through the Bible.

A common thread in Peterson's writing is defining what it means for a church to be faithful followers of Jesus:

"It's possible to claim the name Christian without being Christian at all - that is, without following Christ. Jesus is far more than a theological icon to believe in; he is a person to follow. He is not just the truth; he is the way. But those who follow Jesus are constantly in danger of getting lost, for we live in a culture that stands in huge contrast to Jesus... . Jesus shows us how to live this gospel-based life, but he doesn't give us a how-to manual. Rather, the local congregation, the company of praying men and women, is the primary place where we discover the way of Jesus."

In short, following Jesus means a long obedience in the same direction. Let's keep moving along that way.

Blessings, Pastor Rick

Sunday Sermons, Scriptures and Events

November 1

"The Cost of the Lost"

Isaiah 55:6-11; Luke 15:1-10

Celebration of The Lord's Supper



November 8

"Filled and Blessed"

Psalm 78:14-20; Mark 6:30-44

November 15

"Shepherds Search"

1 John 2:1-6; Matthew 18:10-14

November 22

"Following the Voice"

1 Corinthians 1:26-31; John 10:1-18

November 29

1st Sunday of Advent

"Being Good Shepherds"

2 Corinthians 4:5-11; 1 Peter 5:1-4

Hanging of the Greens

Sandwich Sunday

Newsletter Deadline is November 15th

White Rock Center of Hope

Sunday, November 8th

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



Food Needs

Canned Beans (not green beans), Canned Corn, Boxed Stove Top Dressing

Directory Update

Andie & Ben Taylor

Sachse, TX 75048

Our Sympathy to . . .

The Family of Kenneth Brandenburg upon his death October 9, 2015. Graveside Services for Ken, a long-time member of St. Mark were held on October 17th at Restland Cemetery.

Dick and Kathleen Arthur and family upon the death of Kathleen's father, Rev. Charles Workman on October 7, 2015.

and to Jo Farley upon the death of her sister, Joyce Hull.





Fall Beautification Day
Saturday, November 14th
8:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
— Free Breakfast —

Arrive around 8:30 a.m., have some breakfast then stay to help beautify the church inside and out, just in time for the holidays.

Some of the projects will include:

- adding light fixtures
- replacing light bulbs
- weeding and cleaning up behind the trellis, planting in the Prayer Garden
- weeding and adding soil and winter flowers along the breezeway to Family Center
- Raking leaves and trash pick-up all around
- interior cleaning of the sanctuary, kitchen



It is helpful if you can bring your own tools, rakes, trimmers, etc. The church has a limited supply of yard equipment. You may also want to bring your own cleaning supplies and cloths.

November
Events



Fall Back
Daylight Saving Time Ends
Sunday, November 1st

White Rock Center of Hope Sunday
November 8th

Inquirer's Class with Pastor Rick
Sunday, November 8th
12:15 p.m.

Church Beautification Day
Saturday, November 14th
8:30 — 1:00

East Dallas Cluster of Presbyterian Churches
Joint Thanksgiving Service
First Presbyterian Church, Garland
Sunday, November, 15th at 5:00 p.m.

Handbell Concert
Sunday, November 22nd
4:00 p.m. - Reception following

Sandwich Sunday for Austin Street Center
November 29th

Hanging of the Greens
and Carol Singing
Sunday, November 29th at 4:00 p.m.

Thank You

Dear St. Mark Family,

I want to thank all of you for the love and support you have given me after the death of my father, Charles Workman. I especially appreciated Pastor Rick's phone call and prayer. How wonderful to be a part of the St. Mark family!

Love, Kathleen Arthur

Thank You!

The cupboard is overflowing. Thank you so much for the overwhelming response to our pantry needs. We are currently in excellent shape. You are a very gracious congregation and are doing an amazing ministry here at St. Mark.

Kat



"For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink..." Matthew 25:35a

Meet Our New Church Secretary . . .

Kathleen "Kat" Hutchings. Kat worked 25 years as the church secretary at First Presbyterian Church in Garland. After she retired, she got a bit bored and wanted a part-time job. As luck would have it, St. Mark needed a part-time secretary, following the retirement of Pat Bilger.

Kat and her husband Rick have been married for 39 years and have 3 children. Son Thomas lives in California with his wife Lindsay. Daughter Meghan is a teacher in Garland and has a son, Elijah. Daughter Lauren and her husband Dustin live in San Antonio with their three children, Avery, Aiden and Noah.

Kat is a musician and a member of the early worship praise band, RUAH, at First Presbyterian Church in Garland.

Rick and Kat love to travel, especially to the Pacific Northwest which has been their vacation destination for the past three years.

Kat is decorating the church office with wall crosses so if you have one you would like to donate, it will be happily received.

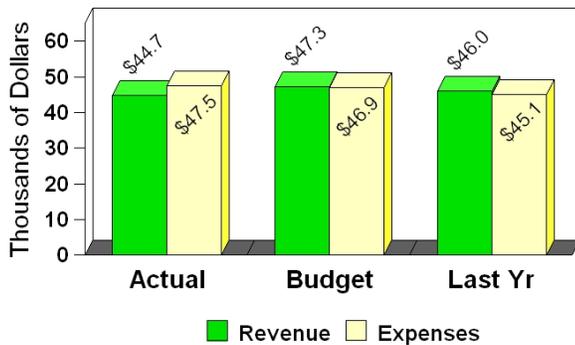
Newsletter Staff:

Kat Hutchings office@saintmarkchurch.org
 Cecilia Grayson

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

Operating Fund

3 Months Through Sep 30, 2015



Treasurer's Report

for the three months ending 9/30/2015

- ⇒ Operating Fund income was \$2,500 below budget and expenses were \$600 above budget.
- ⇒ Capital & Facilities Fund income was \$100 below budget and expenses were \$500 below budget.
- ⇒ Our Combined Fund Balance is down 1,900 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.

God Bless You On Your Birthday

November 2

John Wahl

November 3

Mary Scallorn

November 4

Alan Aulenbach

November 7

Dorothy Moore

November 9

Frances Cockrell

November 13

Charles Miller

November 16

Hannah Jones

Shirley Roberson



November 19

Cheryl Nowlin

Troy Simpson

November 20

Teri Brooks

November 21

Andi Taylor

November 23

Victoria Monroe

November 24

Pelham Swift

Lisa Washburne

November 29

Todd Arthur

Daylight Saving Time Ends
Sunday, November 1st



Randall's Pen Thanksgiving Day is just a few weeks away now. It's that time of year when we are encouraged to pause and give thanks for the gifts that God has given to us.

I've used the phrase "growing in grace and gratitude" a lot the last few months. It's the name of the new curriculum we are using with our children. I have been posting updates on what they are exploring on the bulletin board. It's a phrase about thanksgiving.

But today as I am thinking about "growing in grace and gratitude" I am not thinking about children who hopefully have a long life ahead of them. Today I am thinking about adults and how we live lives of "grace and gratitude." One of the ways that we do that is by beginning to ponder the end of our lives.

I am grateful for the "Preparing for the End of Life: A Handful of Things You Can Do Now" event we had at St. Mark last month. I am grateful for all the people who were involved in helping to prepare for this event. I am grateful that Debbie Reinhart-Young was willing to come and share some of her knowledge and wisdom with us. I am grateful that Rick Brooks offered some thoughts at the end of the day that meshed nicely with Debbie's presentation.

Debbie shared with us a list of important forms that we need to consider completing. Some of them are

legal forms. Others are about things like the type of funeral or memorial service we would like to have.

In addition to talking about forms, Debbie also offered suggestions about how we might have important conversations about matters related to death and dying with our loved ones and close friends. She acknowledged that these are tough conversations and that many people do not want to participate. She pointed out that things like news stories or TV shows and movies might provide an opening to start a conversation.

Many of the things that Debbie talked about are covered in the booklet **Preparing for the End of Life: Easing the Way for Those You Love**. Each person who attended the event last month received a copy of the booklet. It was developed by First Presbyterian Church of Dallas and adapted for use here at St. Mark. Copies are available in the church office if you would like to have one or need another copy. I hope everyone will take time to read over this booklet. Lots of people had questions for Debbie. She answered as many as she could. I know she visited with some people after the event for a while. Debbie has indicated that she would be willing to come back for another gathering in the future. Do you have some things you would like her to talk about if she came back? Let me know.

Randall McGee, Director of Christian Education

The Spirit in Hindsight

When I first started coming to St. Mark I was in a place in my life that was not too fun. I had many worries and concerns going on in my life and I knew I needed help. I just didn't know where to turn for that help. It had been a few years since I had attended church and I really had lost my way. I decided to attend a service at St. Mark to see if maybe reviving my faith would help.

The first day I attended it was a cold winter day and misting outside. I debated whether to wait and maybe go another Sunday, but my worries and anxieties were so big that I thought "no better time than the present," so I bundled up and headed to a church that I had never been to and didn't know a soul.

I parked in the back and headed through the courtyard to the back doors. No one was around or in the courtyard at the time and the wind was blowing right through me. I pulled up the collar on my jacket to help cover my face. It was soft rabbit fur and it smelled like my perfume. I could feel my eyes swell up with tears as I got closer to the door. I was frightened and didn't know if I was doing the right thing. After all, my life was such a mess and my Doubting Thomas attitude kept telling me that nothing or no one could possibly help me at this point. I had prayed and prayed and begged God to make things right in my life but nothing was changing. I felt so abandoned. Where was this God? This Holy Spirit that I had seen work wonders in the lives of those with absolute faith. He certainly wasn't paying any attention to me and my needs!

Just before I got to the doors to enter the church, I asked God to please just give me a sign, anything; to let me know that HE was there. Everything in my life was so ugly and I felt like I was walking through life with blinders on. I had to stay focused and try to fix

my life and take care of those that I loved that were in trouble.

I heard a rustling just to the right of the path. I stopped in my tracks and looked over to see what it was. There at the wrought iron fence was a tiny bunny. He was so calm and beautiful. He looked at me as if he knew me. He didn't even run away. We locked eyes for what seemed like a long time, but I'm sure was just a few seconds. I suddenly felt this sense of peace come over me. It was a sense of peace that I had not felt in a long, long time. It was that moment that I knew God **was** with me and that sweet bunny was God's way of telling me everything in the world was not so bad and ugly, if I just keep my eyes, my heart and my search to revive my faith open, He would be there through my journey and help guide me through the bad times and the good times that were yet to come. His grace in that small creature totally turned my outlook on things around. It was my journey and with God's guidance through my faith, I would be ok. Everything would be ok.

As I continued through the doors of the church I turned around and, out loud, I told the bunny not to worry the fur on my collar was actually fake rabbit fur and I was sorry if I offended him in any way. He slowly hopped away as if to say, "no worries."

So I keep coming back to my new church and I have made many new friends and feel as though I am a part of the family at St. Mark. My faith has grown tremendously and because of that, my problems and worries in life have become much more manageable. Although I have never seen that bunny again in the courtyard, I know he is there just like I know that my God is there too. I thank him every waking day for the blessings in my life. Amen.

Respectively, D M

Inquirers Class

Sunday, November 8th - 12:15 p.m.

If you have been worshipping with us at St. Mark Presbyterian Church for a while and want a better understanding of what we're all about, you may have some questions.

- Who are the Presbyterians?
- What do they believe?
- What do they do?
- What is their history?
- What has their influence been?



Bring your questions about being Presbyterian to Pastor Rick's Inquirer's Class. The class will meet in the Session Room in Princeton Hall.

Sandwich Sunday - November 29th



Each 5th Sunday we prepare and serve sandwiches at the **Austin Street Center**. Volunteers are asked to prepare **two or three dozen sandwiches, individually bagged** with the sack labeled as to the contents, and bring them to the church on that Sunday.

Cookies and snack cakes are also welcome.

Sign-up sheets are on the glass table in the narthex.

Volunteers are also needed to help serve the sandwiches at the Center on that Sunday evening.

The Church office will be closed Thursday, November 26th for the Thanksgiving Holiday.