

St. Mark Connection

St. Mark Presbyterian Church

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Issue 12

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2021



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reminders

December 5

2nd Sunday of Advent

December 12

3rd Sunday of Advent

Christmas Cantata

December 19

4th Sunday of Advent

Lessons and Carols

December 24

6:00 Candlelight Worship



Advent Preparations

Two years ago, I was 37 weeks pregnant with my son, Gabriel. Never in my life did advent feel so visceral on so many levels: the waiting, the immense joy swirling with immense anxiety, and the endless preparations with so little time. When you are expecting your life to become completely upended at any given moment, the state of your current life changes drastically. This kind of waiting shapes our priorities, defines our relationships, and drives our daily behavior. Remember all the people who built fallout shelters out of the fear of nuclear war? Remember how toilet paper became such a scarcity at the start of the pandemic? It seems the more uncertain our future, the more we grasp for things to control.

Advent is a season of expectant waiting. Advent means “coming” or “arrival.” As God’s beloved people, these are our days of waiting, hoping, and longing for the coming of the Christ child into the world and into our lives. God’s desire to be with us will be fulfilled through the birth and life of Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh to dwell among us.

In a time when we are encouraged to make our preparations for the imminent future out of fear rather than to hope, this is an opportunity where God invites us to embody the promises God offers all of us: to be *with* us and *for* us in ways the world has yet to imagine.

As the prophet Isaiah proclaims, God’s presence is good news to the entire weary world.

Energize the limp hands, strengthen the rubbery knees. Tell fearful souls, “Courage! Take heart! God is here, right here, on God’s way to put things right and redress all wrongs. God on the way! God will save you!” (Isaiah 35:3-4, The Message Translation)

Believing that our lives will change in any moment through the coming of Christ here on earth, how will you spend the days ahead as you wait? What are the things within your control that you can touch in order to fuel your hope in God’s nearness? How can this time of waiting be made more joyful to testify to the good news of Christ for all of humanity and creation?

If you are struggling to find a starting place, may this prayer light your way as you wait: *Loving God, lift our eyes to look for blossoms in the desert. Attune our ears to listen to the cries of your children. Open our hearts to dare to love, even as the pain of having loved remains. Steady our feet and grant us courage as we make this journey to welcome you, O Christ Emmanuel. Our rejoicing is near, for you are near. Amen.*

Reverend Kathy Lee-Cornell

Upcoming Events

Sunday Sermons, Scriptures and Events

December 5

Luke 3:1-6

Annual Congregational Meeting
Celebration of The Lord's Supper
2nd Sunday of Advent
Reverend Kathy Lee-Cornell

December 12

Christmas Cantata
3rd Sunday of Advent

December 19

Lessons and Carols
4th Sunday of Advent

December 24

6:00 p.m. - Christmas Eve Worship
Reverend Kathy Lee-Cornell

December 26

Luke 2:41-52
1st Sunday of Christmas
Reverend Kathy Lee-Cornell



God Bless You on Your Birthday

December 2

Phyllis Miller

December 3

Collin Stephen

December 6

Voni Robinson

December 7

Leigh Taylor

December 9

Pam McGuire

December 10

Randall McGee

December 11

Mary Moffitt



December 12

SuzAnne Munoz

December 13

Alex Crawley

December 14

Becky Page

December 15

Ron McMahon

December 27

Clint Taylor

December 29

Sheila Wahl

December 31

Diane Llywelyn
Emily Stephen

Sock Tree

Hats and Mittens Too



Please consider bringing new warm socks, hats and mittens/gloves for children, teens, and adults and deposit them in the basket next to the Christmas tree in the narthex. We will be delivering to Sharing Life Ministry in Mesquite

Coat Drive

It's time to clean out your closets again for our annual coat drive. We're collecting new or used coats of all sizes, to give to those in need.



If you don't have any old coats to contribute, please consider giving a small cash offering towards the coat drive so that we can go to the Goodwill or other thrift stores to buy gently used coats. Last year St. Mark contributed enough coats and cash to make our donation total 64 coats!

Christmas Cantata

December 12



The Sanctuary Choir will present "Ceremony of Candles" by Joseph M. Martin.

"Lessons and Carols"

December 19

A traditional service of music and scripture will be presented by the Sanctuary and Handbell Choirs during the 10:30am worship service.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

December 24

Worship begins at 6:00 p.m.

St. Mark Presbyterian Church exists to know Jesus and to make Him known.

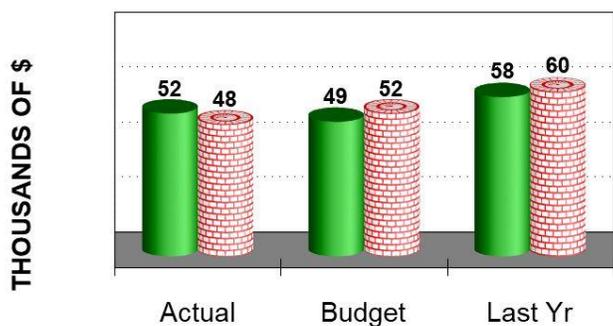
St Mark Presbyterian Church, Dallas Texas

December 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
28 9:15a Sunday School 10:30a Worship Service 12:00p Yoga 1st Sunday of Advent	29	30	1 6:30p Handbells 7:30p Choir Rehearsal	2 6:00p Zoom Yoga	3	4 10:30a Zoom Membership/Evang Com. Mtg.
5 9:15a Sunday School 10:30a Worship Service <i>2nd Sunday of Advent</i>	6 6:00p Zoom Worship & Music Com.	7 6:00p Zoom Fellowship Com. Mtg.	8 6:00p Property Com. 6:30p Handbells 7:30p Choir Rehearsal	9 6:00p Zoom Yoga	10	11 9:00a Mini Workday 
12 9:15a Sunday School 10:30a Worship Service - Christmas Cantata 12:00p Mission & Outreach Com. Mtg.  <i>3rd Sunday of Advent</i>	13	14 6:00p Zoom Stewardship & Finance Com. Mtg.	15 6:30p Handbells 7:30p Choir Rehearsal	16 6:00p Zoom Yoga	17	18
19 9:15a Sunday School 10:30a Lessons and Carols  <i>4th Sunday of Advent</i>	20 6:30p Session Meeting	21	22 6:30p Handbells 7:30p Choir Rehearsal	23 6:00p Zoom Yoga	24 6:00p Worship Christmas Eve 	25 
26 9:15a Sunday School 10:30a Worship Service	27	28	29	30 6:00p Zoom Yoga	31	1 Happy New Year

Treasurer's Report

4 MONTHS THROUGH 10-31-2021



OPERATING FUND

■ +INCOME ■ -EXPENSE

Operating Fund – YTD unrestricted contributions are better than budget by \$2800, but \$4900 less than last year. YTD expenses are \$4,000 below budget, and \$11,600 below last year. Bottom line, we are approximately \$3,900 cash positive YTD which is \$6,600 better than budget and \$6,200 better than last year.

Session Highlights

Stated Meeting of the Session, October 18, 2021.

- Motion passed to accept the recommendation of Rev. Kathy Lee-Cornell as Part-time Supply Pastor for St. Mark Presbyterian Church, from the Supply Pastor Search Committee.
- Motion passed to name the choir room “O’Neal Choir Room” with a plaque.

A full set of Session minutes are available to read on the Session bulletin board.



There are no words to truly express our appreciation and love for the people of St. Mark. The celebration of my 50 years as director of music was beyond incredible...such talent and creativity...and yes, there were even some surprises.

Ann and I will also cherish the beautiful sculpture, which already has a “home” beside our grand piano, the set of bells which are now joyfully ringing in our backyard, the new plaque for the “O’Neal Choir Room”, the many cards, special notes, and other wonderful gifts that we received. We want to give a big thank you to the planning committee, the choirs, the entertainers, and to our St. Mark family for taking time out of your schedule to celebrate with us. It was astounding to see the multi-generational families in attendance who have been part of the music program through the years. Peace and love,
Gary & Ann



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

*Pastor Kathy Lee-Cornell
Gary O’Neal
Rev. Dr. Randall McGee
Kat Hutchings
Bob King
Elaine Burgess*



St. Mark Presbyterian Church exists to know Jesus and to make Him known.



So, we have now dipped our toe into the waters of the Advent. One week down and three to go. The season of waiting and anticipation.

I don't mean to sound grumpy but... I am really getting tired of waiting and anticipation.

Waiting and anticipating when I will be eligible for a vaccine booster. Waiting and anticipating the naming of a new variant of COVID. Then waiting and anticipating reports on how serious it is and how well my vaccines work against it. And that's just the COVID related waiting and anticipation.

Yep, I am tired of waiting and anticipation. And now I'm in a season where that is what I am called to focus on and even celebrate those things.

So last Sunday I taught a class elsewhere on the Nativity section of the Gospel of Mark. It was a bit of a trick lesson. There are no nativity passages in Mark. When Jesus appears on the scene in Mark, he is a full-grown adult doing lots of things in a very short time.

In some ways Mark is the Gospel written for the impatient person. It doesn't begin with long genealogies or long speeches. If my math is right the word "immediately" can be found seven times in the first chapter. I think I preached a sermon some years at St. Mark and used the entire first chapter of Mark as my text. I read the whole thing. All 45 verses of it. And then I think I asked the congregation if you were worn out yet. We had already had a baptism, temptations, preaching, the calling of disciples, and multiple healings.

The Gospel of Mark is my favorite. But even in this fast-paced account of the life of Jesus I can't get away from waiting and anticipation. The opening words of the Gospel are "The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God." There is a lot in Mark. But it is only the beginning of the story. There is lots of good news, but everything is not complete by the end of the Mark.

Then there are Jesus' first words in Mark, "The time is fulfilled and the Kingdom of God is at hand." Mark is filled with signs that the kingdom is truly at hand. But by the end of Mark after the crucifixion even though the tomb is empty the kingdom is not yet fully present.

So, we are called to continue to wait and anticipate. But as I told some folks last week this waiting is not passive like waiting at an airline gate with your bags packed for someone to whisk you away.



Our waiting and anticipation are active. We believe the good news. We know the kingdom will be present fully at some time in the future. So, we watch and wait for the birth of Jesus. But as the prophet Micah reminds the people of God we seek to "do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with our God." Even if we are kind of grumpy about the whole idea of waiting and anticipation.

St. Mark Presbyterian Church exists to know Jesus and to make Him known.

AGO 50th Year Celebration

We can all agree that the Gary and Ann O'Neal 50th Year Celebration at St. Mark was a fun, joyful, emotional, and memorable event. Many former members and guests were in attendance for the worship service which included a surprise anthem -- *God Is In His Holy Temple* -- for Gary and Ann - the first anthem Gary directed at St. Mark in July 1971. Joining the Sanctuary Choir during the Worship Service were Rev. Rick Brooks, Sharon Bradford, Susi Bussard, Donna and Brielle Jones, and Rose Marie Stone.

The meal provided by Chef Jerry was scrumptious and hearty; the entertainment was lively and fun; and, probably the best of all for me was reminiscing with so many friends and past members who came to honor Gary and Ann.

Thanks to the Session for approving this well-deserved celebration. So many were involved in this event - discussions, meetings, advertising, invitations, photographs, preparing DVD, property cleanup, sound system/stage setup, catering coordination, tables/chairs setup, setting the tables, flowers, decorating, rewriting lyrics for a familiar tune, programs, removing chairs and tables. The Session and church members generously volunteered for projects.

Our amazing volunteers: Anne Thomas, Susie Miller, Bill Grayson, Cecilia Grayson, Marilyn Jackson, Diane Llewellyn, Kathy Hale, Kathleen Arthur, Dee Huckaba, Christi Malouf, Phyllis Miller, Leigh Taylor, Gerald Jones, Danny Robinson, Alan Aulenbach, Patti Aulenbach, Jeff Taylor, Charlene Taylor, Allison Curry, Alice McLean, Lorraine Stephen, Trish Johnson, Cody Robinson, Bill Oney, Bruce Huckaba, and Pelham Swift,

Luncheon entertainment included Hunter Swift; Rose Marie Stone; Kathy Hale; Leigh Taylor; Gerald Jones; Rev. Rick Brooks; special guest and St. Mark friend, Rudy Gatlin; St. Mark Sanctuary Choir directed by Susie Miller and accompanied on piano by Anne Thomas.

For those of you who did behind the scene projects that I am unaware of, thank you as well. And, to our amazing Church Administrative Assistant, Kat Hutchings, thanks for all you did to help with invitations, copying, orders of worship, handouts, and the extra work involved. We appreciate you.

Thank you all for your enthusiasm and dedication in helping to make the AGO 50th Celebration a success.

Sheila Wahl
AGO Planning Committee

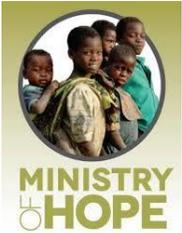
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Special Christmas Offering

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 \$4,000 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.



St. Mark Presbyterian Church
9999 Ferguson Road
Dallas, TX 75228
Non-Profit Organization

CHRISTMAS
Joy December
A small red star ornament hanging from a string.