

2017 ANNUAL REPORT

Rector's Report Ministry and Committee Reports

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RECTOR'S REPORT

Friends in Christ,

Another year of ministry is on the books, and this is my opportunity to report back to you some of our past triumphs and some of our future dreams. Last year, I wrote that St. Mark's was in the midst of a renaissance. I believe it continues. Hardly a Sunday goes by that I don't see a visitor. Our average Sunday attendance in 2016 was 77; our average Sunday attendance in 2017 was 87. This is an increase of 12.9% in 12 months. More importantly, hardly a Sunday goes by that I don't see a visitor welcomed warmly, invited to Coffee Hour, and folded into the life of the parish. It is because of these acts of radical welcome that the church will flourish. I push our Vestry and staff to be as effective administrators as possible of the time and money in our care. Still, if God's welcome is not at the center of our shared life, the best bureaucratic systems in the world amount to simply spinning our wheels. The people of St. Mark's and their Christ-like welcome of the newcomer define this place, and able administration follows.

Children's Education

Last year, I wrote about the need to discern and raise up a talented superintendent for the church school. This has happened, though not quite as expected. St. Mark's was the recipient of a significant grant from the national church, and with this money, we courted and hired a former colleague of mine from Chicago, Mr. Matt Phillips, to be our Director of Campus and Youth Ministry. Matt has taken the helm of our church school as well as launched a Campus Ministry to UWM and Marquette. His excellent work has freed me for other ministries, and I could not be more pleased with the hire. Church school attendance is up modestly, and we continue to offer the finest Christian curriculum available. The parish has outfitted our church school rooms with a new TV and DVD player to make our curriculum easily usable for all children. Our nursery is expanding, and we may have to consider additional help if we continue to grow. In 2017, we hoped to create a family restroom with a changing station on the first floor, which has been accomplished. It is my hope that this is the last year that Children's Education will be included in the Rector's report as the majority of those responsibilities now fall to the Director of Campus and Youth Ministry.

Adult Formation

See the Rev. John Hickey's excellent report for details, but suffice it to say that this has been a banner year for Adult Formation. We've increased our offerings from Sunday mornings to include two quiet days, led by Judith Miller, a parishioner and spiritual director. We hosted a rousing and well-attended summer series highlighting the theological work of three promising Marquette scholars. And our Lenten series "One Book, One Parish" drew a wonderful crowd reading C. S. Lewis' *The Screwtape Letters* together over a shared meal. Adult Formation would be well served to restart its lay steering committee in 2018. If you have a passion for that work, contact the rector or the priest associate.

Worship/Music

Steve Wolff and the choir have worked incredibly hard this year. Our Section Leader Program continues to provide depth and leadership to our growing music program. See Steve's report for the specifics; from where I sit, our music program is better off today than it was a year ago. In particular, the choir added an August choir clinic, bringing in an outside clinician to help jumpstart the season. St. Mark's has 60

minutes each Sunday to make an impression on a newcomer, and our choir and organ are major components of this impression. I'm delighted that 2017 has been such a good year for music.

The Vestry suggested that I spend some more time making my expectations of worship at St. Mark's clear to the staff, and to that end, Steve and I have been meeting more regularly, and I believe these meetings have benefitted us both and made our Sunday worship better.

Outreach

The Outreach committee and I hosted several listening sessions in the parish to discern where it is that the Holy Spirit is calling St. Mark's into service out in the world. After these sessions, the committee and I met to talk through the results. We talked about concentrating our efforts on a few agencies with whom we have strong relationships—ideally, places where St. Mark's could spend volunteer time as well as money. To that end, Outreach made fewer but more generous grants in 2017, and I have committed to developing relationships in 2018 with the executives of the agencies who were beneficiaries (The Gathering, Riverwest Food Pantry, Haiti Project, and Common Ground).

Prayer

Several members of the parish have come to me over the last few months talking about their desire for deeper prayer life in the community. This seems like a natural response to our current cycle of growth. As we grow in numbers, it seems right that we will also grow in faith. To that end, I brought together a team of folks to think about ways we can be a community deeper in prayer. In 2018, look for more opportunities for retreats, spirituality groups, and peer-to-peer pastoral care.

Pastoral Care

In addition to the excellent work of our Lay Eucharistic Visitors and our Pastoral Care Team, the Rev. Michelle Mooney and I have made a point to visit members in need in the hospital, to attend to funerals and interments, and to support the work of lay people caring for each other with meals and prayer. In addition, we have kept the tradition of healing services in the chapel after service on the third Sunday of the month.

Dreams and Our 125th Anniversary

I see impressive growth in our parish. With this growth will come some bureaucratic pains. How do we deal with the abundance that God has seen fit to bestow? Some of the informal systems we have enjoyed for years will not work with our newfound abundance. So, I believe that our challenge going forward will be how to retain all that makes St. Mark's a special place while we figure out how to manage buildings, personnel, volunteers, staff, and clergy—all while doing our mission work both inside and outside the parish. (We began this process by vetting, purchasing, and then rolling out a new church management system, Breeze, which is making our communications and personnel management much more effective.). It's a tall order, but it's one I believe we are more than capable of fulfilling. I want to see more baptisms in this place. I want to see more of our young people connected to lives of service in this place. I want to see people from all walks of life coming through these doors and calling St. Mark's home. The world is hungry for what the church has to offer, and I plan to work hard in our 125th anniversary year to make sure that as many people as possible can find God at St. Mark's.

Respectfully submitted,
Fr. Burch

FORMATION PROGRAMS

ADULT FORMATION

Once upon a time, and that time was last year, in a kingdom close by the confluence of Belleview and Hackett, people gathered after church on Sundays in a place called the Library to become adventurers.

Now, their adventures went by many names, but it was most often whispered that they were attending something called “Adult Formation” (which is just a very important-sounding phrase that only means *abracadabra*). Sitting around a table that was actually a magic carpet in disguise, these fortunate few were whisked away to discover sacred places, fabulous Biblical foods, and a land where Queen Gossip reigned; they even fought deadly battles with a tempter named Screwtape! Why, their adventures were so numerous, this writer cannot even recount (or remember) them all. And the best news is that the magic table is still there waiting to take anyone—yes, even you!—on further adventures right now. Join us, if you dare.

These adventures are brought to you by the Adult Formation Committee: Fr. Ian Burch, Deacon Michelle Mooney, Bill Wainwright, Dan Buckler, and the Rev. John Hickey.

~John Hickey

BIBLE STUDY

Bible study meets from 4–5 p.m. on Wednesdays in the Library. The schedule follows the school year with similar vacation breaks. Refreshments are served, and members read and discuss the Bible in an informal fashion. There is no outside reading to do during the week; everything read is read in class. Those with interest may join in the study and discussion at any time. Everyone is encouraged to attend. Contact Deacon Michelle Mooney for further information.

~Michelle Mooney

CAMPUS AND YOUTH MINISTRY

Though I have had the pleasure of serving at St. Mark’s for only half a year, I am already amazed and joyful with all we have accomplished together. Through these last six months, we have continued to gain energy and strengthen our children’s ministries, and have begun to establish a new Episcopal Campus Ministry right inside our doors.

Children’s Ministry

Our children’s ministries saw notable growth in 2017. This fall alone, our Church school was supported by seven teachers who welcomed and taught 15 children on Sunday mornings. When children weren’t in class, we introduced activities to include them in the life of the church, such as our Epiphany Dinner crafts and Advent calendar craft day. Thanks to our Halloween Bash, we have even offered family-friendly events that reach out and are visible to the broader community.

In the coming year, we plan to continue to better the ways we minister to our youngest members, to increase opportunities for children to engage in the life of the church as well as our visibility to the broader community.

Campus Ministry

This fall brought the beginning stages of establishing an Episcopal Campus Ministry here at St. Mark's. We have entered supportive and collaborative Campus Ministry networks within the Diocese of Milwaukee and Province V of the Episcopal Church. Last semester we made personal connections with 12 students from Marquette and UWM who have gathered together for formation programming and fellowship events (such as our river hike and our trip to Miller Park). We even held the first Living Compass Wellness Circle for College Students. St. Mark's has also empowered students to create and lead new ministries such as our Advent Bible Study.

In the new year, we plan to continue the Bible Study, take a group of students to the Province V Campus Ministry retreat, offer a Living Compass Spiritual Practice group, and officially register as Student Organizations at both Marquette and UWM.

The last year brought a great deal of change and growth to our congregation, and there is much to celebrate. Let us praise God and give thanks by continuing to do His work here in the city of Milwaukee.

*~Matt Phillips
Director of Campus and Youth Ministries*

YOUTH CONFIRMATION

Have you noticed one of our young people busily writing during a sermon at St. Mark's? Despite what it may look like, this young member of our congregation is not trying to get ahead on schoolwork. Rather, she or he is likely to be writing sermon notes, one of the requirements of Confirmation classes.

Confirmation is the mature affirmation of the baptismal vows. Youths in 6th–11th grades are currently included in confirmation classes at St. Mark's. The confirmation process takes two years and has multiple elements. This past fall, a second cohort was added that included youths from All Saints' Cathedral, resulting in two groups of students being in the confirmation process. Last year's group will be confirmed at the Cathedral on Saturday, April 29, 2017, 7:00 p.m.

Requirements

- Attendance at all monthly classes in both years. One absence per year is allowed. Classes meet in the rector's office at St. Mark's.
- Completion of 18 Sermon Notes. While prompting questions may be provided, the notes have to contain the person's response to the sermon including what s/he believes to be the main message.
- Commitment to one ministry at St. Mark's. Ministries may include being an acolyte or lay reader.

Areas of focus

- Experiential: Each class includes a hands-on experience related to one aspect of the church experience or service. In one class, students created and baked communion bread. Another class included making fleece prayer shawls for parishioners in need.
- Christianity in the world: Students use the Bible as touchpoints for discussing what it looks like to live as a Christian in their everyday worlds. Students have used *The Ten Commandments* and *The History of the Church in 30 Minutes*, presented by Dean Kevin Carroll of All Saints Cathedral, as touchpoints.
- The Sacraments: Students learned about the sacraments and the role they play in Christian life.

We are excited about the deep thinking, the sensitivity, and the other-centeredness of the young people in our Confirmation program. It is delightful to see the St. Mark's family grow to again offer this program.

~Jayne Heffron and Ian Burch

LITURGICAL MINISTRIES

ACOLYTES

St. Mark's celebrates a reverent and joyful liturgy with a strong tradition of lay leadership. As our attendance and membership grow, I have sought to simplify acolyte service and to bring more folks into this form of worship. I would be delighted to see a crucifer and an altar server for each celebration of the Eucharist, and to have eight regular volunteers so that each person is needed once per month. We currently have five people interested in regular service, and three others that we call upon for special occasions or funerals.

If you would be interested in this ministry, contact kyle.potter@gmail.com to set up a chat. Additionally, Ian, Matt, and Kyle will host a training session on March 10. This would be a great time to investigate this ministry in a hands-on way to see if you would enjoy it.

~Kyle Potter

ALTAR GUILD

The Altar Guild is a ministry which, under the guidance of the Rector, helps prepare for our weekly Sunday morning and Wednesday evening services as well as Advent, Lent, and special occasions including baptisms, weddings, and funerals. We prepare the sanctuary for the various services and maintain the vestments, linens, vessels, and candles as well as the supply of wine and wafers.

We work in two teams and have the flexibility to meet everyone's needs, usually spending less than an hour each Sunday on preparation and clean up. We enjoy the music of our organist during set up and the camaraderie of the St. Mark's Flower Guild and the many parishioners who help make each worship service special.

I want to thank Peter Batchelder, Nikki Domenget, Richard Runkel, and Jane Shero for their continued dedication to the Altar Guild, and I look forward to having more of you involved.

I encourage anyone interested in considering this ministry to talk with me or any member of our group as you explore ways to become involved in the life of St. Mark's parish or want to try something different.

~Meg Edwards

CHALICE BEARERS

Our chalice bearer ministry has served as a linchpin of our Eucharistic observance. Chalice bearers are responsible for assisting the deacon at the Gospel, as well as serving fellow parishioners the cup of Christ at Communion. Servers are licensed by the bishop after a training by either the priest or deacon of St. Mark's. This year, the ministry lost one member to a move, and we are anticipating losing another member in 2018 to another move. The rector will select up to four more servers for 2018 to help with our growing parish and to replace those members we lost. Huge thanks to Ron Tunis, Frank West, Vince Katter, Nikki Domenget, Ellie Moseley and the Rev. Michelle Mooney for this service.

~Ian Burch

EUCCHARISTIC VISITORS

The Lay Eucharistic Ministry brings communion to those who are shut in or otherwise unable to attend Sunday services. The ministers are sent directly from Sunday worship so that, in effect, those visited are included in our regular service and community. Eucharistic Visitors are licensed by the diocese and serve at the pleasure of the Rector. Members are appointed by the rector and deacon.

The Eucharistic ministers currently licensed (or in the processing of being licensed) to serve are Nikki and Todd Domenget, Stephanie Dudek, Joe and Kelly Glostott, Mark Heffron, Vince Katter, and Jane and Tom Lacy.

~Michelle Mooney

FLOWER GUILD

St. Mark's Flower Guild members obtain and arrange flowers, plants, and greens for our services with funds donated by members of the parish who wish to honor or remember persons or occasions, or give thanks for persons.

Our current members are Jackie Adams, Nikki Domenget, Kathy Katter, Travis Trott, Marie Wolff, Judy Young, and Jamie Zingler. Special thanks to Georgia Cain, who works on holidays, and to Bjorn Akerblom, who joined us at Easter.

Members are assigned individually on a rotating basis for a specific weekend. We are responsible for the two arrangements in church we usually see on Sundays. At Easter and Christmas, all available members work together to decorate St. Mark's.

In 2017, we continued our project of vase restoration with one of our pair of silver vases being completed. The second of the pair was ready in early 2018 in time for the pair to be used in church on Epiphany 2018.

New members are welcome. We provide training, which includes selecting flowers, access to a small library of flower-arranging literature, and working together with a current member before being assigned a weekend of one's own. Please contact us if you would like to be part of our guild.

~Judy Young

LAY READERS

At Sunday Eucharists and other occasions of worship, lay readers present the day's appointed lessons from the Old and New Testaments. Our ministry is important for its role in clearly communicating these sacred texts to the congregation. With these readings, the laity joins the ordained clergy in bringing the liturgy to our shared life.

The following parishioners participated as lay readers in 2017:

Virginia Chappell	Steve Rohde
Tom Davies	Sue Rohde
John Dudek	Richard Runkel
Jayne Heffron	Bill Stotts
Kathy Katter	Travis Trott
Vince Katter	Ron Tunis
Dave Kiger	Sandi Tunis
Christine Kuramoto	Bill Wainwright
Janet Martin	Frank West
Marilyn McKnight	Jamie Zingler
Judith Miller	

Kathy Katter

MUSIC

- I. The Choir
 - A. We were sad to bid farewell to two of our dear friends and long-term members, Ron and Sandy Tunis, who retired to St. Louis before Christmas. We will miss them sorely, and we wish them all good things.
 - B. The establishment of the Section Leader program in 2016 was the beginning of a renewal of the choir. Much good work has been done this year, and a tonal foundation has been set for exciting growth. Also, the section leaders have provided beautiful cantoring as well as solo and duet music for the enrichment of our services.
 - C. In early fall, St. Mark's hosted its first choir clinic, led by Marco Melendez of the Milwaukee Children's Choir. Much learning and fun were had by all.
 - D. At this time, the choir has fourteen regular singers. However, we are always eager to welcome new members. If you are concerned that you don't have the skills to sing in a choir, be not afraid. I can teach you whatever you need to know. Joining the choir at St. Mark's always includes some free voice lessons from me, and two singers made use of these free lessons this fall. I invite you to consider joining our happy group soon.

Members of the choir during 2017 included:

Sopranos

Mary Beth Alvarez
Julianne Frey
Sharon Maier
Sarah Mellstrom
Susan Rohde
Sandi Tunis

Altos

Kelly Glostott
Ginny Schrag
Elizabeth Smith

Tenors

Todd Domenget
Elizabeth Jacobs
Ron Tunis

Bass

Alex Cain
Joe Glostott
Vince Katter

- II. The Organ—The recently refurbished (summer of 2016) organ console is a joy to play and now allows for the necessary rapid combination changes that are required in the playing of a liturgical service such as the Episcopal service.
- III. The Artist in Residence Program has six artists (AIRs) who play at Sunday Eucharists and other services. AIRs currently under agreement are Mike Keegan, horn; Evan Taucher, classical guitar; Steve Rohde, composer and organist; Bob Estlund, flute; Aaron Zauner, cello; and Todd Domenget, bass. These musicians have all wonderfully enriched the liturgies of St. Mark’s during their tenures, and we have been enormously blessed with such great talent and in such quantity.
- IV. Music at St. Mark’s Concert Series—We are in the twelfth year of the concert series. The fall concert involved most of our Artists in Residence and was a celebration of their talents and their contributions to the life of our parish. There were around 20 attendees. Look for announcements about our spring concert, which will feature an outstanding organist from Chicago.
- V. Finally, let me thank sincerely all who have contributed to the liturgy and music program at St. Mark’s. Thanks go to the choir members, section leaders, soloists, artists in residence, and accompanists—Steve Rohde and Kelly Glostott; bassist Andrew Arndorfer; percussionist Terry Smirl; trumpeter, Matt Ernst (MSO Principal Trumpet)—and thanks to all who made comments, suggestions, and helpful criticisms.

~ Steve Wolff

USHERS

Ushers are our parish’s front line for newcomers who come through our beautiful red doors. They also offer a welcoming greeting to those who have been part of St. Mark’s for decades. Our service is a privilege. Five teams rotate to serve weekly and for special services, always being present in the nave to welcome all, hand out bulletins, guide newcomers to their seats, collect offerings, call Sunday school children to join their families, help all to the communion rail and clean up the nave as people leave for coffee. It is a noble calling that is pleased to welcome new members into its ranks.

Parishioners who served in 2017 were Sandy Boltz, Steve Butcher, Alex Cain, Georgia Cain, John Cain, Virginia Chappell, Barbara Costanzo, Brooke Frizzell, Mark Heffron, Bill Hunt, Christine Kuramoto, Janet Martin, Steve Martinie, Marilyn McKnight, Ellie Mixter-Keller, David Miyama, Harry Moseley, Andrew Muriuki, Hyla Palubecki, Wayne Palubecki, Mary Ross, Jamie Zingler, and Ron Zingler.

I encourage all those who may be interested in being a regular or alternate usher to contact me about the service of the ushers. Ushering involves becoming part of a four-person team assigned to a five-week rotation. On-the-job training is offered as you become join a key part of St. Mark’s hospitality to new and long-standing parishioners.

~Harry Moseley

LIVING BEYOND THESE WALLS

COMMON GROUND

Common Ground is an organization of 50 congregations, neighborhood groups, non-profits, schools and small businesses, with a combined membership of approximately 50,000 members.

We believe that people working together have the power to change their communities and their country for the better. Too many people don't realize that they have the potential to join together and create positive change in their city and beyond.

Projects include housing rehabilitation; water quality efforts; getting better recreation facilities for central-city youth; organizing on Milwaukee's South Side for better accountability from the police force and being the major force in establishing the Common Ground Healthcare Cooperative.

We held a very successful Friends of Common Ground campaign within the parish this year to help support the organization. Over \$9,500 was raised from 28 parishioners.

If you would like to become active in the St. Mark's chapter of Common Ground, contact Deacon Michelle Mooney, Janet Martin, Jennifer O'Hear or Harry Moseley to learn the meeting times of our Core Group, and to hear more about Common Ground projects currently underway.

~Michelle Mooney

OUTREACH MINISTRY

In 2017, the extraordinary efforts of many in our parish donating their time, talent, and treasure, the St. Mark's Outreach Committee raised over \$10,000 through our Corn Roast during the Downer Classic Bike Races and the October Pumpkin Sale. St. Mark's outreach improves our community while connecting with our neighbors. Thanks to all who have volunteered to raise funds and volunteer this past year.

Your Outreach Committee decided to increase their financial support to three agencies to acknowledge our parish's involvement in their activities and to affirm the important work of these agencies. We recognize that their financial needs increase as the demand for their services grows.

Common Ground—*Donation amount: \$2,500*

To support creating significant positive change in our community around housing, healthcare, public safety, water quality, parenting, education, gun safety, jobs, and criminal justice. Common Ground brings diverse people together and teaches them how to tackle problems they couldn't solve alone. St. Mark's parishioners play a critical role, volunteering hundreds of hours as leaders, canvassers, researchers, and event organizers.

Eastside Senior Services—*Donation amount: \$2,000*

To support the growing needs of area seniors for rides to medical appointments and grocery shopping trips, and to provide affirming social experiences that foster safe independent living. A number of St. Mark's parishioners are involved in leadership and service delivery for the agency.

The Gathering—*Donation amount: \$4,000*

To support its work in eliminating hunger in our city at its four serving sites. This year, over 90,000 freshly prepared meals have been served so far by thousands of volunteers, including over 250 volunteer hours contributed by our parishioners.

In December, the committee also committed to donating \$500 to the Diaper Drive for **Robyn's Nest**, and \$1,000 for the **Haiti Project**, helping Haitian teachers provide the best possible education at St. Marc's School in Jeannette, Haiti. This commitment funds two student scholarships.

~Harry Moseley

THRIFT SHOP

The Thrift Shop earnings have rebounded this year. New and regular customers still come in and have enabled us to meet our monthly pledge to St. Mark's. The treasurer's report by Jan Rhodes below gives the details.

Many thanks are due to Jan and our other volunteers who gave their time and efforts to staff the shop: Marian Byers, Georgia Cain, Charles Camilli, Molly Canary, Nancy Goble, Leslie McCormick, Michelle Mooney, Ellie Mixer-Keller, Ellie Moseley, Isabel St. Arnold, Ivon Steffen, and Ron and Jamie Zingler.

We always welcome new volunteers to help in the shop. The only requirements are the ability to make change, unpack donations, put clothing on hangers and place items on shelves. You would participate in a real ministry, as many of our customers' incomes limit them to shopping at thrift shops or Good Will stores. Additionally, for some of our lonely elderly customers, the shop staffers are an important part of their social system.

~Sue Rohde

THRIFT SHOP TREASURER'S REPORT

After four years of slowly declining revenues, the Thrift Shop's 2017 revenue was up substantially. Compared to 2016, the 2017 revenue showed a 20 percent increase, totaling \$4,400 for the year. The Thrift Shop paid its pledge of \$3,600 to the church in full, and as of December 31, 2017, had \$3,272 in its checking account.

Cash flow was positive for the second consecutive year. This follows two years of negative cash flow, during which the shop had to dip into its savings to pay its pledge.

~Jan Rhodes, Thrift Shop Treasurer

COMMUNITY LIFE

ART GALLERY

St. Mark's Art Gallery features revolving art exhibits that change every few months. The three shows we had this year had much beautiful and unique artwork.

In January, Byron Becker, an accomplished photographer, exhibited stunning photographs in color as well as black and white. Mr. Becker learned photography during his military service.

In March, the colorful, abstract paintings of Bjorn Akerblom graced our gallery walls. Several were done as variations on a theme.

To bring the year to a close, in November, Jordan Acker-Anderson exhibited bright acrylic paintings done in a mosaic style.

The Gallery charges a one-time fee for use of the Guild Hall and takes a 10% commission on all sales. Steve Wolff and Todd Domenget have provided music for some of the artists' receptions. Exhibition openings are announced on our church website, in *The Lion*, and in the *St. Mark's Weekly Happenings* email.

It has been an honor and joy for us to develop the Gallery and interact with artists as well as St. Mark's members, who have given us such great support. Thank you all.

~Todd and Nikki Domenget

COFFEE HOUR

St. Mark's Coffee Hour: Next to the Eucharist itself, it's the best thing going on Milwaukee's East Side. If you haven't been there, stop by and find out for yourself.

St. Mark's parishioners and guests enjoyed fellowship and superb spreads on Sundays throughout 2017. This weekly get-together is a great way to stay connected with friends and welcome newcomers. We have consistently had eight full tables each week. Big thanks to the Coffee Hour hosts who volunteered both food and time to make this happen.

Sign-up lists are in the Parish Hall (next to the Library doors) and online (signupgenius.com). We ask all members of St. Mark's to consider hosting, or helping host, a coffee hour in 2018. You don't have to do it alone; help is just a phone call or email away.

Thanks for joining in. See you at Coffee Hour

~Jamie Zingler

COMMUNITY GARDENS

The community gardens on the church's green space had another successful year. All the garden plots were full, planted by both church members and community neighbors. Plots are available for a nominal fee each spring for the summer growing season.

Contact Michelle Mooney before May 1 if you have an interest in a plot for the 2018 season. There will be notices in *The Lion* and church bulletins in April with sign-up information. Parish members' requests are filled from our waiting list before those of community members.

~Michelle Mooney

GARDEN GUILD

We had another busy season in the St. Mark's gardens during 2017.

Our big accomplishment was replanting the area near the office entrance door after regrading was done. We planted the bioswale with low-growing native plants to help absorb any run-off during rainstorms. We also installed sod along the walkway to eliminate any bare soil.

Although we didn't have time for our planned rehab of the St. Mark's sign garden on the corner, we did do some more planting of perennials on the Belleview side to replace plants damaged during the window renovations. Now that side of the church looks great from top to bottom!

All this, plus our usual planting of containers, weeding, watering, and pruning happened because of a dedicated group of parishioners. Thank you, Michelle Mooney, Barbara Costanzo, Meg Edwards, Mark Heffron, Jayne Heffron, Ginny Schrag, Sulun Turkseven, Judy Young, and Jamie Zingler. It couldn't happen without you!

If you are interested in finding out more about what we do, email janeshero@yahoo.com, or stop by at 6 p.m. Tuesdays during the summer. We'll be glad to have you join us!

~Jane Shero

MEN'S FELLOWSHIP GROUP

The Men's Fellowship Group meets the third Saturday of every month at St. Mark's for breakfast. We share in fellowship and breakfast with an average attendance of between 12 and 20 people. This group is not limited to men only, and we invite anyone engaged in early setup or additional events to join us. We have plenty to share in both breakfast and fellowship.

Our group supports the parish life in many ways. We are asked by the Building and Grounds Committee to organize the spring and fall work days. We assist with many church activities, including volunteering for the following: Downer Classic Bike Races corn roast, pancake breakfast, and Christmas tree set-up and the greening of St. Mark's.

We also support each other through our annual Men's Retreat. Our retreat weekend includes spiritual reflection and prayer, and ends with a worship service on Sunday. This is a spiritual weekend during which we also find time to relax with refreshment and fellowship. We are looking forward to the 2018 retreat, and we welcome all men to join us.

Several of the men have supported our clergy with a prayer ministry. We support Father Burch with Sunday morning prayer. We normally pray with our clergy before Sunday's worship service and invite anyone who would like to join us. I would like to thank the following dedicated prayer ministers who have continued this ministry since the early 1990s: John Cain, Vince Katter, Ron Tunis, Frank West, and, our newest member, Ron Zingler.

~Frank West

PASTORAL CARE MINISTRY

The Lay Pastoral Care ministry is made up of individuals who contact and visit parishioners who need a bit of extra support at any time. Members of this ministry are chosen by the rector and deacon of the parish.

Members meet bi-monthly under the supervision of the deacon, Michelle Mooney. Their ministry may take the form of meeting with a parishioner or writing notes of encouragement. Members of this ministry include Janet Martin, Ellie Moseley, Sue Rohde, Mark Heffron and Vince Katter.

~Michelle Mooney

PRAYER TEAM

The following people were 2017 members of the Prayer Team: Virginia Chappell, Todd Domenget, Barbara Franczyk, Mary Beth Alvarez, Janet Martin, Ellie Moseley, David Platcow, Norman Reynolds, Mary Ross, Virginia Schrag, Skrauss, Sandi Tunis, Genevieve Vassell, Frank West, Mary Bellis Williams, Stephen Wolff, and me, Sue Rohde. The team grew by two members in 2017, Genevieve and Mary Beth.

The team members offer intercessory prayers on a daily basis for anyone who wishes prayer, which includes those facing illness, medical tests or surgery, those in the hospital or in hospice care, and those in the process of dying. These people are generally members of St. Mark's and their friends, co-workers, and relatives, but no request is turned down.

We'd also like to pray for joyful occasions such as weddings, anniversaries and births, but those requests come less often. As St. Paul reminded us to give thanks in all circumstances, please let us know about the happy events as well as the ones that cause serious concern.

~Sue Rohde

QUILTING CIRCLE

Members of this group exercise their creativity by making baby quilts to present to the newly baptized babies at St. Mark's. If the newly baptized person is not an infant, age-appropriate gifts are made, such as a pillow or bookmark.

We meet 9:30–11:30 a.m. on the third Saturday of the month. Current members include Jane Shero, Jamie Zingler, and Michelle Mooney. New members are always welcome, and no quilting skills are needed. We'll teach you!

~Michelle Mooney

SHEPHERDS MINISTRY

The mission of the Shepherds Ministry is to visit with newcomers to the parish so that we can better know them and their expectations. Shepherds try to meet every newcomer and invite and accompany them to Coffee Hour after Sunday worship. We also seek to acquaint them with the many programs and opportunities that St. Mark's offers.

Beginning in 2018, the committee will be chaired by Mark Heffron. Members in 2017 included Brooke Frizzell, Jayne Heffron, Mark Heffron, Vince Katter, Janet Martin, Ellie Moseley, Harry Moseley, Andrew Muriuki, Kyle Potter, and Jamie Zingler.

Anyone interested in this ministry is encouraged to contact Fr. Ian Burch or Deacon Michelle Mooney. Requirements are an interest in getting to know new parishioners and helping them feel welcome.

~Michelle Mooney

WOMEN'S BOOK GROUP

The Women's Book Group had another successful year of lively and informative discussions. We have about 15 members. We read a variety of books, both fiction and nonfiction. We meet in each other's homes on Monday evenings, at 7 p.m., about every six weeks.

The following is the list of books that we read in 2017:

- *The Marriage of Opposites* by Alice Hoffman
- *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City* by Matthew Desmond
- *Accidental Saints: Finding God in All the Wrong People* by Nadia Bolz-Weber
- *Britt-Marie Was Here* by Fredrik Backman
- *Tale for the Time Being* by Ruth Ozeki
- *The Sparrow* by Mary Doria Russell
- *When Breath Becomes Air* by Paul Kalanithi
- *The Nightingale* by Kristen Hannah
- *Memed, My Hawk* by Yashar Kemal

~Ellie Moseley

THEOLOGY PUB

Theology Pub started three years ago and has since met every second Tuesday of the month at Paddy's Pub on Milwaukee's east side for delightful discussion in a casual atmosphere. Events like this have sprung up around the country and they offer great opportunities to discuss myriad topics informally. The premise is simple: gather together, grab a drink and chat. Theology Pub is open to all, whether you are "religious" or not, as long as you are respectful to your fellow explorers of existence. Every meeting also features great food from local restaurants.

Attendance has averaged 10–15 people at each Theology Pub. We hope that you all come out for a drink and a conversation.

~Dan Buckler

ADMINISTRATIVE

BUILDING AND GROUNDS

It costs a lot of money to keep our buildings looking good and in good repair for our use today and for the use of future generations of the St. Mark's congregation. Our "Minor Repairs and Maintenance" budget line for 2017 was set at \$10,000. Expenses on that line totaled slightly over \$14,000 (140%). Our "Capital Improvements" line was set at \$15,000. Expenses there totaled \$24,400 (163%). We were able to end the year without a deficit because of (1) the great care with which the Vestry sets priorities and makes decisions, and (2) many generous gifts from members of our growing parish. The Vestry, Wardens and staff are **grateful for your generosity!** As is the case with church buildings of St. Mark's vintage across the country, there is and will be more work to be done.

Repair and Maintenance projects for 2017 included the following:

- 1. Bathroom Accessibility:** Signs for the formerly gender-specific restrooms in the NE corner of the Parish Hall were replaced with gender-neutral signs, including braille labels; grab bars were installed in both rooms. A diaper changing station was added to one. Research by an ad hoc Vestry committee determined that the current size of the two NE bathrooms cannot accommodate wheelchairs and that expansion and re-plumbing are not feasible.
- 2. West Parking Lot Entrance:** Awning installed, door and frame repainted, new keypad lock installed. Bids were solicited for painting and repair of NW stairway and will be re-solicited in spring. Trench drain installed just outside the entrance, where water from parking lot accumulates. (See Drainage below.)
- 3. Repair of Front Walkway:** A hazardous gap between two concrete blocks appeared, a member of the Vestry urged its immediate repair, and mudjacking quickly resolved the problem.

≈GRATITUDE≈

Many generous volunteers have lent their time and expertise to the care and tending of our buildings, both in response to emergent issues and as part of our regular spring and fall workdays. Their efforts significantly defray our maintenance and repair expenses. The parish is **grateful for what they do!**

4. **Tree Removal:** Strong summer windstorms knocked down much of the two “trash” trees near the playground: a mulberry and a box elder. After arborists removed the debris and cut down loose branches, WE Energies cut down branches tangled in electric wires. Now that it is winter, we await complete removal of the remaining trunks and stumps.
5. **New Flooring and General Refurbishment of Basement Anteroom:** Many thanks to Alex Cain for his many hours of work on mold removal, fresh paint, and the new tile floor and baseboard!
6. **Drainage:** After consultation with a civil engineering company and a drainage expert, we undertook three related projects on the northwest side of the Parish Hall:
 - a. Construction of a bioswale to drain water away from the building along the west wall of the Parish Hall, under the various office windows, where the ground had previously sloped toward the building
 - b. Tarring (for waterproofing) of the four deep window wells along that same exterior wall
 - c. Installation of a trench drain outside the keypad door to the parking lot, with underground drainpipe angled to join the catchment to the north and east that in turn sends water to the sewer lateral. (A drain from the roof routes water to this same drain and hence the lateral.)
7. **Boiler Maintenance** – In addition to routine start-up costs, two igniters require replacement ASAP in the new year. (The igniters on the other two boilers were replaced last winter.)
8. **Lighting** – Research is underway to determine priorities for a de-lamping project for which we received a \$3,000 grant from the diocese.
9. **Major Refurbishment of Caretaker’s Kitchen** – New countertop and sink cabinet from Lowe’s; new (used) refrigerator and range installed. One piece of electrical work related to the garbage disposal remains, along with potential repair of the kitchen ventilation fan.
10. **Electrical Repairs in Apartments** – Caretaker: Broken outlet repaired Housekeeper: closet light (not working) rewired and replaced; kitchen light (not to code) rewired and replaced.
11. **Parish Hall Building Lintels** – Repair—in lieu of replacement—undertaken on a limited basis. To be assessed when weather warms.

PENDING PROJECTS AND CONCERNS:

- Repair of broken terrazzo in sanctuary. Bid received from company in Onalaska (the only terrazzo contractor listed in Wisconsin), but problems with matching the existing floor have resulted in extensive delay. In the meantime, a temporary fix has been put in place by refilling the hole in the floor and covering it with a thick rug. Thus, the falling hazard has been remediated. For permanent repair, we may turn next to Illinois-based terrazzo contractors.
- Smoke and fire alarms. Routine inspection in the fall revealed that our system is beyond its life expectancy and likely to continue to reveal faults. More immediately, one of the two smoke alarms high on the east sanctuary wall, above the altar, is not working properly. We await a recommendation from the vendor, who is in the process of acquiring additional equipment to

determine what steps need to be taken. **Note:** We will need a new, revamped, up-dated—and expensive—system in the next two or three years.

- Vestry is exploring the cost of replacing the aging Hobart commercial dishwasher in the kitchen. Meanwhile, city inspector has ruled that our current stove venting meets code.
- In both of the second-floor apartments, spots of wet plaster point to likely roof and tuckpointing leaks that will be investigated in spring.

*~ Submitted by Virginia Chappell
Based significantly on the work of our much
missed and appreciated former Junior Warden,
Ron Tunis*

STEWARDSHIP

Stewardship 2017 was an unmitigated success. Our theme, Open Doors + Bold Future, captured the imagination of the parish and left us in a strong financial position for 2018. The team reached its goal on November 19 after a lively seven-week campaign. Our financial goal was \$235,000, and we received \$243,218 as of the closing of the campaign. Our participation goal was 80 families pledging, and we received 81 pledges. Massive thanks to the members of our Stewardship Team: Dan Buckler, Ashley Luthern, Georgia Cain, Meg Edwards, Vince Katter, Cheryl Johnson, and the Rev. Ian Burch.

Special thanks to Paula Wheeler for compiling all the ministry reports and to Virginia Chappell for proofreading the report. Your assistance is much appreciated!