

Rector's Corner

Christmas greetings! I'm pleased to report that Travis and I have moved into our home in Cambridge Woods. I'm sure we'll be comfortable here, and I've already managed to find the Home Depot and the Sendik's. We're looking forward to taking some time to decompress from the emotional last weeks in Chicago so that we come to St. Mark's refreshed and ready for ministry in 2016.

For some spiritual food, I thought I would include a bit of my homily for Advent Lessons and Carols in Chicago a few weeks ago. I tried to think and write about the wonderful and hopeful vision the prophet Isaiah paints for us:

"They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain; for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord," says the prophet Isaiah.

Isaiah dreams about a holy future—a future wherein predators stop hunting and children can play safely at the mouth of snake dens. Isaiah paints a picture of a holy mountain where God dwells and there is no hurt or destruction, because the mountain is too full of the love and the knowledge of God.

These few weeks, I've had a hard time seeing the mountain of God. The stormclouds have been thick. I saw instead refugees displaced, the poor exploited, the vulnerable imprisoned and the powerful colluding. I saw guns and death in story after story. How is the knowledge of God supposed to fill this whole earth in these scary and violent days? Where is the

*prophet's vision?
Where is God's
mountain?*

*Isaiah believed in
a living God for
whom nothing
was impossible.
And in these
harrowing weeks
of wars and
violence, we*

*must, somehow, find that same kind of
courage. The courage to believe that
death is not truth, that spite holds no
power over the children of God. We must
fight despair with intelligent hope and
darkness with the light of Christ.*

*That is the Christian manifesto—to
envision impossible things. It is our
business to reject the established wisdom
that positive change is futile and
wickedness inevitable.*

*We must be brave like the prophets
before us. We must be brave like Isaiah,
who lived in a time when his own city,
Jerusalem, had been destroyed and his
whole nation was in exile. Even in those
terrible circumstances, he had the
audacity to envision impossible things
through a God whose power is peace.*

*And we are just as brave. It is because of
this Christ, this God With Us, that we are
brave enough to imagine, with the
prophet, the impossible.*

Christmas Blessings,

Fr. Burch+



Fr. Burch's
first Sunday
with us will be
January 3,
2016.

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Welcome, Fr. Burch!

- The Second Sunday of Christmas is the anniversary of Fr. Burch's ordination as a priest. Please consider bringing a greeting card of welcome and congratulations.
- The cash plate offering will be deposited to the Rector's Discretionary Fund.



Epiphany Dinner

January 9

6 p.m.

Epiphany Dinner and Concert

Please plan to attend St. Mark's first big social event of the year, the Epiphany Dinner. Come meet and chat with our new rector, Father Ian Burch, and his husband, Travis Trott. The event will feature a fabulous dinner (as always), the selection of the Epiphany King and Queen, and a talent show spotlighting our child and adult musical artists. A signup sheet is posted in the Guild Hall where you can, please, indicate what side dish, and how many people you will bring. The church will provide two main course dishes (meat and vegetarian), plus juice, soda, wine, and coffee. The cost will be \$5 per person with a family maximum of \$15. Invite your neighbors—this evening is a great way to get to know St. Mark's.

All artists should speak to Steve Wolff to arrange participation in the concert. The dinner and concert were a great hit last year and promise to be at least as much fun this time around.



Annual Meeting—January 31

Please mark your calendars for the St. Mark's 2016 Annual Meeting, which will follow the 9:30 a.m. service on Sunday, Jan. 31. This important meeting in the life of our parish will include a look back at our church community in 2015, election of wardens and vestry members, presentation of the 2016 budget, and plans for growing St. Mark's programs and deepening our life together in the coming year. If you have any 2015 pictures to share for the slide show, please send them to stmarks_mke@sbcglobal.net.

The nominations committee is in the process of recruiting candidates for Vestry members. Nominee biographies will be distributed at Sunday morning services and via parish email prior to the Annual Meeting.

Ministry Leaders: Please submit your annual reports to Paula Wheeler no later than Jan. 4, 2016. Thank you!

Deacon's Corner

Although we are all flawed creatures, we are also splendidly endowed. We are divided within ourselves, both fearfully and wonderfully made. We do sin, but we also have the capacity to recognize sin, to feel ashamed of sin, and to overcome sin. We are both weak and strong, bound and free, blind and far-seeing. We thus have the capacity to struggle with ourselves. There is something heroic about a person in struggle with herself.

David Brooks, *The Road To Character*,
Random House, 2015, p. 262

In this wonderful book, David Brooks lays down a critique and some solutions for the “human nature” or “moral ecology” of today’s people. It started me thinking about the coming year and how we as Christians might set out to be better people and give more to our society, using our own unique gifts and strengths.

Most New Year resolutions tend to revolve around ourselves. How to make ourselves better, whether it be thinner, smarter, more successful financially, making better grades, exercising more, reading more, or eating organic. This is not surprising to me since most of what the culture tells us is that we should strive to be the best little perfect person that surely lies deep inside us. We are more or less autonomous and, if we try hard enough and the fates smile, we will surely triumph!

But most of us, I feel, in our hearts know that we are not autonomous, we are not little perfect persons just waiting to be unleashed. We have both goodness and badness. Theologically we might say there is a light and a dark side to our nature and that is why we need the Grace of God so desperately. And we need a community of believers to support and challenge us.

So I have decided for myself this year a new kind of New Year’s resolution. I am going to wage inner war on one of my self-perceived faults, part of my dark side. I am going to reflect and pray on a way to remediate this fault (notice I didn’t say

destroy it) through some concrete actions. I am going to apply what discipline I can to try to keep this fault at bay. With God’s help, I’m hoping to do the best I can with this thorny fault.



I am also going to call on my light side to help in this battle. We know in our hearts how we fail, but do we also know what strengths we have that we can put to work? Some of us have great gifts of intelligence, self-discipline, creativity, joyfulness, empathy, loyalty, faith, humility and integrity. Let these work for us as we work towards ameliorating our faults.

I believe that the church calls us to find balance in our lives. It tells us to live a good life and to seek justice and the common good. We need to be in tune with the outer and inner reality of our lives.

I want to start out the New Year on a journey to find this balance. Want to join me?

Blessings in the New Year,
Michelle



Christmas Pageant 2015



Thanks to all the contributors
for a wonderful Christmas
Pageant!



2016 Stewardship Campaign

On Sunday, November 22, we blessed those pledges received so far with these words:

“The pledges which we make are but tokens of the awesome gifts that have been given to us, and they are offered in thanksgiving for all we have received, for all we have been inspired to be, for all we are challenged to become, in this place.”

But we are far from over with this year’s Pledge Campaign. As of December 30, we are at 73% of our pledge goal of \$240,000. It is never too late to get your pledge in.

Why pledge? Yes, the money matters. We have bills that need to be paid just to keep our doors open to our community. Far more importantly, your pledge, no matter how large or small, is your commitment to God and to yourself to give back to God that which He has given to you in abundance. It’s that simple. And you will feel great for having pledged.

~John Cain, Stewardship Chair

Women's Book Group

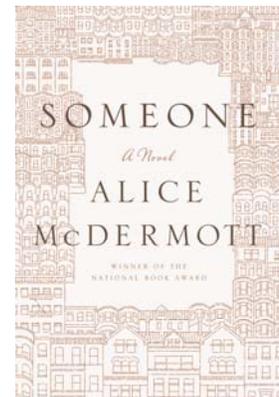
The Women's Book Group will be meeting on Monday, January 18 at 7 p.m. at the home of Jayne Heffron. The book for discussion this month is *Someone* by Alice McDermott. If you need directions to Jayne's home, please call the church office.

The list of books for 2016 looks very exciting, so please come join us. Books can be purchased at Boswell for a ten percent discount. All women of the church are invited. Guests are also very welcome.

January 18

Someone by Alice McDermott
Location: Jayne Heffron's home
Recommended by Jackie Adams

Publishers Weekly—In this deceptively simple tour de force, McDermott lays bare the keenly observed life of Marie Commeford, an ordinary woman whose compromised eyesight makes her both figuratively and literally unable to see the world for what it is. When we meet her on the steps of her Brooklyn townhouse, she's a bespectacled seven-year-old waiting for her father; McDermott then leaps ahead, when Marie, pregnant with her first child, recalls collapsing at a deli counter and the narrative plunges us into a world where death is literally just around the corner, upending the safety and comfort of her neighborhood. We follow Marie through the milestones of her life, shadowed by her elder brother, Gabe, who mysteriously leaves the priesthood for which everyone thought he was destined. The story of Marie's life unfolds in a nonlinear fashion: McDermott describes the loss of Marie's father, her first experience with intimacy, her first job (in a funeral parlor of all places), her marriage, the birth of a child. We come to feel for this unremarkable woman, whose vulnerability makes her all the more winning—and makes her worthy of our attention. And that's why McDermott, a three-time Pulitzer nominee, is such an exceptional writer: in her hands, an uncomplicated life becomes singularly fascinating, revealing the heart of a woman whose defeats make us ache and whose triumphs we cheer. Marie's vision (and ours) eventually clears, and she comes to understand that what she so often failed to see lay right in front of her eyes.



February 29

The Heart of a Woman by Maya Angelou
Location: Janet Martin's home
Recommended by Janet Martin

April 11

My Brilliant Friend by Elena Ferrante
Location: Carolyn Davies's home
Recommended by Jayne Heffron

May 25

Just Mercy by Bryan Stevenson
Location: Brooke Frizzell's home
Recommended by Brooke Frizzell and Marsha Kostus

June 27

The Storied Life of A.J. Fikry by Gabrielle Zevin
Location: Kathy Katter's home
Recommended by Carolyn Davies and Joan Nason

August 8

Elizabeth and Hazel by David Margolick
Location: Michelle Mooney's home
Recommended by Stephanie Dudek

September 19

The Book Thief by Markus Zusak
Location: Ellie Moseley's home
Recommended by Ellie Moseley

October 31

The Little Paris Bookshop by Nina George
Location: Stephanie Dudek's home
Recommended by Michelle Mooney

November 11

Book Selection Night
Location: Judy Young's home

December 12

Our Souls at Night by Kent Haruf
Location: Leslie McCormick's home
Recommended by Carolyn Davies

Celebrations

Birthdays

1/3 Stephanie Dudek
1/12 Nicole Newcomb
1/18 Sulun Turkseven
1/19 Fr. Ian Burch
1/21 Sophia Diliberti
1/24 Randy Miller
1/30 Rebecca Martinie
1/31 Harry Moseley
1/31 Jennifer West



Anniversaries

1/1 Robert & Kris Kreuziger



Flower Chart Available for Sign-Ups

The 2016 Flower Chart is available in its usual location in the Guild Hall on the board to the left of the Library doors. A couple of Sundays are available in January and early February before Lent begins on Wednesday, February 10. During Lent Sundays will be blocked out as there are no flowers during Lent. Flower opportunities will resume with palm arrangements for Palm Sunday, March 29, and then, Easter. If you would like to sponsor flowers for a certain Sunday, just sign your name on the chart. The Flower Guild will send you a reminder a bit before your date. As usual, the donation for flowers is \$50, which is fully tax-deductible and will appear on your quarterly contributions statement.

Coffee Hour



Want to get your New Year off to a great start? Have I got the resolution for you! Put hosting a Coffee Hour anytime this year on your list. You can sign up now for a date and then brag that you have crossed your first resolution off your list! Of course, making coffee that Sunday would be lovely, too.

In all seriousness, this hospitality to parishioners, newcomers, and guests is an important part of St. Mark's "persona." If you haven't signed up recently (or at all), please consider doing so. Something worrying you about the set-up? I will be glad to answer questions, find you a partner, or work with you to smooth the way.

Thank you for helping make St. Mark's a welcoming place.

~Jane Shero

Outreach Ministry Report

Your Outreach Ministry Committee met in November and disbursed a total of \$11,750 to ten local organizations and three agencies that address human needs in the wider world. Our support to organizations that are local includes Common Ground, East Side Senior Services, The Gathering, Guest House, Hunger Task Force, Meta House, Our Next Generation, Pathfinders, Sojourner Family Peace Center, and University Christian Ministries. The international agencies that we have contributed to are Haiti Project (sponsored by the Milwaukee Diocese), Episcopal Relief and Development (Syrian refugee assistance), and Central Asia Institute. Also, we acknowledge that many in our parish (youth and adult) provide additional financial support not enumerated above and volunteer time to many agencies that are not recognized here.

The Outreach Ministry Committee believes strongly that those agencies that are supported financially need also to have St. Mark's parishioner engagement. For example, many parishioners have served at The Gathering, are involved in Common Ground initiatives, and actively deliver services for clients of East Side Senior Services. We encourage all parishioners to join us in serving our neighbors in need by volunteering and helping others, perhaps for one or more of those agencies listed.

The parish's operating budget includes no funds for Outreach. We are extremely grateful for the countless hours spent raising all the funds that are given out. Beginning with the Flower Sale in May, led by Patty Buckley, continuing with the Corn Roast during the Downer Ave. Bike Race, and concluding with our month-long Pumpkin Sale, led by Ron Zingler and staffed by 50 volunteers, nearly \$11,000 was raised this year.

In all that we do, we are guided by the Outreach Ministry Mission Statement, a portion of which is:

St. Mark's seeks to reach beyond its walls to bear active witness to the peace and promise of Jesus Christ. St. Mark's works to transform lives and bring healing to the community and the world by focusing on the following issues:

- *Fighting poverty, racism and economic inequality;*
- *Providing food and shelter to people in need;*
- *Promoting education, jobs, and affordable health care for poor and marginalized people; and*
- *Caring for elderly people, people who have mental illnesses or addictions, and people who are victims of violence.*

~Harry Moseley

Riverwest Pantry Wish List Items



- Low or no-sugar whole grain cereal
- Canned fruits in 100% juice
- Shampoo or deodorant
- Pasta

We also need plastic bags. As always, thanks to all contributors to our community at Riverwest Food Pantry!

Music Corner

At this time of year because of the many important liturgical and parish community events (Lessons and Carols, the Christmas Pageant, the Christmas services, and the Epiphany Dinner Talent Show), expressions of my gratitude for all music participants are more than appropriate.

Thanks, first of all, to the choir for their beautiful singing at the annual Advent Lessons and Carols at St. John's. And thanks to those who joined us for the occasion: Kris Devitt, Ginny Schrag, and Alex Cain. This service has become a much appreciated event for many of the members of St. John's on the Lake, for the St. Mark's Choir, and for the attendees from St. Mark's. Thanks to the choir for their time and hard work.

Also thanks to all the actors, readers, singers, and musical performers at the Christmas pageant. A special thanks to the music soloists: Marie and Andrew Arndorfer, Sammie and Sophie Diliberti, Cat and Marcus Lacy, and Daniel O'Hear. Above all, sincere thanks to Jane Lacy for her writing of the script and her general planning and organization of the event.



Thanks to our Artists in Residence Todd Domenget and Mike Keegan for their offerings of music during these days. And thanks to Kris Tunis, Melanie Lomblo, and Katie Llanas for joining the choir for the Christmas Eve.

At the time of this writing, the Epiphany Dinner Talent show has not yet occurred and all participants (I'm sure) haven't notified me yet. However, thanks in advance to Mathilde and Leo Prosen-Oldani, Sue and Steve Rohde, Samara Eitel, Anil Ras and Santha Ravi and their Telegu community (singing songs in Telegu), to Todd Domenget, to Sara Bitner and Ginny Schrag (a curious vocal duet), to Ron Tunis (crooning in his inimitable style), to Marie Arndorfer and Sophie Diliberti (a song from their first professional theatre engagement—just finishing its run!), and to Daniel O'Hear and Andrew Arndorfer (with Todd Domenget, making triple bassists). These are those who have made commitments and other semi-serious noises about jumping in, but there may be others! See me, call me, email me, text me; let Sara know. Stay tuned and be sure you attend the Epiphany dinner on January 9, 2016. You won't want to miss this extraordinary display of talent (and tomfoolery)! Bring your neighbor or a friend. Let the world know how fun we are: that we're not just the "Light of the Eastside." (Father Tom Niehaus recently anointed us with that accolade in a sermon. If you had to miss church that Sunday...seriously...he did: he called St. Mark's "The Light of the Eastside!")

Lastly, I want to extend my personal admiration for and appreciation of the work that you have all done during the last year and a half of interim. Thanks to Frank and Virginia, whose contribution of leadership has been enormous, and thanks to all the ministry and program leaders. From my vantage point, it seems we haven't missed a beat. And all by the grace of God! But now we have a pastor! We are all extremely excited and we welcome Ian Burch to St. Mark's with open and loving hearts.

All glory to the living God.

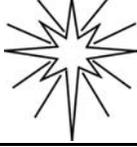
Steve

A Visit from St. Nick and Wrapping Presents for Eastside Senior Services



On December 6, the Church School youth and parents wrapped nearly 100 Christmas gifts for Eastside Senior Services. Thank you for all your donations!

January 2016 Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 8 PM AA	2 10 AM–12 PM Thrift Shop
3 9:30 AM Holy Eucharist No Sunday School/Sunday Exploration	4 6 PM SWEATnDANCE 6 PM Adult Formation 6:30 PM UWM: Healthy Foods	5 7:30 AM Yoga 8:15 AM Breakfast Fellowship @ Hollander 10 AM–12 PM Thrift Shop 12:30 PM EfM/St. John's 3:30 PM Yoga	6 4 PM Bible Study 7 PM Choir 7 PM Common Ground DIG Session 	7 7:30 AM Yoga 3:30 PM Yoga 8 PM AA	8 8 PM AA	9 10 AM–12 PM Thrift Shop 6 PM Epiphany Dinner and Concert
10 9:30 AM Holy Eucharist 9:30 AM Church School Chapel 11 AM Common Ground DIG Session	11 6 PM SWEATnDANCE 6:15 PM Finance Committee	12 7:30 AM Yoga 10 AM–12 PM Thrift Shop 12:30 PM EfM/St. John's 3:30 PM Yoga	13 4 PM Bible Study 7 PM Choir	14 7:30 AM Yoga 3:30 PM Yoga 8 PM AA	15 8 PM AA	16 9 AM Men's Fellowship Breakfast 10 AM Quilting Circle 10 AM–12 PM Thrift Shop
17 9:30 AM Holy Eucharist 9:30 AM Sunday School/Sunday Exploration	18 6 PM SWEATnDANCE 7 PM Women's Book Group	19 7:30 AM Yoga 8:15 AM Breakfast Fellowship @ Hollander 10 AM–12 PM Thrift Shop 12:30 PM EfM/St. John's 3:30 PM Yoga 6 PM Theology Pub 6:30 PM Vestry	20 4 PM Bible Study 7 PM Choir	21 7:30 AM Yoga 3:30 PM Yoga 8 PM AA	22 8 PM AA	23 10 AM–12 PM Thrift Shop
24 9:30 AM Holy Eucharist 9:30 AM Sunday School/Sunday Exploration	25 6 PM SWEATnDANCE 6:30 PM UWM: Healthy Foods	26 7:30 AM Yoga 10 AM–12 PM Thrift Shop 12:30 PM EfM/St. John's 3:30 PM Yoga	27 3:30 PM UWM: International Cuisines 4 PM Bible Study 7 PM Choir	28 7:30 AM Yoga 3:30 PM Yoga 8 PM AA 	29 8 PM AA	30 10 AM–12 PM Thrift Shop
31 9:30 AM Holy Eucharist 9:30 AM Sunday School/Sunday Exploration						

Common Ground at St. Mark's

Common Ground at St. Mark's will be holding two sessions during early January for both our parish and the wider community, to give citizens a chance to voice what they feel are important projects in which the City of Milwaukee should be investing to improve its neighborhoods.

CG learned many lessons in the campaign to get more transparency and justice in the city financing of a new arena for the Milwaukee Bucks. One of the important lessons is that many important decisions made in our city are often carried out by a few corporations, locally powerful private citizens, and their allies on the Milwaukee Common Council. There was very little transparency, and very little open policy being shaped.

Common Ground is opposed to such disenfranchising of its citizens. But it also recognizes that we will never win without getting strong citizen power to stand up to the moneyed power brokers of this city. We believe in democracy. We believe that those who are most affected by public policies should have a strong place at the table when these policies are crafted—not the *only* place, but a strong place. We want laws and policies that reflect The Common Good, as much as possible.

To begin this campaign for democracy and the funding and planning of public policy in our neighborhoods, CG member groups are planning Discovery in Groups (DIG) sessions, all across the city of Milwaukee. Hundreds of these sessions are being planned for the month of January. The goal of these sessions is to get citizen input on how to invest city capital to improve the neighborhoods across all the city. The question for discussion at all the DIGs will be, "How should \$100 million in capital improvements be spent in the next few



years to help our neighborhoods survive and flourish?"

CG will be taking all the information from hundreds of DIG sessions and prioritizing it into a CG Platform. We will then be asking candidates who are running for office in Milwaukee to sign on to the platform. Before the spring elections, we will be going out to the voters to educate them as to what our platform is and which office seekers have endorsed it.

Our DIG sessions will be held on Wednesday, January 6, from 7–8:30 p.m., in the Guild Hall. This session is geared for the wider community. Another session will be held primarily for parish members who are City of Milwaukee residents on Sunday, January 10, after church from 11–12:30 p.m. in the Library.

We hope that you will take the opportunity to be a part of these sessions and experience the beginning of citizens becoming better educated about our issues and coming together to build power to fight for The Common Good.

~Michelle Mooney

St. Mark's Episcopal Church
2618 N. Hackett Ave.
Milwaukee, WI 53211



St. Mark's
Episcopal Church

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Milwaukee, WI 53211
414-962-0500
stmarksmilwaukee.org
stmarks_mke@sbcglobal.net

Sunday Service 9:30 a.m.

Childcare is provided from 9:00–11:00 a.m.

Office Hours

Mon., Tues., Fri. 9:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.
Wednesday 9:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.

Deacon Michelle's Office Hours:

Monday 1:00–3:00 p.m.
Thursday 10:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.

Eastside Senior Services: 414-961-0661

The Rt. Rev. Steven A. Miller, Bishop of Milwaukee

The Rev. Ian C. Burch, Rector

The Rev. Michelle P. Mooney, Deacon

The Rev. John Hickey, Priest Associate

Stephen Wolff, Director of Music

Frank West, Senior Warden

Virginia Chappell, Junior Warden

Barbara Costanzo, Treasurer

Sara Bitner, Parish Administrator

Bill Davies, Bookkeeper

Jyoti Bratz, Housekeeper

Skrauss, Sexton

Vestry Members

Nikki Domenget	Barbara Costanzo	Jackie Adams
Richard Runkel	Brad Kirschner	Marian Byers
Jane Shero	Susan Rohde	Paula Wheeler

**Transforming lives through meaningful
relationships with God in Jesus Christ**