

Annual Report 2019

Rector's Report

January 18, 2020

Friends in Christ,

At last year's Annual Meeting, I remarked that after three full years of doing ministry together, I had the sense that we were done with our transition time. We'd shored up our finances, attendance, programs, buildings, lay leadership, and staff. And with herculean efforts by this whole parish, we'd found a way to turn the ship away from a slow but steady decline and to instead sail in the direction of growth, abundance, and outward mission. There was just one catch: while I had helped a previous parish through a crisis, I had never had the honor of helping a parish navigate a season of growth and limitless potential. My "tricks" for helping to fix what was ailing at St. Mark's had run out, and as of January 2019, it seemed to me, the real, deep, and relational work of organization building needed to start. I remember saying something like, "I'm not quite sure what we do next, but I imagine it will have to come from prayer and conversation."

Well, here we are a year later, and I think I may have been on to something. This year has seen a rise in new, varied, and talented lay leadership. It has also seen difficult conversations related to our future—our relationship to our buildings and grounds, blending the spirit of "old St. Mark's" with the vitality and energy of relatively new members, beginning the long and deep process of a capital campaign discernment, and trying to imagine what decisions NOW are required for the resourcing of God's mission in five, ten, and fifty years. This kind of work is necessarily slower and messier than some of the quick fixes: ordering a new boiler, streamlining our communications, hiring talented staff, and cleaning closets.

I've learned a few things this year about accompanying you through our abundance. I've learned that we have a building vs. mission problem. We want to throw open our doors for radical welcome, but our physical plant can barely accommodate members and friends with any kind of mobility issue (which, bear in mind, will be all of us at some point). We want a place where like-minded missional organizations can meet for support and strategy for the healing of our city, but our basement is basically unusable, and our upstairs spaces are not ADA compliant. We want to be a community of impact for the city, and we are sitting on green space that is used for 90 minutes a week, twelve weeks a year for worship, by a few neighborhood gardeners, and as an unlicensed dog park. None of that helps our mission or our growth. Our needs and our space are not matching up, and I do not see this changing unless we decide to change it. How we do this is an open question, but this year of capital campaign discernment

has convinced me that what we are called to be in this city is being significantly hampered by our space.

I also learned, or was reminded, that we have a cracker jack staff. The wardens, Personnel Committee, and I worked to make sure (along with support from the Finance Committee), that our staff compensation packets were reviewed and that staff who were in need of raises received them with our gratitude for their exemplary work this year. Our staff is now paid at the higher end of the scale for the work they do, and where appropriate, we have funded continuing education opportunities. This will support their development as people and as experts in their fields as well as maintain high job satisfaction and retention. If you ever fret over the cost of a raise, please consider the cost of replacement and retraining. I believe that you design your staff for the church you hope to be, and we are fortunate indeed to have this group of people working hard for us.

One staff development that will need attention is the likely seminary attendance of Mr. Matt Phillips in the fall of 2021. Matt oversees formation from the nursery through young adulthood in our parish. Those are big shoes to fill. This gives us 18 or so months to figure out how to replace the irreplaceable Matt. I've let the Vestry know that I would recommend finding a young priest with a similar skill set to Matt's who can continue to help us grow into a dynamic home for families and college students. I've also let the Vestry know that providing housing for a prospective priest is the wisest way to shepherd your cash flow. Our church doesn't own a rectory, but I believe that looking into church owned housing would be a wise way to plan for a future associate priest. If you have a condo lying around that you want to donate to the church, talk to me or Kathy.

I've learned that there is an upper limit to what I can handle organizationally, and I believe I flirted with this limit a few times this year. If we continue to burn as hot as we have — and I don't see our work slowing down anytime soon — we will need to continually evaluate both the role of lay leadership and the role of staff/additional clergy in our lives. I know that there are sometimes worries about professionalizing ministry, and I do hear those concerns. At the same time, in our insanely busy and fast-paced world, the amount of discretionary time for people — from cradle to grave — has dwindled. For some people, the choice might be to chair a committee or to make sure they're spending time with kids or a partner before bedtime. I fully appreciate that the church sometimes gets put in second place. We will need to keep a vigilant eye on our clergy and staff for signs of over-work or burn out. I don't believe we're in a dangerous place at the moment, but I am aware that the pace of the last year was pretty fast.

I suppose the last thing I've learned this year is that the oldies are still the goodies: focus on radical welcome to the visitor, vibrant worship and music, children and adult formation, and opportunities for outreach to the community — bake it with some good humor and smart mid-range planning — and you'll have a feast of growth and abundance. My focus hasn't changed much in four years, and I think we're doing pretty well. I'll add some additional thoughts about specific events or ministries below under bold headings.

Holy Orders

St. Mark's is currently the leading parish the diocese in terms of people seeking discernment for Holy Orders. At the moment, we have two Aspirants (those discerning at the parish level): Nathan Self and Crawford Wiley; one Postulant (those discerning at the diocesan level and awaiting their education): Matt Phillips; one Candidate (those awaiting ordination having completed their education): Kirsten Guidero. I believe that vibrant parishes engender vocations, and as we have grown, so has the sense of call for many of our people. While the Episcopal church is set up with a strong sense of discernment for priests and deacons, we are less skilled at discernment for lay ministries, which is silly since many, many more people act out their lay vocations than do priests and deacons. Perhaps this next generation at St. Mark's can help us figure out a better way to support lay people in their ministries.

Finances

See the Treasurer's Report, but I would just echo his observation that our building is an outsized drain on our resources and will continue to be unless we figure out something clever to do about it. Imagine taking the capital and repair budgets and putting them toward staff, or church planting, or supporting local non-profits.

Bishop Search

I have been asked to co-chair the search for the next Episcopal bishop of Milwaukee, and I have accepted. This means that for the next 18 months, I will have significant duties outside of these walls, and it will additionally mean that you may notice some response times to increase and some availability to decrease. Since we are in a season of raising up addition, strong lay leaders, perhaps this is a great time to practice. I believe our diocese, and St. Mark's, could greatly benefit from new leadership in the bishop's chair, and it seems to me that one way to help make this happen is to bring some of the life and hope of our parish to a national search. I would be fibbing if I didn't also say that I do find professional challenges exciting, and so there are ways in which this task will let me exercise some diocesan leadership that I don't often get to exercise.

Growing Smaller

There's an adage in church growth literature that says "as you grow larger; you must grow smaller." Evangelicals are really good at this — making sure that members belong to some kind of small group that meets outside of a Sunday. It goes a bit against the Episcopal grain to be assigned to a small group, but I'd like to spend this year working to create more opportunities for people to connect in small groups. Perhaps this is social — such as monthly potlucks or foyer groups. Perhaps this is devotional — prayer or wellness circle groups. Or perhaps this is affinity based — bible studies, age-peer groups, hiking clubs etc. I don't know what this looks like, but

I'd like someone to help me. Are you out there with experience getting people organized into small groups? If you're willing to help me, I'd like to learn, AND I'll take you to lunch.

Three Years

The Vestry and I have agreed to a three year contract beginning January 1, 2019. This, I believe, will give the church a chance to relax into these next 36 months knowing that there will be leadership stability, and it will give me a chance to grow deeper in my ministry with you as we work through years 5, 6, and 7 together. I would like to say that I am very grateful for the Vestry's willingness to be generous and forward-thinking. Often, churches don't think strategically about their priests, which can cause priests to begin seeking greener pastures. I feel like the senior leadership here understands the vision I try to cast, and they show me in concrete ways that my work is appreciated. So, thank you, and here's to the next three years!

Respectfully submitted,

Fr. Ian Burch, Rector

Senior Warden's Report

Dear People of St. Mark's,

For the past year, we have faithfully gathered here at St. Mark's to worship God and form a community that lives out our faith.

I've always appreciated the wordplay we use when we say we are "practicing Episcopalians." On the one hand, there is a sense of affirmation of the tradition and continuity of our church. On the other hand, we really are just "practicing." There's an acknowledgment that we don't always get it right, but we keep trying. I think that's at the heart of any healthy life of faith.

This past year at St. Mark's has been a good one. As your senior warden, I would say it's been a healthy one. We have been able to pray and work together as we welcome new members and sustain our growth. We've said farewell to a few members, too, for reasons that vary. In my experience, these comings and goings within our community are signs of health.

We benefit from a caring and engaging rector and staff. Our vestry serves as an able guiding body. But, most importantly, I think, we have exceptionally kind and committed church members who show up and help when help is needed. To use a sports metaphor, our bench is deep. People step up when asked.

There are many wonderful ministries at St. Mark's, which you can see from the range of reports presented today. I urge you to look those reports over, and if there's a ministry you'd like to be a

part of, please let us know. We are open to new initiatives, too. If there is a ministry or program you'd like to establish or develop, please let me or Ian know. Similarly, if you want to take a step back from something, feel free to do so. I know it may be odd for me to encourage that, but, really, our bench IS deep, and we can trust that either someone else will see the opportunity, or that task may need to be reconsidered.

I've said we are healthy, and as a faith community, that is true. We are "practicing" in both senses — in that we sustain traditions and we are open to change.

That's what I want to turn our attention to: Change. We undertook a task of discernment this past year when we formed the Capital Campaign Task Force. We engaged in deep reflection about the nature of St. Mark's. We did not immediately leap into fund-raising mode, as one might have expected. Instead, we have been very deliberately taking our time. We are clear about some things: St. Mark's exists in a changing world, and it serves as a place of healing.

We are now discerning what we ought to do, what we ought to invest in, in terms of program and in terms of our physical plant, to sustain our community. We have many resources, and we are taking time to assure that they are well-used.

We have concerns about the state of our facility, its accessibility, as well as its safety. Big changes may need to take place. Small fixes may no longer be prudent. I want to say plainly that this will likely be very expensive, and we want to create something that sustains our community for fifty to one hundred years hence. It is no easy fix. When we have a clear set of options, something we hope to have this Spring, we will present our options to you and to the vestry for your input. I ask that you keep our leadership in your prayers as we continue this work. It takes time.

Meanwhile, I am thankful for our church community. We are a healthy and vibrant parish and I thank all of you for continuing to "practice," alongside one another. May we do God's work in this world.

Respectfully Submitted,
Katherine Katter
Senior Warden

Formation Programs

Adult Formation

With few exceptions, our Sunday morning adult education program has met each Sunday of the year. With attendance ranging from 8-25 adults each week, the program is varied, engaging, and supports adults in their lives in faith. In future years, we will benefit from more varied teachers, more female voices and voices from people of color. In addition to our Sunday

programs, we fielded a meaningful Lenten series, inviting the entire parish to read a wonderful book by Sara Miles. We gathered over soup, discussion, and compline each Thursday of Lent with around 25 people in attendance. We also posted questions online so that those who were unable to attend the weeknight events could follow along with the curriculum. In the summer, we hired the Rev. Dr. Stephen Peay to teach a five part series “spirituality in everyday life.” It was attended by 15-25 people each week, and though the series did cost around \$1,000, we think it was well worth the outlay to continue supporting our people in their lives of faith. The Rector has taught 3 sections of Episcopal 101, with attendance ranging from 3 to 13. We foresee continuing all these programs for 2020, in addition to our brand new lectio divina group, facilitated by Judith Miller. We will continue to look for ways to provide opportunities for growing deeper in faith for the people of St. Mark’s.

Submitted by the Revs. John Hickey and Ian Burch

Bible Study

Bible Study is held in the Library at 4 p.m. on Wednesdays. This group has been meeting for over 10 years, and it requires tea and cookies before any study is done! There is nothing to read at home. It is all done in class.

Please join us and see how it can actually be fun to read scripture.

Submitted by Michelle Mooney

Children’s, Youth, and Campus Ministry

From our Church School classrooms to the campuses of Marquette University and the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, St. Mark’s spent 2019 continuing to serve our young members in the community through formation, worship, and loving service to God and our neighbors.

Children’s Ministry

Our Children’s Ministry had another great year in 2019 due in no small part to our wonderful volunteers. Church School and Bible Story Time were supported by ten volunteers and teachers— including three new volunteers— who welcomed 15 children on Sunday mornings. Outside of the classroom, children were included in the life of the church through activities and events that included Vacation Bible Camp, trick-or-treating, our Solemn/First Communion Class, Advent wreath-making, and our wonderful Christmas Eve pageant directed by Jane Lacy and Susanna Mortara.

In the coming year, we hope to grow our Church School program and corps of teachers while offering even more opportunities for young people in the life of the church. If you would like to learn more about or are interested in volunteering with any of our children's ministries, please reach me at matt@stmarksmilwaukee.org.

Youth Ministry

St. Mark's youth group, RESPOND had a great year in 2019 punctuated by service and growth. Youth in grades 7 through 12 spent the spring serving the community through providing meals for The Guest House of Milwaukee and raised funds through a pie sale benefitting the Milwaukee Rescue Mission. In the fall, our group began reading through the book of Psalms while doubling the frequency of our meetings and welcoming a new member as well. Our group is currently planning two service projects for the spring of 2020.

Campus Ministry

St. Mark's Campus Ministry continued to grow throughout 2019, making connections with new students from both Marquette and UWM. We have continued to serve our community's college students through opportunities for worship, formation, and fellowship. In the spring of 2019, we began offering Dinner Church, our new monthly worship and meal together, which continues to meet on the first Sunday of most months. We saw growth in our partnerships with Dinner Dialogues, an interfaith discussion group for students and young adults as we joined The Corner House (ELCA) in welcoming Hillel Milwaukee to our planning team. Our Director of Campus and Youth Ministries has also continued to serve as one of the Affiliated Ministers for Canterbury Fellowship at Marquette University, leading weekly Evening Prayer services on campus. In the coming year, we plan to continue our worship and prayer services, as well as our formation and discussion opportunities for students. We will offer a six-week Living Compass Wellness Circle for college students during the spring of 2020. We plan to bring a group of students to the Province V Campus Ministry retreat at Techny Towers (IL) in February and we will continue listening for more ways we can better serve our students.

Submitted by Matt Phillips, Director of Campus and Youth Ministries

Liturgical Ministries

Acolytes

As acolytes, members of the Church take an active leadership role during worship in a variety of roles: carrying the Cross or torches, censuring the sanctuary with incense, assisting a thurifer, and serving at the altar.

Our acolyte program carried through 2019 with significant changes. I began leading the acolyte program in the summer after thanking Kyle Potter for his great service to this ministry. Our team

of acolytes has switched our schedule to a monthly rotation. We have begun training youth in the parish to serve as acolytes as well.

In the coming year, we hope to increase both our youth and adult members of the acolyte team. If you are interested in joining us or learning more about this ministry, please reach me at matt@stmarksmilwaukee.org.

Submitted by Matt Phillips, Director of Campus and Youth Ministries

Altar Guild

Have you been greeted at the church entrance by Fr. Burch wearing a gold brocade cape with the lion on the back, wondered if we have gluten free wafers or if there will be enough wine given how many new faces are at church? The Altar Guild is responsible for taking care of these things!

Under the guidance of Fr. Burch, we prepare for our weekly Sunday morning services, Wednesday evening service, seasonal holy days, Advent, Lent and special occasions to include baptisms, weddings and funerals. We prepare the sanctuary and maintain the vestments, linens, vessels and candles as well as the supply of wine and wafers.

We work in teams of two and have the flexibility to meet each person's needs. We usually spend less than one hour each Sunday with preparation and clean up. We enjoy the background music of our organist as we set up and rely on other ministries to make each service go smoothly.

I want to thank Peter Batchelder, Marian Beyers, Jayne Heffron and Jane Shero for their continued support and dedication to the Altar Guild and welcome Nathan Self to our Ministry!

This year we will be assessing our inventory and obtaining several new items to replace our well used gifts from ages past through our Altar Guild budget and gifts from parishioners.

I encourage anyone interested in knowing more about our Altar Guild to talk with me or a member of our group as you explore ways to become involved in the life of St. Mark's or want to try something different.

Submitted by Meg Edwards

Chalice Bearers

We currently have five chalice bearers who assist with the Gospel book during the procession and in administering the chalice during the Eucharist. All five are duly licensed by Bishop Miller. Members are: John Cain, Vince Katter, Sue Rohde, and Ellie Moseley. Nicki Domenget was a chalice bearer for half of 2019 and has left for another parish. With our growing parish, it would

be good to add one to two new members for 2020 and to select a chalice bearer coordinator. If interested in becoming a chalice bearer or in coordinating this ministry, contact Fr. Burch, ian@stmarksmilwaukee.org.

Submitted by Fr. Burch

Eucharistic Visitors

Eucharistic Visitors bring Communion to our shut-ins and others on a special basis. You take a Communion kit and go to the member's home and give communion along with any family or friends that might also want Communion. You serve about once every six weeks. Presently we have Vince Katter, Kelly and Joe Glostott, and Stephanie Dudek serving in this ministry.

If you are interested in serving, contact Michelle Mooney.

Submitted by Michelle Mooney

Flower Guild

In 2019, St. Mark's Flower Guild members arranged flowers and greens for our altar for every Sunday plus the feasts of Easter and Christmas. Easter includes decorating the chapel for the Vigil and for us Christmas includes all sorts of decorations. We restored our custom of having a lighted and decorated Christmas tree in the parish hall in 2019.



Guild members are very pleased to be able to have an account with a floral wholesaler in Milwaukee as of 2019 where some of us have already taken seasonal arranging classes and where all guild members can obtain fresher flowers and a much greater variety from which to choose for arrangements.

We make an effort to follow current trends applicable to a church setting. We have a small library of books on church flower arranging plus general arranging, from British, French and American stylists.

Flower Guild members are: Georgia Cain, Helen Chou, Kathy Katter, Travis Trott, Marie Wolff, Jamie and Ron Zingler and Judy Young. As we have lost two long-time members recently due to moves, we are looking for new members. Anyone interested in joining us should ideally be interested in arranging or love flowers. We have a brief training program during which an interested person works with a current member, selecting and arranging flowers for a Saturday or two before working alone. Please contact Judy Young if interested. We would be grateful.

Submitted by Judy Young

Lay Readers

At Sunday Eucharist and other special occasions, lay readers read the day's designated Old and New Testament lessons. Our ministry is to clearly and articulately present these texts to the congregation. By virtue of these readings, the laity joins the ordained clergy in bringing the liturgy to life.

The following parishioners participated as lay readers in 2019:

Lucy Cooper, Tom Davies, John Dudek, Bill Florescu, Jayne Heffron, Kathy Katter, Vince Katter Susan LaBudde, Jane Lacy, Tom Lacy, Judith Miller, Kathryn Mlsna, Daniel O'Hear, Michael O'Hear, Kyle Potter, Susan Rohde, Steve Rohde, Travis Trott, Graicey Van Spankeren, Genevieve Vassell, Jamie Zingler

Submitted by Kathy Katter

Music – Steve Wolff

1. The Choir

- a. Joy! Our St. Mark's Choir has become, indeed, a respectable choir! The beautiful tonal foundation of in-tune and blended singing (the most difficult component of all of choral singing to achieve and maintain) has now been well-established since the last part of 2018; and the further musical development in other areas, which I suggested and hoped would occur — suggested in last year's annual report — has now been, since then, progressing propitiously, according to plan. A first and significantly noticeable area of growth in 2019 has been growth in subtlety of solo choral performance, in expressivity, in communication of spiritual and religious meaning; in a heightening of the choir's capacity for expression of musical prayer. Of course, please notice, when the choir "performs" its anthems and solo music — most often in the conventional liturgical position at the offertory, after the Offertory Sentence — the choir is not "performing" in a typical musical or theatrical or choreographic sense. It is not performing in the way that the Milwaukee Symphony performs, or the Milwaukee Ballet, or a community chorus, or a rock or jazz band. In the church, the choir, when it sings alone, offers to God its prayer in music and text — on behalf of, as representative of, as spokesperson for — the congregation. The solo choir in the liturgy has a specifically religious, communal purpose which embraces, on the one hand, a presentation of gifts, from the choir and members of the choir, for the sake of the congregation, for the sake of communal, spiritual edification and illumination; but at the same time, on the other hand, this purpose embraces the presentation of

the gifts of musical talent and beauty for the glory of God in the congregation's stead. All of us in the choir at St. Mark's, then, as it may be possible, in the church service, perform an offering — humble and humanly meager though it, nevertheless, may be — an offering to God of a gift of beauty by which the hearts of the congregation, perhaps, may be even musically turned toward and opened to the Grace of God — which offering occurs fittingly and providentially, at the time of the Offertory, when the gifts of the people are collected...at the same time of the Eucharistic Liturgy when all of our gifts — our treasure, our worship, our music, our poetry, the bread and wine — not least, ourselves — (even the smoke of incense on high holy days, rising as offering) — all these gifts to God are presented at this moment of collection and presentation in the Eucharistic Feast during which Jesus Himself offers Himself as sacrifice — for us — He calls us Friends— in the celebration of His Passion, Death, and Resurrection.

It might be important to observe that the word “perform” does not (and ought not) connote, in respect to music in the church, as intimated above, any attempt to vaingloriously earn praise or admiration, to unduly call attention to performer or performance. The word is used, rather, in its Latin etymological sense and means “to form, to make” (Latin *formo*) through and throughly (Latin *per*),” i.e., to accomplish entirely. The word also has come to mean, since Greek and Roman antiquity, to do one's duty, to keep one's promise or word; and also to carry a part upon a stage. And in that last sense, we who worship are all performers: the congregation, the presiders and deacons and homilists, the readers, the choirs, the ushers and acolytes, the instrumentalists, the organists and pianists...we all perform our roles in the liturgy, we carry our parts in the Order of Service; while during the week we perform our parts on the stage of active Christian life in the world. We perform our Christian duties, therefore, as best we might not only in Liturgy but as well in Life: and that is to say, we yearn and we strive to keep our baptismal promises.

- b. A second area of the growth of the choir is an expansion of repertory. We have begun an exploration of the Renaissance polyphonic repertory (e.g., Byrd, Tallis, Palestrina, Tye, Viadana), the body of cathedral anthems (Stanford, Harris, Wood, Howells); the music of modern composers (Dawson, Kenreich, Archer, Schalk, Rutter); and the music of other lands, churches, and languages (Kenreich and Schalk, above — Lutherans; also Andrew Muriuki is working to obtain an a cappella piece in Swahili from his native Kenya, a work not available in the US.)
- c. Our section leaders (hereafter SLs), who have lent stability and surety to our choir, have continued to provide beautiful cantoring and solo and part music of the highest quality. One of our choir members who had been originally a little skeptical about the Section Leader Program confided in me some surprise that they were all so helpful and knowledgeable and fun and happy, without trace of pride or arrogance, no elitists or prima-donnas: just great musicians and lovely people. Further, there is that truism: If you want to get better (to advance), hang

out with people who are better (more advanced) than you are. Because of our Section Leaders, therefore, all of us are stronger singers and better musicians. You may have noticed, accordingly, that many members of the choir (not just the SLs) are now quite confident in acting as cantors alone or as a duo on a Sunday morning, or singing in a smaller ensemble. In short the Section Leader Program, Ian's brainchild, has been an unqualified success. Heartfelt thanks to our SLs. And of course, thanks to the anonymous benefactor who has made this possible.

- d. We welcomed the following new singers this year: Ginny McCullough, alto (in observance of full disclosure, one of my sisters); Ian McCullough, tenor (in observance of full disclosure again, Ginny McCullough's son, thus one of my nephews), Monica Murphy, alto; Xai, soprano (SL); Austin Bare, tenor (SL); Sam Mullooly, bass (SL); and Mariah Taylor, soprano (SL).
 - e. At this time the choir has fifteen 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; and joining the choir at St. Mark's has always included some free voice lessons from me. I invite you to consider joining us soon. The choir is, in fact, a smaller community within the larger St. Mark's community; and although we are associated by our work in music and liturgy, our true foundation is, of course, our shared worship and prayer in the St. Mark's community, joined to our weekly coming together on Wednesday evening in the joy of Christian fellowship and amity, in the joy of creating through music the beauty of holiness: won't you please consider becoming a part of our group? (We spend a lot of time laughing—it's one of the most important things we do!)
2. The Organ. The repaired organ console (in summer of 2016) continues to be a joy to play. Just to remind us again of the importance of the repair: the new console has allowed for the necessary rapid combination changes (making complicated changes of sound easily) which are required in the playing of a liturgical service (such as is the Episcopal service). The organ is being kept in good tune and in good repair.
 3. The Artist in Residence Program (now in its sixteenth year) at this time has five artists (AIRs) who play at Sunday Eucharists and at other services. It works like this in some cases...if they agree to become AIRs and to play at St. Mark's, I agree to accompany them, practicing with them and playing their repertory and helping them perfect it in concerts outside of St. Mark's. I require their repertory consist mostly of music suitable for church service (in this way I am practicing for St. Mark's, when I practice with them). Otherwise, I tell them, I am not able to work with them, nor will I accept them as Artists in Residence—a valuable and prestigious title for most freelance musicians. This arrangement is mutually advantageous for them and us: they get a competent accompanist and play concerts around the city: and we are lifted up by the music which they have worked very hard through performances to bring to excellence. Other AIRs exchange use of the church for their concerts, for playing at the church services. AIRs now under agreement are: Mike Keegan, French horn (he had taken some time off in 2018 and 2019, but will be back this winter; Emma Peng, classical guitar, who just began

residency in fall of 2019; Steve Rohde, a double Artist in Residence — composer and organist, AIR since 2013; Steve has also become Associate Organist and accompanies the choir and is the substitute organist; Bob Estlund, flute, who has, however, been out of service for personal reasons for a year, but will start up in month or so. Unfortunately, Todd Domenget, AIR string bass since 2009 and a member of St. Mark's with his wife Nikki since about 2006, left St. Mark's last spring for personal reasons. He had been an extremely generous member of the AIR Program and performed at Sunday services almost every month for nearly his entire time as a parishioner. Todd is one of the reasons that St. Mark's has developed its reputation for incorporating, as some have called it, "hip" or "cool" or "fun" music into its program, for not being a stuffy church — even while maintaining the grand, classical traditions of the Episcopal Church. We are sad, of course, that Todd and Nikki have left, and I still keep in touch. At this time the Domengets are attending St. Thomas of Canterbury, although Todd laments the state of music there. Two other musicians who are associates of St. Mark's are Matt Ernst (three years), principal trumpet with the MSO; and oboist and English hornist with the MSO, Margaret Butler (two years). All these wonderful musicians have immeasurably enriched the liturgies of St. Mark's during their tenures, and we have been enormously blessed with such great talent and in such quantity.

4. Finally, let me thank sincerely all those who have contributed to the Liturgy and Music program at St. Mark's. Thanks go to all my dear choir singers, to the Section Leaders, soloists, Artists in Residence, and accompanists — Steve Rohde and Kelly Glostott; to our annual Passion Sunday percussionist, Terry Smirl; to our trumpeter, Matt Ernst; to oboist and English hornist, Margaret Butler; and thanks to all who made comments, suggestions, and helpful criticisms. Lastly, thanks to Fr. Burch for his vision, his energy, and his universal talent. Thanks to all who in 2019 contributed to the Ministry of Music at St. Mark's and through whose efforts it has continued to be exciting, active, and various.

Submitted by Steve Wolff, Director of Music

The Choristers

The Choristers had a successful year! Though membership was down a bit, the singers sang for eight services this past year, collaborating with the adult choir, parish instrumentalists, choral scholars, and even a professional violist. The singers learned about healthy vocal production and posture, were exposed to a lot of repertoire (even a piece in German!), and grew as young musicians and people. Looking forward, we are seeking more members and could use assistance with recruitment.

Submitted by Daniel Koplitz, Children's Choirmaster

Ushers

Or the view from the back pew! Ushers perform a real service to St. Mark's. Ushers greet everyone when they arrive for Sunday and other special services. We welcome new people and long-term parishioners. Ushers pass out the Sunday bulletins; count the number of people present, collect the gifts, call the Sunday School children to their families, help shepherd parishioners to the communion rail, and straighten the church up after the service. When I'm ushering my view of the church during the service fosters a real sense of community for me.

I would like to thank Sandy Boltz, Steve Butcher, Georgia and John Cain, Virginia Chappell, Barbara Costanzo, Mark Heffron, Bill Hunt, Steve Martinie, David Miyama, Ellie Mixter-Keller, Harry Moseley, Andrew Muriuki, and Ron and Jamie Zingler. This year we had four people joining our team: Krysta Benson, Bill Florescu, Bobby Gilbert and Marilyn McKnight. I'm so glad you decided to join. I would also like to give a special thanks to Harry Moseley for being in charge of the ushers for many years and for continuing to serve.

We have five teams of four ushers and we serve on a weekly rotation. If you interested in this ministry, please contact me at mross5325@sbcglobal.net , or Ian or Sara at St. Mark's office.

Submitted by Mary Ross

Living Beyond These Walls

Common Ground

Common Ground is a membership based group of mostly churches, but also some colleges and special interest groups such as "Under 40s." Its goal is to achieve greater justice in the Milwaukee metro area around a number of issues, such as substandard housing or workforce development for youth who are unemployed. We have also founded a cooperative health care insurance company that has over 60,000 members in southeast Wisconsin. If you would like to be a part of this exciting team that acts to improve our world as we live out our Christian calling, contact Jennifer O'Hear, Harry Moseley, or Michelle Mooney.

Be a part of a common endeavor that acts in, and holds up our community, in a responsible and highly effective way.

Submitted by Michelle Mooney

Courage House

St. Mark's Courage House ministry is focused on supporting the newly opened halfway house for LGBT Youth. Moved by the plight of homeless and displaced LGBT youth. Founders Brad and Nick Schaikowski began fundraising in 2015 to open a halfway house that would cater to this specific under resourced population. The first house opened last summer, becoming

Wisconsin's only LGBT halfway house. The home has filled with residents and they plan to expand to further locations in the coming years.

The Courage House ministry team will support the House in two complementary ways this year. We have some volunteers who will lead a fundraiser/item drive to help offset their budget and make sure more funds can go directly to the kids. We also have a team that will volunteer in the house each month to be a positive adult presence. This last option is what they most need, stable adults who can come and be a consistent positive adult presence. That could mean a volunteer watches Spongebob with one of the kids, bakes some cookies, helps someone with their homework, or sorts donations in the office. It's very chill but rewarding.

Currently we have seven members involved and would love to have more people. If this sounds like something you'd email Nathan Self at nathan.philip.self@gmail.com or talk to him after church.

Submitted by Nathan Self

Diaper Drive — Brooke Frizzell

Thank you to everyone who donated diapers and wipes for this year's Advent and Christmas Diaper Drive. After taking a year off, we set an ambitious goal of collecting 6,000 diapers, and I am pleased to report that WE MADE IT! As of this writing, we have collected 6,106 diapers, as well as quite a few wipes. Five hundred diapers are going to the Riverwest Food Pantry, and the remainder will be split between Robyn's Nest and HOPE Network for Single Mothers. Robyn's Nest is part of Children's Hospital of Wisconsin Community Services, and it provides supplies to foster families and others identified by CHW as having unmet need. HOPE Network for Single Mothers provides support for single mothers, many of whom live in poverty. We are aiming to grow the diaper ministry over the next few years and are particularly interested in establishing some ongoing partnerships with these great organizations, as both Robyn's Nest and HOPE Network have a need for regular volunteers. If you are interested in volunteering or in assisting with the 2020-2021 diaper drive, please contact me. Thank you again for your support for Milwaukee's families.

Submitted by Brooke Frizzell

Outreach Ministries

The committee members include Alex Cain, Steve Butcher, Charles Camilli, Darolyn Davies, Florescu, Andy Martin, Ellie Mixter-Keller, Michelle Mooney, Harry Moseley, Ginny Schrag, Ron Zingler. St. Mark's has a number of persons helping with Eastside Senior Services and many volunteers cooking and serving meals at the Gathering. In addition, a number are involved in Common Ground. Through two fundraisers, we netted nearly \$8,000. In November, we voted to support the agencies that have St. Mark's members involved in the amount of \$8,800. In

addition to these agencies, the parish had a drive for providing backpacks for students, feminine products and packaged foods for other organizations.

Submitted by Harry Moseley

Thrift Shop

St. Mark's Thrift Shop closed in 2019 after 60 years of service. During its lifetime, the Thrift Shop earned more than \$250,000. Most of that money was used to support St. Mark's and its parish life. Some donations were made to other worthy causes, including Camp Webb, The Gathering, Episcopal Relief and Development, Great Hunger Book Sale, the Salvation Army, the Rescue Mission, and school groups.

Turning to 2019, the Thrift Shop grossed \$1400 during five months of regular operation from January through May. This is approximately what the Shop earned in the same period in recent years.

On June 1, 2019, the Thrift Shop held a rummage sale, which doubled as its going out of business sale. The Shop's physical space in the basement was emptied out and the contents carried up one long flight of stairs to the Parish Hall for the sale. What did not sell was packed up and donated elsewhere or otherwise disposed of that day. The June 1 sales receipts (plus other minor post-closing income) amounted to \$1021.

After the rummage sale, the Thrift Shop had a total of \$6,373 to its name — the \$1400 earned between January and May, the \$1021 rummage sale earnings, and the Thrift Shop's long-term savings.

At the same time, the Shop had outstanding expenses. It owed the church \$1500 for its 2019 pledge and \$983 for expenses incurred in staging the rummage sale and wrapping up the business. When these expenses were paid, there was a final surplus of \$3890.

Thrift Shop volunteers collectively decided what to do with the surplus. They wanted it to go somewhere that reflected the Thrift Shop's mission to serve the community, especially the poor among us. So they decided to give \$1945 each to Sojourner Family Peace Center and the Guest House.

The Thrift Shop's only bank account was closed on July 25, 2019. With its premises vacated, expenses paid and surplus funds distributed, there is no further business to conduct.

The St. Mark's Thrift Shop is well and truly closed for good.

Submitted by Jan Rhodes, Thrift Shop Treasurer

Community Life

Coffee Hour

St. Mark's Coffee Hour, not surprisingly, continues to be a huge draw. This weekly gathering is a great way to stay connected with friends and welcome newcomers. The tables are full each week but you never know who might be sitting at your favorite table, as people tend to mix it up from week to week.

A big thank you to the Coffee Hour hosts. Your dedication to this ministry is greatly appreciated and enjoyed by all! As you may have noticed, many men participate in hosting coffee hour and we look forward to having more join in this year. Don't be shy!

The sign-up list is in the ParishHall (next to the Library door). We ask all members of St. Mark's to consider hosting, or help host, a coffee hour in 2020. You don't have to do it alone; help is just a phone call or email away. I have also added a sheet to sign up if you're willing to bake or bring something, but may not have time to participate in the actual coffee hour.

Thanks for joining in. See you at Coffee Hour!

Submitted by Jamie Zingler

Community Gardens

The community gardens are for members of St. Mark's and some members in the community. You pay a small fee and the gardens are provided with watering and mulch every other year. If you are interested in doing some fruit or veggie gardening, please see me, Michelle Mooney. I'll have more news as we get nearer to spring.

Submitted by Michelle Mooney

Garden Guild

Thanks to a dedicated and great bunch of gardeners, St. Mark's gardens looked wonderful all year. The faithful volunteers of the Garden Guild are Michelle Mooney, Barbara Costanzo, Meg Edwards, Jayne and Mark Heffron, Ginny Schrag and Jamie Zingler and newcomers Marilyn Hamilton, Nathan Self and Gretchen and J.R. Ponzer. My heartfelt thanks to each of you!

As always, much of our work is weeding and keeping the gardens looking tidy, but this year we also had the honor of planting a Serviceberry tree given by parishioners in memory of Alex Martin. We were glad to be able to do this for Janet and Andy.



Plantings this year included more variety and color in the church gardens especially around the perimeter of the church building. We also are using native plants where we can, making sure that we are being good stewards of God's creation. Perhaps you didn't know, but all the work of the garden guild is done without the use of chemical pesticides and herbicides.

Tuesday evenings at 5:30 is our meeting time, mid-May to September. We work for about an hour and a half and then take time for refreshments and catching up. Please feel free to join us — we are a friendly group! You can call or email me with any questions.

See you in the church gardens!

Submitted by Jane Shero

Men's Fellowship Group



The St. Mark's Men's Fellowship group meets on the 3rd Saturday of each month at St. Mark's for breakfast and conversation. We start the coffee and food prep about 8 am and eat about 9 am. We catch up with each other for about an hour and then clean up. If there are seasonal building and grounds tasks, we help get those accomplished.

An incomplete list of the folks that you might encounter at a breakfast looks something like this:

Mark Heffron, Bill Florescu, Ron and Jamie Zingler, Nick Katter, John Cain, Steve and Sue Rohde, Michelle Mooney, John Hickey, Michael O'Hear, Jyoti, Steve Wolff, Daniel O'Hear, Alex Cain, Andrew Muriuki, Harry Moseley,

Bill Hunt, Kyle Potter, Skrauss, Owen O'Hear, and yours truly.

If you're looking to have a bite to eat and to connect with folks at church — stop on by!



If you'd like to get on the mailing list for the group — drop me a line at vkatter@gmail.com or give me a call at 414-403-4596.

Submitted by Vince Katter

Pastoral Concerns

The Pastoral Concerns Committee is made up of a small group who are invited to be part of the ministry by the rector or deacon. Visits are made, cards sent, phone calls made and occasionally we even take some members with special needs out to lunch.

Submitted by Michelle Mooney

Prayer Team

The following people have been members of the Prayer Team during 2019: Mary Beth Alvarez, Virginia Chappell, Todd Domenget, Barbara Franczyk, Janet Martin, Ellie Moseley, David Platcow, Lynda Read, Steve Rohde, Mary Ross, Sandi Tunis, Genevieve Vassell, Mary Bellis Williams, Steve Rohde, Stephen Wolff, and me, Sue Rohde. Our only task is to serve your prayer needs.

The team members pray intercessory prayers on a daily basis for anyone who wishes prayer, which includes those who are ill, either temporarily or chronically; having medical tests; facing surgery; in the hospital; and 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 away.

We'd also like to pray for joyful occasions such as weddings, anniversaries, and births, but those requests, alas, 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.

We're always looking for new members for the Prayer Team. The only requirement is a willingness to pray daily. You will be informed of requests for prayer in a basic format, and you may then pray as simply or as elaborately as you wish. Please remember that "we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit itself intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words". (Romans 8:26)

Submitted by Sue Rohde

Quilting Circle

The quilting circle is made up of men and women who create unique quilts that are given to every baptized child at St. Marks. We meet on the third Saturday of each month. If you'd like to be part of the group speak to me, Michelle Mooney. Absolutely no prior quilting is necessary.

Members of the group presently are Jane Shero, Jamie Zingler, Judith Miller, Nathan Self, and Michelle Mooney. Come and join us it's really fun and creative.

Submitted by Michelle Mooney

Reclaiming Jesus

“You’re spiritually dangerous, and we’re here to stop you.”

“You can’t talk about God this way. It’s not right.”

These are just two of the objections I’ve heard this year from unexpected guests at our Reclaiming Jesus program. Reclaiming Jesus is a theology pub that meets at Von Trier on the first Tuesday of each month at 8 pm. That gathering is co-sponsored by St. Mark’s Church and Jesus + Beer. For more than six years, Jesus + Beer has been bringing together people from diverse backgrounds to have a drink and to enjoy “genuine people and spirited conversations” about faith and life. I assist my co-director in writing content for our conversations each month, and I moderate most of our East Side gatherings. Reclaiming Jesus provides an important welcoming space for folks of all ages, particularly for those new to St. Mark’s who wish to engage in the kind of serious religious questioning for which Episcopalians are famous. The program has mostly drawn millennials, agnostics, and Christians who find themselves alienated from their church traditions. Our regulars tell us that they keep coming back because we host important, honest, and respectful conversations that they can’t have anywhere else.

Jesus + Beer also meets at Dugout 54 in Wauwatosa on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month (a calendar change that begins in March), and may be attractive to St. Mark’s folks who live farther out. This summer, our ‘Tosa gathering to discuss purity culture was disrupted by the same fundamentalist church that often protests the women’s health clinic on Farwell. Yes, I am quite proud of this.

Join us at Von Trier at 8 pm on the first Tuesday of each month! Contact me for more details, or visit collectivemke.com/jesusandbeer.

Submitted by Kyle Potter

Shepherds Ministry

Every newcomer who comes through the doors of St. Mark’s is invited to coffee with the rector, receives both an email and a snail-mail greeting, and is added to our database and our weekly email blast. This all happens in the office. Once these four steps are completed, the newcomers are ready to be sent to the Shepherds committee — a group that arranges one-on-one meetings, social events, and offers accompaniment and support for newer members in the parish.

The Shepherds has had a year of excellent ministry as well as some leadership transition. Both Mr. Mark Hefforn and the Rev. Michelle Mooney worked hard to steer our committee and improve our radical welcome. With their assistance, I took some administrative responsibility for the group in the second half of the year — mainly making sure that all newcomers were assigned a Shepherd to help integrate them into the parish. At one point in the summer, we had

so many newcomers, that we opted to host an evening cocktail hour welcome rather than the more typical brunch (it's easier to host more people at a party than a brunch). This was well attended and might be a good tool for the future.

Effective January 2020, Ms. Brooke Frizzell has agreed to take over the administration of the Shepherds. Under her leadership, it is my hope that we will be able to continue supporting the volume of newcomers coming to St. Mark's while continuing to weave people meaningfully into the community here. Brooke has some ideas for how we might expand and improve our ministry to newer members, and I look forward to the energy she will bring.

Submitted by Fr. Burch

Spirituality & Aging

Spirituality and Aging is a group of folks who meet on the third Tuesday of the month from 1-2:30 p.m., in the Library, and discuss the book they have chosen to read. The topic may be specifically about aging or more often, a mix of spirituality and aging.

We started this group in 2016 and have been going strong since. Ask Michelle Mooney if you are interested. We would love to have you.

Submitted by Michelle Mooney

Women's Book Group

We had another good year of fellowship and discussing the books we had chosen. We read eight books. We met in members' homes on Monday night about every six weeks. We welcome new members and would be delighted to have you.

The following people participated: Jayne Heffron, Janet Martin, Stephanie Dudek, Kathy Katter, Ellie Moseley, Barbara Costanzo, Carolyn Davies, Marilyn McKnight, Brooke Frizzell, Judy Young, Marie Wolff, Jackie Adams, and Kathryn MIsna.

Submitted by Ellie Moseley

Administrative

Building & Grounds

Finished projects:

1. Number 2 boiler was replaced in August and general maintenance has been completed on the 1,3 and 4. We currently are stable with the heating situation and have passed state inspections. However 3 and 4 will need to be replaced in the next year or two. Boilers 1 and 2 will be good for the next 20-30 years so long as maintenance is kept up properly. We have this scheduled to be done every year in early fall.

2. The Sink Hole was fixed in July and drain tile has been set up to prevent any further damage. The parking lot is still in need of upgrades but for now will work for what we need.
3. Installation of windows in choir doors
4. Installation of new flood lights in parking lot
5. Installation of new lighting in Church offices
6. Overall general maintenance of building.

Pending Projects:

This is as of yet to be seen. We have some roofing issues causing leaks. Nothing too serious but a question to patch or replace trouble areas. The sanctuary roof is 20 years old and is in need of repairs but seems to hold up nicely for now.

Electrical work including the replacement of outlets and installation of GCFI outlets in the bathrooms and kitchen are necessary.

Other projects are pending on how we move forward in our Capital Campaign.

Questions? Contact billhunt999@yahoo.com. Thank You.

Submitted by Bill Hunt, Junior Warden

Stewardship Committee

"I am grateful for my St. Mark's family of faith and love."

While it provides the foundation for the annual operating budget, the Stewardship Committee's work is generally done quietly and behind the scenes. For a short seven weeks the Committee asks parishioners to reflect on the ways St. Mark's is a part of their lives, and to make a financial commitment to support the ministries. Establishing the theme of Gratitude 2020, this year's committee consisted of Meg Edwards, Harry Moseley, Ellie Moseley, Laura Peters-Shimko, Craig Frizzell, Charles Camilli, Nathan Self, and Mary Beth Alvarez. We established a goal of \$270,000 and an increase in the number of pledging supporters.

Helen Chou's gorgeous table decorations and the statements of gratitude gave life and voice to the ways gratitude shows up for people at St. Mark's. "I am grateful for a strong sense of community, united by God....I am grateful for our St. Mark's family and the heart and soul of our leadership." The Gratitude of so many was evident in exceeding both our monetary goal and with an increase in supporters. We are truly united in gratitude as we enter 2020!



Submitted by Jayne Heffron

Capital Campaign

Over the winter of 2018-2019, a number of listening sessions at parishioners' homes were held to share around the following questions: what people valued about St Marks; what we could do better; what God may be calling us to do or be in the greater community; if money were falling from the sky what should we be doing with our campus; and how would our ministries and programs be impacted if we didn't do these changes.

Summarized by our consultant from the Episcopal Church Foundation, three overarching themes emerged:

1. Service and social justice
2. Growth and integration of diversity
3. The facilities and their improvements needed to support our vision (points 1 and 2 above)

To dig deeper into each of these areas, we engaged in the following:

1. In October, we had a "café conversation" with a diverse group (long time, new, older, younger) parish members where we listened to one another around our identity as a faith community. Fr. Burch restated each of these themes during the collects for Advent.

For welcome: We ask God to help us make a space in this church for everyone - knowing that every would who walks through these doors is Emmanuel, God with us. May we prepare a place for every stranger and keep this light burning as a symbol of God's radical welcome.

For connection: We ask God to connect us this year in Christian fellowship, those of us who have worshipped here for decades and those of us who are new. As we prepare for the baby Jesus to enter the world, may we remember that in Christ are made one people, one Church, one body.

For service. We ask God to give us the strength and wisdom to use our gifts in service to the least and the lost. Just as the Holy Family walked toward Jerusalem in need of shelter and support, so are people in our own city suffering. May this light be a reminder to us of the needs of the world.

For healing. As we prepare for the One who comes in the world to mend what is broken, make straight what is crooked, and heal what is sick, let us follow that graceful example and offer the healing of the church to all who enter into these doors. May this light remind us of the holy work that happens with God's help inside these walls as spirits are renewed and healed each week.

2. We prepared a request for proposal (RFP) for a comprehensive assessment of our current buildings...what needed to be done first, what projects could be staged later, compliance with building codes, accessibility (bathrooms, second floor, etc.), roof, drainage, etc., etc. The RFP was sent to seven firms who subsequently toured the building, reviewed floor plans, renovation history, etc. Four firms responded with a proposal to do engineering/architectural assessment of what we currently have. Those estimates ranged from \$16K - \$28K.

During this coming year:

- Concerning our vision and mission: we hope to bring the entire congregation into conversation about what it will mean for us personally and corporately to grow in each of these four areas – welcome, connection, service, healing.
- Concerning our building: As the amounts for the assessments (let alone any repair, renovation, construction work) are already substantial given the size of our annual budget, we will be continuing to evaluate our current and future needs as well as our options.

Submitted by Judith Miller