

St. Mark's 2022 Annual Report

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Rector's and Warden's Reports

Rector's Report

Church Growth 101

For some of you, my ideas about church growth will be a repeat. But I thought that since we have had so many new faces in the last few years that a repeat of some of the pillars of our community's welcome strategy could be helpful. Here are the four main ways that we grow.

52 Equal Sundays

This is an old expression invented by Fr. Bill Tully during the revitalization of St. Bart's Episcopal Church in NYC. Fr. Tully taught that every Sunday must have excellent liturgy, music, education for all ages, radical welcome, helpful signage, strong bulletins, and a sixty-minute Mass. His thought was that every Sunday of the year is the potential for a visit from someone who is in need of what the church has to offer, so to take a Sunday off from this kind of excellence is to risk losing a chance to connect with a visitor. At St. Mark's, we would add a robust coffee hour and an easy-to-navigate website to the Tully Doctrine, but it has been a guiding principle for us for the last 7 years, and we will continue to practice it to the best of our abilities.



Rigorous Newcomer Follow-up

It is a miracle straight from God when someone decides to visit our parish—particularly in this age of plummeting church affiliation in our country. Everyone who visits and decides to give the parish their contact information is showing hope and vulnerability: hope that this will be a place where they can find belonging and vulnerability by asking for entrance into a new community. We take this with great seriousness—if God sees fit to send people our way, we believe it is a holy duty to respond in a way that we hope Jesus would recognize. Our clergy and staff ensure that every newcomer is invited to coffee, is contacted both electronically and with a paper letter,

is connected to both an Episcopal 101 course and a Newcomer social hour hosted by the Shepherds, and is connected peer-to-peer at coffee hour.

Increased Leadership

Once people find themselves in the pews, most will want at some point to put into action what they hear in the Gospel stories and the sermons. People want to be useful and to exercise the gifts that God provides. To this end, newcomers are offered positions of leadership that are related to their gifts—perhaps they teach adult ed or usher or read or acolyte. Perhaps they serve on a committee or do flowers or something else. It doesn't really matter. But for a newcomer to feel like they have a stake in this community, they need to be welcomed into some kind of leadership.

Understanding and Being Proud of Our Charism

Charism is a Greek word that means gift. When monks and nuns use it, they are talking about the gift of a particular community. For instance, Benedictines have a gift for hospitality. Dominicans have a gift for preaching. Franciscans have a gift for joy. It's been my experience that parishes have a charism. In my seven years here, the gift I have seen at St. Mark's over and over again has been the gift of healing. Story after story of people who find their way to this church has to do with some kind of pain or alienation they experienced in a Christian community. Sometimes women were not offered leadership. Sometimes LGBTQIA+ people were abused or driven to some kind of conversion therapy. Sometimes simple questions about the nature of God or the authority of the Bible brought with them criticism or ridicule from church leadership. And sometimes people have simply been searching for a long time to find a place where they belong. No matter who you are, and no matter what wounds you might bring, the red doors of St. Mark's are flung open for you. And this is in response to our belief in the radical welcome of Jesus for all of us. We do our best to follow Jesus, and in this time and place, that looks like making sure that every precious child of God who comes through these doors finds a home.

2022

This was a year that brought with it both massive challenges and magnificent opportunities.

+I accepted the resignation of our long-time organist Steve Wolff, who left to be closer to his family and ailing mother. So many of you came together to send him off with a beautiful liturgy and party, filled with friends and gifts. I want to put my thanks for Steve's many years of service in my report so future church members can see that he was well-appreciated by clergy and lay folks alike.

+In a fairly miraculous turn of events, Michael Batcho was looking for the sort of position that St. Mark's could offer. Michael came to us with 25+ years of experience



at the Roman Catholic Cathedral, and, in a few short months, has brought our choir back to life, re-invigorated our liturgies, and offered counsel on the needs of our organ and our grand piano. I want to thank the seven families who came together in August to add an additional offering to cover Michael's insurance. Michael is currently serving as an Interim Director of Music with the possibility to extend that contract after August.

+Over the last three years, seven members have transferred to different parishes in the diocese. Four of these members have let me know that they were leaving due to concerns about our building project, and three left no word, though I suspect the reason was the same. It is always hard when Christians have strong disagreements, and I miss them in worship. Though it is a hard thing to have to experience, there will always be membership attrition when a church attempts any sort of large change—liturgically, staff/clergy changes, physical plant changes, or the ending of long-beloved programs. We wish them well, and I respect their right to determine that St. Mark's is not the best community fit for them right now.

+2022 was the first full year with a full-time assistant priest. This has been a new challenge for me as a leader—I have never supervised a full-time assistant before now—and also a growing opportunity as well as a growing pain for the parish. There are some of you whose primary pastoral relationship has been with Fr. George, which is a change to the previous six years, where all pastoral relationships would be directly with me. Having a second priest has been a delight and a blessing, but it has also been an outward symbol of some of the big changes that have been occurring here at St. Mark's. I want to thank George for all that he has done—especially in tending to the entire parish during my sabbatical last summer. He is an excellent priest, and we are lucky to have him.

+Last summer, I took a six-week sabbatical from my duties at St. Mark's. I spent a good portion of this time recovering from the difficulties of managing a parish community during a pandemic, and I also spent time pursuing my doctoral studies at General Theological Seminary in NYC as well as doing some discernment work about where I think our parish is going—what I think we are doing well, what I think we could improve upon, and probably most importantly where I think God is calling us next. I want to thank the vestry for including sabbatical time every five or so years for the rector. The time away helped me come back in the fall ready to continue leading us through some difficult changes as well as reimagining some of our programming.

+I want to say something about the stress and anxiety that I see in our church family right now. I talked in a sermon a few weeks ago about how I see anxiety about the future coming to St. Mark's both from inside and from outside. From the outside, we see a rapidly collapsing mainline Christian affiliation, a diocese in massive transition, shifting patterns in church attendance, not to mention environmental, public health, and governmental crises seemingly new every month. It's a stressful time to be alive. And from within, we are in the midst of an enormous generational shift in leadership, an enormous influx of newcomers—almost none of whom have an Episcopal background and who bring with them gifts and ideas about St. Mark's future—a church that has outgrown a family and a pastor sized model of governance and has had to add layers of staff and bureaucracy, not to mention three years of a building project

whose purpose is to address decades of deferred maintenance. If the church feels a little chaotic right now, that is because it is. I know that this kind of destabilization can be sometimes frightening, and I know that it can bring with it some grief. I hope it helps to hear that we are not alone. At every level of governance in The Episcopal Church—bishops, dioceses, seminaries, provinces—faithful leaders just like you are having to ask: what does it look like to be a church in the next 25 years? It's a hard question to ask, and it brings with it many uncertainties. On a call with Bishop Lee the other day, he said to me that every church right now is having to figure out whether to change or whether to die. We, at St. Mark's, have chosen life, and I trust that God will be with us all in this transition, even when the journey is sometimes bumpy.

Our 1949 Building Project

Have no anxiety about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. Paul wrote these words to a church in Philippi, two thousand years ago. The funny thing about Paul's letters is that, in addition to admonitions about the love of God, they also contain incredibly practical items about who should be doing what task and which church is supplying the money for the mission. Ministry always has a practical component.

The thing is, I know that some of you are anxious about the building project. And I am anxious too. We are at the business end of a once-in-a-generation change, and it is touching on issues of culture, authority, age, tradition, priority, church size, and money. Parishes don't have many opportunities for this level of disruption, and it is a lot of stress for a church to have to metabolize.

And, at the same time, I find myself constantly hopeful that our future is brighter than our past. The bright future that we would like to see as a parish—and which I believe God is calling us—requires radical inclusivity and a building that reflects that value.

Your vestry and building committee have been working incredibly hard this year to find a way forward on our land sale and the building of a new parish hall. It has been difficult work. Lately, I have found myself increasingly hopeful that we are systematically finding the best way forward—answering questions about finances, timing, and the different ways that a building budget fits into a comprehensive plan that sets the church up well to continue its mission to serve everyone who walks into these doors.

You'll hear more about the specifics at the Annual Meeting as well as in future missives from the building committee and the vestry. I've heard several times that some parishioners wish they had been kept better informed over these last months, and the wardens, vestry, and I have taken that feedback to heart.

Conclusion

It is my honor to be your rector, and it is especially an honor to serve in this role during this time of great transition. We have worked hard together to make sure that we open the doors of this place to everyone who needs haven or solace or a sense of God. And we will continue to do so

well into the future. These years have been hard, and I am grateful that God is walking beside us. I see children running happily all over the church, knowing that it is a safe and loving home for them. I see new members nearly every Sunday, slowly being woven into the fabric of St. Mark's. I see Christians of all ages growing in faith and in love toward one another. And I see lives transformed and sent out into the world to make it look a bit more like the world in God's imagination. Thank you for the work that you do. Thank you for your prayers.

Faithfully,
Ian+
(Fr. Burch)

Senior Warden's Report

Dear St. Mark's,

As I end my first year serving as your senior warden, I find myself reflecting on how this role has been incredibly easy in some ways while being terribly challenging in others. It has been easy because of our wonderful staff. One of the only official duties of the senior warden as outlined in the bylaws is to make sure church happens. With Fr. George serving first as assistant priest and now as associate rector, I actually never had to worry about this! Sara continues to be the rock of this parish, often thinking of things that need to be handled before they enter my brain, and our new music director has breathed a new life into the worship service that I hope you feel as much as I do. Our longtime nursery worker left us at the end of the summer, but the sound of children in the pews is always a delight. My work has also been made easy by the scores of dedicated parishioners who volunteer their time every week, making our worship space beautiful, ensuring that we have a lovely spread for coffee hour, ushering, teaching Sunday school, counting and depositing the offering so we can pay our staff, organizing and directing a delightful Christmas pageant, and so much more.

This year has also been challenging as we move ahead with our building project. The vestry voted in 2020 to proceed with selling our green space and parking lot to Michael DeMichele in order to partially fund the razing and rebuilding of our parish hall. Your rector and wardens signed a contract for the sale of the land in February 2022, and we are scheduled to close on this sale at the end of February 2023. A demolition date for the existing parish hall is still to be determined.

We spent much of the summer working on getting necessary city approvals so that we can move forward with our parish hall plans and so that Mr. DeMichele can move forward with building an apartment building on the land we are selling. These approvals were crucial to the project's success because the closing of the land is contingent upon them. This process was not always easy, as some nearby neighbors opposed the building of an apartment building, but a number of parishioners offered written support and testified at the hearings. I believe everyone from St. Mark's represented us well before the city, and I am pleased that the Historic

Preservation Commission approved designs for both the apartment building and the new parish hall. The Common Council approved a rezoning of the green space and parking lot for the apartment building, which means the sale can proceed to closing. This process was also quite illuminating, as the Historic Preservation Commission prepared a staff report detailing the condition of our existing parish hall. The report was not pretty, to put it mildly, and it highlights the need for dramatic action.

Meanwhile, the Building Committee has been hard at work with the architect and builder to design a building that meets all our programming needs. There are a lot of moving parts, but I am excited to see us moving toward a building that will better suit our needs, particularly the needs of children and those with mobility limitations.

As we approach the demolition of our existing parish hall, I acknowledge that this time may feel strange. Even as we know the poor condition of our building and the need to make it accessible to those with mobility limitations, most of us have fond memories of this building. I recall sitting around with other youth leaders while our middle schoolers made us a spaghetti dinner, thinking about how our children and youth are capable of so much more than society gives them credit for. My daughter, Maggie, has spent many Sunday mornings in the nursery upstairs and now learns about God in the Sunday school room. I met her godparents at an Epiphany dinner in the parish hall, and I can distinctly remember another Epiphany dinner where the smell of nearly every dish made me nauseated because I was 10 weeks pregnant. The people I have met in this building are the people who have supported me in the darkest of times. So the farewell will be bittersweet, but I truly believe a new building will enable us in our mission of transforming lives through relationships with Jesus Christ.

I ask for your prayers as we embark upon this journey. I also ask you to bring your courage and your creativity, as our transitional period without a parish hall will present challenges, some of which we are anticipating and some of which I'm sure we haven't even thought about. I invite you to pitch in however you are able as we continue striving to be Christ's hands and feet in this world.

Faithfully,
Brooke Frizzell, Senior Warden

Report of Building Committee

January 2023

Prepared by Tom Piacentine and Brooke Frizzell

Background: Approximately five years ago, the Vestry began to seriously explore a capital campaign to renovate our parish hall, which is in poor condition and has required large amounts of time and money to maintain in recent years. After concluding that the cost of our building needs likely exceeded the funds that we could raise through a capital campaign alone, the Vestry began exploring selling a portion of our property in order to partially fund the renovation and construction of a new parish hall. After an extensive process, the Vestry decided to move forward with selling some of our property to the DeMichele Group and begin the process of razing and rebuilding our parish hall.

A building committee was convened in 2022 to work with our architect, HGA, to design a new building. The building committee consists of Leslie McCormick, Jane Shero, Sandra McClellan, Kathy Katter, and Tom Piacentine, as well as the wardens, Brooke Frizzell and Vince Katter. Surveys were previously conducted of ministry heads regarding their space needs for a new building. The results of these surveys were submitted to HGA and to the builder, Catalyst Construction. This information was used to come up with renderings for a building that included a green roof, a new accessible entrance, a fully accessible main floor, and a fully accessible basement. Renderings of this proposal were presented to the congregation in October 2022, and the full estimated cost of this building is \$4 million.

After considering the likely available funds from a land sale, capital campaign, and mortgage, the Vestry asked the building committee to explore a \$3 million building, with inclusions up to \$4 million. The building committee most recently met on January 12, 2023.

Building Footprint, Exterior, and Entrances: The footprint of a \$3 million building would be the same as a \$4 million building, but it would have fewer finishes. The basic shell of the proposed building will be built upon a portion of the current building footprint. The south wall foundation (facing the courtyard), along with a good portion of the east and west foundation walls, will be reused as the footprint of the building on those portions are to remain. The north foundation wall will be new to accommodate the new lower level wall line and accessible entrance.

The area to the north of the new building, which is now currently part of the current building and the parking lot, will become a shared drive with the new apartment building. This will include a ramp from the street level down to the basement level. This ramp will provide access to two disabled parking spaces, the elevator, storage, and trash areas. This shared drive will also access the parking level of the new apartment building.

Currently the main entrance to the church is through the doors at the south end of the west wall, directly into the sanctuary. This entrance will remain, but a new, accessible main building entrance into the parish hall will be built where the north set of red doors is. A ramp with a very

gentle grade will lead to this entrance, which will open into the “bride’s walk,” allowing access to the sanctuary and the other set of doors. This will allow for the extension of the cloister walk around the courtyard.

A \$4 million building would use the dark brick already approved by the Historic Preservation Commission on the entire exterior of the building. A \$3 million building would use this same brick for the west side of the building (facing Hackett) and for the first 32 feet of the north side (facing the apartment building). However, it would switch to a less expensive, lighter-colored brick for the remainder of the north side of the building. This technique is common on brick buildings throughout Milwaukee’s east side.

Main Level: The layout of the first floor was designed to provide both the needed support services for the church along with spaces to provide the maximum space allowable for gatherings.

Entering the new front door will direct you through the cloister walk. This area will have new windows and doors opening onto the courtyard for maximum light and to open up the space. As you enter, the lobby, business office, and rector’s offices are the first areas to greet you. After that will be gender-neutral, ADA-compliant restrooms. The large open area to be used as the gathering space will make up the bulk of the center of the new first floor. As previously mentioned, the south side of the new gathering space will also be open to the cloister walk and the courtyard.

To the north of the office area will be a new conference room, which can be used either to provide meeting space or as an extension of the gathering space. The offices and conference room will have windows along the west and north sides to provide natural lighting throughout the spaces.

Along the east side of the new building, a new kitchen will be set up in such a way as to provide support and services to the gathering space. Also, within the kitchen will be the necessary spaces for the flower guild and other needed support functions. A new nursery/child care room with a private restroom will also be along the east wall, which will provide easy access to parents during services and fellowship. An additional restroom is also planned for that area.

The current platform in the front of the church is currently not ADA accessible. This plan allows for the main floor to be fully accessible, including an accessible entrance from Hackett. A new ramp and designated loading zone along Hackett will provide for accessible entry without affecting the historic aspects of the west wall of the existing church building.

Basement: The south basement wall will remain to protect the courtyard and maintain the sanctity of those buried there. The existing light wells in the courtyard walls will be restored to allow for the basement area to have natural light along the south portion of the basement.

A \$4 million building would have a fully finished basement, as previously shown to the congregation at the October 2022 meeting. This would include restrooms, children's and youth space, offices, choir room, and kitchen storage. However, a \$3 million building would mean that the basement would be partially unfinished.

In a \$3 million building, the basement would provide a new space for the mechanical equipment, the new ADA entrance, two disabled parking spaces, and a storage area for large storage and exterior equipment with an overhead door for easy access. Beyond these rooms, the rough in underfloor plumbing for the ADA restrooms would be put in place. At the west side of the building, a new exit stair to grade level is required by code. The north wall of the basement will be partially exposed along the shared driveway. This wall will have windows as allowable by exposure to bring light into the lower-level rooms (including a potential choir room).

The basic mechanical systems needed for code would be installed, including basic lighting, sprinkler lines and sprinkler heads, HVAC equipment, and basic ductwork needed to provide temperate control.

However, in a \$3 million building, restrooms would not actually be built, nor would walls to create children's and youth spaces, offices, or a choir room.

Green Roof: A \$3 million building would not have the previously shown green roof and therefore would not have stairs from the roof to Hackett. The front of the building is being designed in a way that such stairs, which are required by code in order to use roof space, could be added if we choose to add a green roof later.

Interior Finishes: The interior designer has drawn on the colors in our existing building, including the wood ceiling in the bride's walk, to suggest materials for the interior of the building. The initial color shown for the gathering space floors was quite dark, and the building committee has favored a lighter floor that helps keep the space bright. The committee has also asked the interior designer to adjust some of the finishes to present a look that is fresh but still fits with the traditional feel of our main church rather than feeling overly modern or commercial. The building committee is focusing on the use of durable materials, such as a polished concrete floor, which will help keep future maintenance costs low.

Other issues: A \$3 million building would not include renovating the apartment above the sanctuary or repairing any existing damage in the sanctuary. The areas under the existing sanctuary building have not been fully addressed but can possibly be used as storage or other useful spaces. These areas will and are currently being used as storage for the items during the construction period.

The building committee has requested a price list for the various add-ins so that we can begin prioritizing based on our budget. For example, we have asked for the cost of basement flooring comparable to the main floor and actually building out the basement bathrooms rather than just stubbing in plumbing for future build-out. As of this writing, the building committee is still

awaiting this information. From there, we can begin determining our priorities within our final budget.

Summary: \$3 million will get us a fully accessible building with a completed first floor that will provide us the space we need for our programming. Additional money beyond that would help us to have more usable space, including a green roof, a finished basement, and/or a renovated apartment above the sanctuary.

Formation Programs

Adult Formation

I want to thank Fr. John Hickey who has taken on the lion's share of responsibility for this ministry in 2022. One of the cornerstones of our philosophy of church growth at St. Mark's is to provide some kind of adult enrichment every regular Sunday of the year. We have offered Sunday courses in everything from C. S. Lewis to Queen Elizabeth to sermon feedback seminars to The Spirituality of Dirt Water and Trees. One particularly great offering was a series put on by our creation care team that was well-attended and timely. Our primary focus has been on Sunday offerings. With a good deal of my time being taken up with our building project and the transitions that come with it, John and I called together an Adult Education committee to hopefully begin to imagine what this ministry could look like in the future. Hunter Farrow and Caroline Redick have both weighed in and will be helping plan for 2023, and it is our hope to return to offering additional programming, such as a summer series and perhaps a young adult evening class.

Submitted by Ian Burch

Bible Study

Bible study continues to meet weekly from 4-5 pm on Wednesday afternoons. We have from 10-11 members each week meeting by zoom. Some from California!

We choose the books from the Bible we want to read. All reading and discussion are done in class. No homework. Join us for a challenging discussion of the Bible as it relates to our world. John Boyland, a former St. Mark's member handles the IT and helps guide the discussion.

Submitted by Michelle Mooney

Campus Ministry

Campus Ministry at St. Mark's has continued to grow over 2022 we have grown in relationship with students from Marquette University, the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, and the Milwaukee School of Engineering. Students from each of these schools have found fellowship and a safe space for worship at St. Mark's.

I have continued to meet with students from UWM in Sunday Worship, meals, and St. Mark's 20s/30s and Friends programming. In particular, St. Mark's continues to partner with the ELCA Lutheran Campus Ministry at the Corner



House, providing meals and fellowship. In addition, I was offered the opportunity to lead worship in this space, representing a strengthening relationship with the student body of that campus.

At Marquette, the Canterbury Fellowship has grown from one day of weekly worship to four, with new regular members and more instances of organic fellowship as members of that space have played volleyball together, gone to movies, and led worship. We continue to have fellowship and fried food every Wednesday during the school year as they do their good works both in school and beyond.



In all, some 20 members of these campuses have worshipped at St. Mark's. Some have joined the choir, acolyted, taught Sunday School, organized coffee hour, and more in terms of official St. Mark's ministries. However, most importantly, all have brought their gifts to our community and have made it a more wonderful, loving space for all.

In the coming year, I anticipate the leaders from these spaces making St. Mark's a more welcoming space with ease as their gifts seem to have already made it so effortlessly. If you're interested in any of these ministries or in learning how to speak to the needs of students, please contact me at george@stmarksmilwaukee.org.

Respectfully submitted,
Fr. George Arceneaux

Children's/Youth Ministry



Since 2022 began, the youth and family presence at St. Mark's has been one of its greatest spaces of joy. From events, to worship, to Sunday School, and more, families and kids have been wonderfully showing God's grace in our community.

In Sunday School, parents and teachers from the parish have offered up the stories and traditions of the church to kids through the reading of books, offering space for play, and exploring stories through the Godly Play method of storytelling. Attendance in Sunday School has remained on average about seven children, though the number of faces we have seen in that space has increased from 17 to 20.

Not only has engagement in Sunday School increased, but the Christmas Pageant saw an increase in participation as well. Jane Lacy and Susanna Mortara, the major leaders of the Christmas Pageant for many years, offered up their guidance as parents and members of the church without kids stepped up to lead the pageant and prepare for a new generation of Pageant leaders. Twenty-two children participated in the pageant along with their parents, with ages ranging from toddlers to teenagers. Kids were playing and having fun every Sunday throughout last year and in other spaces as well as we held family meals, bounced in houses, painted pumpkins, and hunted for Easter eggs. This isn't to mention the outreach kids helped with as they helped wrap Christmas presents in coordination with Eastside Senior Services, made pies for people in the neighborhood in coordination with All Peoples Church in the Harambee neighborhood, packed period supplies with the Milwaukee Diaper Mission, and raised funds during our Summer of Service fundraiser selling popsicles at the Downer Bike Races.



And all the above is still only the tip of the iceberg with how amazing the kids, youth, parents, families, and members of St. Mark's have been this last year. I anticipate that life continuing to flourish as the life of these young people and those who love them is seemingly boundless. The Youth and Family Ministry program at St. Mark's is always open for new Sunday School teachers and leaders to make space for kids and families. If you're interested in teaching Sunday School or learning more, please reach out to me at george@stmarksmilwaukee.org.

Respectfully submitted,
Fr. George Arceneaux

Confirmation

In the summer of 2022 as Fr. Ian Burch was on sabbatical, St. Mark's hosted the confirmation and reception of nine members of St. Mark's. The service itself was deeply meaningful and a sign of God's wonder manifest in the diverse gifts of those confirmed and received by Bishop Lee. Among those confirmed were two youths from St. Mark's who had participated in confirmation class with me, and, in addition, some who were confirmed and received were longtime members of St. Mark's, newcomers, young professionals, and students associated with St. Mark's campus ministry presence. It was a gift to see so many from different walks of life making a public commitment to the promises of baptism.



St. Mark's will continue to be a place of discernment and welcome for anyone considering confirmation and reception. Should you be interested in confirmation class, or one-on-one conversations about what confirmation and reception might mean, please contact me at george@stmarksmilwaukee.org.

Respectfully submitted,
Fr. George Arceneaux

Liturgical Programs

Acolytes

The acolyte program at St. Mark's remains robust as ministers from the parish continue to offer their gifts in this intergenerational ministry. By the end of 2021, we had grown from three regular members to five. Since then, four acolytes have been trained, we have maintained a rota of five regular acolytes with an additional two substitutes able to help from time to time. In addition, two children from the youth program and two teenagers have also participated in liturgical leadership as torchbearers, crucifers, and boat-bearers.

In the coming year, I anticipate training more acolytes as members of the parish have expressed interest in serving. This remains a wonderful opportunity to both serve the parish and to engage

deeply and differently with worship, and we could always use more acolytes. If you're interested in serving and learning more, I encourage you to contact me at george@stmarksmilwaukee.org.

Respectfully submitted,
Fr. George Arceneaux

Altar Guild

We certainly knew we were "back to business as usual," with Altar Guild in 2022! I want to thank our members Peter Batchelder, Marian Byers, Jayne Heffron, Ginny Schrag, and Jane Shero (Michael Weinert, ad hoc) for their commitment and dedication to making all of the services run smoothly and enhancing our worship space. We sadly said goodbye to Ginny who moved to Colorado in the fall.



Altar Guild's primary role is to prepare the sanctuary for the worship services to include maintaining the vestments, linens, vessels, candles and the supply of wine and communion wafers. Along with our usual Sunday morning and Wednesday evening services and, we assisted with preparations for two weddings, three baptisms, five Celebrations of Life and a visit from Provisional Bishop Lee when he confirmed and received several people into St. Mark's community. We assisted the Flower Guild and Stewardship Committee in setting the tone for Lent, Easter, Advent and the Stewardship campaign.

Through generous donations, we were able to meet our goal of replacing the green and white vestments! Our goal for 2023 is to recruit new members to the Altar Guild. Please contact Meg Edwards at: ms_edwards@sbcglobal.net if you are interested. You may even be able to hear our new organist, Michael practice as you help prepare for a service!

We have enjoyed our collaboration with the clergy, parish administrator, Flower Guild and various parishioners and it has been a pleasure to serve St. Mark's.

Respectfully submitted,
Meg Edwards

Flower Guild

In 2022 the Flower Guild finally returned to its usual ways after the major adjustments for COVID, plus we added another collaboration with the Altar Guild to create a new plan for Ash



Wednesday/Lent for the high altar and for in front of the altar where mass is celebrated.

We would also like to mention that in the last few years or so we have collaborated more with the altar guild and the people of the Fellowship Breakfast Group, in particular at Christmas, for selecting and installing trees, the garland, giant wreath and creche. We are truly grateful for their willingness to work with us. We also have had generous sharing of flowers specifically planted for us from the courtyard during COVID from the Garden Guild. We've also valued the knowledge they've shared with us on numerous occasions.

We anticipate having to change the way we provide altar flowers related to the building project. This may include what flowers we provide as it may affect our space and water supply.

At the end of 2022, we had five members: Kathy Katter, Doris Kiely, Carolynn Theodorah, Donna Whittle, and Judy Young. We have lost five members in 2022: four to leaving St. Mark's and one to another ministry of the church. I, personally, am beyond grateful that those who have left the church still join us for arranging for holidays and helping with special projects.

We are definitely looking for new members for the flower guild. No previous experience required; it's a creative sort of duty. We arrange a Saturday (usually) training session with one of us, going to select flowers and then arranging the flowers together. Just contact Kathy Katter or Judy Young and something can be arranged. Maximum one Saturday of arranging a month, often less; members select their days of duty.



Thank you so much from us to all of you who have sponsored flowers, either for a Sunday or on Easter.

Submitted by Judy Young

Lay Readers

At Sunday Eucharist and other services, lay readers read Old and New Testament lessons, as designated by the Revised Common Lectionary (RCL) of the Episcopal Church. This lectionary is held in common with churches Today, the RCL is used widely around the world and across denominations. <https://www.lectionarypage.net/>

This ministry serves to clearly and articulately present the assigned texts to the congregation. By virtue of these readings, the laity joins the ordained clergy in bringing the liturgy to life.

If you are interested in participating as a lay reader, please contact Kathy Katter. Our thanks to the following parishioners who served as lay readers in 2022:

Lucy Cooper
Tom Davies
Kathie Eilers
Bill Florescu
Jayne Heffron
Kathy Katter
Vince Katter
Jane Lacy

Tom Lacy
Sean Larsen
Michael O'Hear
Kyle Potter
Emily Rohde
Susan Rohde
Steve Rohde
Sarah Marie Streed

Linda Steiger
Maryclaire Torinus
Travis Trott
Ethan Vander Leek
Graicey Van Spankeren
Genevieve Vassell
Barbara Wuest
Jamie Zingler

Submitted by Kathy Katter

Morning Prayer

The Zoom Morning Prayer group is an adaptation from the COVID lockdown that has continued into its third year as a vital part of the prayer ministry of St. Mark's. Three-six members of the church pray online for twenty minutes Monday-Thursday at 9 am. We pray for the church, the world, and each other's concerns. It's a beautiful and creative prayer, and it is an expression of our Episcopal and even Benedictine spirituality. For part of the year, we were also praying on Fridays, though our group shrunk a bit and we decided to keep it to four days a week. For 2023, we plan to make certain that the parish continues to know that we are meeting and that everyone is welcome. In our tradition, we preach that prayer shapes our beliefs, and I have been lucky enough to watch this in real time with these wonderful and faithful Christians.

Submitted by Ian Burch

Music

I've been working at St. Mark's a little over four months, beginning on Thursday, September 15 with my first Sunday being September 18. My first goal has been to meet the parishioners and learn as much as I can about the parish. The weekly coffee hour has been incredibly helpful with

this goal. It's obvious to me that this time is an important component to parish life. My second goal is to learn the rubrics and nuances of Episcopal liturgy as well as the liturgical and musical traditions here at St. Marks. The similarities between Roman Catholic and Episcopal worship have aided with my transition here. Nonetheless, I often remind myself that I need to view my ministry through a different lens.

Ian tasked me with reorganizing the choir. Rehearsals commenced at the beginning of October and the choir's first Sunday was October 16. I had all prospective choir members meet me one-on-one. This allowed me to get to know each of them a bit and hear their voices so that I could plan. It was at one of those meetings that I learned that there hasn't been much of a choir since before Covid, so I felt as if I was starting from square one. As of this writing, there are 13 singers, three of whom are stipended section leaders/cantors. Rehearsals are on Thursday evenings, which is a change. As I began organizing the group one prospective singer mentioned a conflict with Wednesday evenings, the usual rehearsal night. After polling the others to see if Thursday evening would work, the decision was made to move to Thursdays. Rehearsals take place from 7 to 8:30 in the Music Room. We also rehearse on Sunday morning at 9:15 to prepare for the service. New members are always welcome! Please contact me to see about joining the choir.



Once the choir was regularly singing, I was feeling a bit uncomfortable in the chancel because of a lack of space. Additionally, Ian mentioned to me that to him the space was a bit disheveled. That led to the decision to move the grand piano from the chancel to the nave floor. This has proven to be a wise decision. Not only do we have more room in the chancel, but many of you have also said to me that the piano sounds so much better in the body of the church. Thanks to Vince and his crew for moving the instrument!

Over the past four months, I've had the organ tuned twice. Pipe organs don't like large shifts in temperature and humidity. The heat and humidity of the summer and subsequent cold winter weather adversely affected the tuning and the mechanical system. Guest instrumentalists shared that they struggle to play in tune with the organ because it has dropped in pitch. Additionally some of the pipes don't play. The reason is that they are victims of dirt and dust

over the years. The organ will be 100 years old in 2027. Once the building project is complete and the dust literally settles, it would be wise to have the instrument completely cleaned and tuned for its centennial.

On December 11 we had Advent Lessons and Carols. I thought it would be good to have the service to show to the parish that the choir is back and to evangelize to the broader community. It was a lovely service. Thanks to Ian, the readers and all who made it a delightful experience.

My plans for 2023 are to continue to meet people and learn. Having worked in other parishes, I know that it takes a year, that is one complete liturgical, to get a true picture of the parish. My interim agreement expires in September. This summer Ian and I will decide if I will continue on or not.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you for your hospitality, encouragement and support. These past months have been a real blessing for me, mostly due to you, St. Mark's parishioners. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you ever have any questions, comments or suggestions.

Michael Batcho
Interim Director of Music

Ushers

I'm grateful for St. Mark's and all the volunteer ushers in 2022. With the new building project, ushers will be even more important to our Sunday morning service. Ushers help provide a warm atmosphere at St. Mark's and some stability during this important change.

The ushers' most important priority is welcoming newcomers and parishioners to church services. This year we had four teams on a rotating basis. We could always use more volunteers. It is not hard to volunteer. All training happens during the service, and teams consist of experienced ushers paired with new volunteers. Please contact me or the rector, if you would like to help. Just stop and ask on Sunday morning. I do enjoy the perspective of our worship service from the "back bench."

I would like to thank our volunteers Sandy Boltz, Bill Florescu, Bobby Gilbert, Steve Martinie, Marilyn McKnight, Ellie Mixter-Keller, Andrew Muriuki, and Linda Steiger. This year Marian Byers, John Johnson, Caroline Redick and Elizabeth Willis joined our team!

I'm also extremely and deeply grateful for the years of service from the following ushers, Virginia Chappell, Barbara Costanzo, Steve Butcher, Raymond Chou, and Ron and Jamie Zingler.

Peace,
Mary Ross

Community Mission

Common Ground

In community organizing, we work for God's Kingdom by helping people connect with one another to bring meaningful change and work for the common good. In June 2022, we began a series of meetings with a professional organizer and started a six-person organizing work group. Our work group has had meetings with many of you in order to learn what justice issues matter most to the people of this parish. I am excited to report that in a rapidly-growing parish with more than 250 active members, many of you have taken meetings with us to tell your story and share your own passion for justice. As a result, we can develop projects that matter to you. The issues you spoke about the most include environmental justice, reckless driving, equitable housing, and access to physical and mental health care. We have also taken research meetings with city officials and fellow community leaders to explore possibilities for working together on these specific issues.



Common Ground participants stand at the ground-breaking ceremony for the new football field at Washington High School—the culmination of a justice campaign that many organizations worked for over several years.

Our church is not alone in this work; the parish is partnered with 40+ other churches and community institutions as owners of an organization called Common Ground of Southeastern Wisconsin. I have experienced three exciting benefits of that partnership. First, our parish benefits from the guidance of seasoned professional organizers as we deepen our connections with one another and with Milwaukeeans of goodwill. Second, this partnership with Black and Hispanic churches opens a door to new friendships and common projects that reflect our growing commitment to racial justice. Third, many of the member institutions that comprise

Common Ground are already working on exciting campaigns for systemic change regarding reckless driving, equitable housing and better jobs for the formerly incarcerated, and several more (Visit the [Common Ground website](#) for details, and to learn about past victories). We can build new projects as well as join existing campaigns with other churches and community organizations.

You can support this formative phase by completing the justice survey (check your email) or having a relational meeting with a member of our working group to talk about your own interests and experiences in working for justice. Contact me at kyle.potter@gmail.com to get connected!

Kyle Potter, Interim Chair
Community Organizing Work Group/Common Ground Partnership

Community Partners Committee



The Community Partners Committee organized another wonderful Summer of Service. We built upon our existing partnership with Kinship Community Food Center (formerly Riverwest Food Pantry) by sending volunteers to sort and distribute food on two dates. We also served meals at the Gathering on two dates, sent volunteers to the Milwaukee Diaper Mission Warehouse, packed period supplies here at church for MDM, hosted a brunch for clients of Eastside Senior Services, and recruited new ESS volunteers. In December, we held another diaper drive for MDM and wrapped Christmas gifts for ESS clients.



Over the summer, we decided to try something a little different. Rather than the usual corn roast, we sold Pete’s Pops at the Downer Bike Race and has some games for children. Our fundraiser was hampered by rainy weather and small crowds, but our volunteers all had a great time and we still managed to send some money to Kinship Community Food Center. We opted to keep the annual pumpkin sale no-contact again this year, and it was of course a smashing success! A huge thanks to Marian Byers, Carolyn Davies, Charles Camilli, and Ron and Jamie Zingler for all their work on these projects. And a huge thank you to Ashley Dallman, for organizing the January drive to support the work of OneHope27, which provides items for children being placed in foster care. We will need a new Pumpkin Sale Captain for 2023, and we could always use some help with finding and planning ways to help our parishioners put their faith into action. If you are interested, please contact the rector or the senior warden.

Faithfully,
Brooke Frizzell, Senior Warden

Giving Garden



Even with big changes (loss of the Community Garden space), a group of five intrepid gardeners grew vegetables and herbs for the Kinship Community Food Center. The Kinship cooks and pantry workers alike welcomed the fresh produce as a nutritious addition to their offerings.

You can find our garden space on the Belleview side of the church, near the chapel doors. Our team is Barbara Wuest, Meg

Edwards, Sara Bitner, Michelle Mooney and me. And we thank Michael Weinert, Nate Spielman and his sons Blake and Jay, and George Arceneaux for constructing two raised beds and filling them with soil. The 2022 harvest included Swiss chard (our biggest crop), green onions, leeks, radishes, lettuce, sweet peppers, beets, parsley, rosemary and chives.

We have big plans for 2023, including a third raised bed so we can grow even more! You are most welcome to join us. Just call or email me for details.

Submitted by Jane Shero

Community Life

20s/30s Group and Friends



St. Mark's continues to offer space for young adults to explore where God is in their lives and provides opportunities for fellowship. The 20s/30s and Friends group has offered events to play and relax with events ranging from plays and board game days to Taco Tuesday meals and sports event outings. The young adult demographic at St. Mark's has also grown, and these new members are offering further welcome to young people who walk through our doors. Members in their 20s and 30s have been confirmed, served coffee hour, joined the choir, helped in Vacation

Bible Camp and Sunday School, and attended Episcopal 101 to just name a few spaces of their leadership and participation.

I anticipate that in 2023, the increased presence of these amazing people will provide a great welcome for new young adults to explore their faith and find community. If you're interested in being part of the 20s/30s and Friends programming, please be encouraged to reach out to me at george@stmarksmilwaukee.org

Respectfully submitted,
Fr. George Arceneaux



Coffee Hour



In 2022 we returned to having coffee hour indoors in the Parish Hall. Yay! There is always help available if you want to host, and a number of newer members were hosts. We had a number of special coffee hours, including but not limited to Bishop Lee's visit, Pancake Breakfast, a party to wish Steve Wolff farewell, and Harvest Fest. Children's tables with paper and crayons were well received by the children. Thank you, George, for starting this. In 2023, we will develop ways to continue our Coffee Hour fellowship while we build the new parish hall.

Submitted by Marilyn Hamilton

Cooking Crew

The cooking crew is responsible for preparing meals and delivering them to parishioners that are home from surgery, sickness, or having a new baby.

We usually supply them for about 10 days. This is a very concrete way to show we care and have compassion for their needs. Anyone can get on the list for cooking by contacting Michelle Mooney.

Thank you and blessings.

Submitted by Michelle Mooney

Fellowship Group

The St. Mark's Fellowship Group meets on the third Saturday of each month at St. Mark's for breakfast and conversation. We start the coffee and food prep at about 8 am, checking the donut quality from time to time. A typical breakfast will have donuts, bacon, sausage, eggs, a vegetable saute, vegetarian roasted potatoes with rosemary, and toast (typically sourdough) available. Since we are in Wisconsin, cheese is present, as it should be. Once breakfast is ready, typically about 9 am, we have a brief prayer of intercession and thanksgiving, and then dig in. We catch up with each other for about an hour, and then clean up. If there are seasonal tasks related to the life of the congregation, we help get those accomplished.



In 2022, we continued to meet for breakfast and conversation. The workday portion became more active as we started focusing on preparing for the upcoming parish hall building project with cleanouts of rooms and moves of items in the existing 1949 building.

In February, we hosted a Shrove Sunday Pancake Coffee hour for 65 people featuring 200 (!) pancakes made by Blake and Jay Spielman-Rice, and Julius Alvarez.

Our December meeting was a great example of what we do: a convivial breakfast followed by tree wrangling, rood beam wrapping, and wreath wrestling in preparation for Christmas services, at the request of our Flower Guild folks.

A huge thank you to all the folks that have helped prepare breakfast, have come to breakfast to make it a wonderful gathering, and have helped out at the workdays afterward, with special thanks to regulars Bill Florescu, Marilyn Hamilton, Kyle Potter, Micheal O'Hear, Andrew Muriuki, Sue and Steve Rohde, Michael Roberts, and Virginia Riggs.

If you're looking to have a bite to eat on a Saturday morning and to connect with folks at church, you are most welcome.

To get on the mailing list for the group, so you can get breakfast reminders about a week out, send me a note at vkatter@gmail.com or give me a call at 414-403-4596.

Respectfully submitted,
Vince Katter

Garden Guild

2022 was a very busy year for the garden guild! In anticipation of construction, we transplanted dozens of plants from the courtyard garden and the front of the existing Parish Hall; replanted the area under the brides walk windows; cleaned up the east side of the building (old dog run) so that it can be planted in future as a garden/play space; continued planting native plants for pollinators along the Belleview side of the church. Whew! Thank you to all who came and helped with some very heavy work.



This coming garden season will find us concentrating on Belleview side of the building as well as making plans for the courtyard garden and a new entrance area by the office. We will do our best to keep the church grounds beautiful even through the turmoil of construction.

Interested in joining us? We meet Tuesdays from 5 to 6:30 pm starting in about mid-May. Please call me if you have any questions.

See you in the gardens!

Submitted by Jane Shero

Pastoral Concerns

Pastoral Concerns is a small group, chosen by the rector and deacon, to support those who have acute or chronic illnesses. We have a list of members that we send cards or make phone calls. We have been less active during the pandemic but hope to pick up our activity soon.

Submitted by Michelle Mooney

Prayer Team

The Prayer Team has one purpose: to pray for the members, friends, and visitors of St. Mark's, and their family members and friends. Requests for prayer may be forwarded by our priests, deacon, parish administrator, members, friends, or visitors. Prayers are usually requested for illness, surgery, or death; but may be requested for any concern. Prayer Team members undertake to pray on a daily basis until the issue is resolved.

The only quality required of a Prayer Team member is a willingness to pray. There is no required training. As it says in Romans 8:26, "We do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words."

We are always ready to welcome new members, as we are a church ministry that can never have too many members.

There are 16 people on the team. We lost a member and added two new members in 2022.

Submitted by Susan Rohde, Prayer Team Leader

Quilting Circle

The Quilting Circle is open to anyone who would like to help us make quilts for all the newly baptized members of St. Mark's. We are a small group and would always appreciate some new members. We will be meeting at Saint John's On The Lake on the third Saturday of the month from about 9:30 to 11:30 am.

When our new parish hall is finished, we will probably go back there. You need no particular skills to machine quilt and everyone is glad to teach you. So welcome. Thanks to Judith Miller, Jane Shero, and Jamie Zingler for all their hard work.

Submitted by Michele Mooney

Shepherds Ministry

Our Shepherds Ministry committee is tasked with weaving newcomers together into the life of the parish. Our 2022 committee was Bekki Schmitt, Andrew Muriuki, Michelle Mooney, and Jamie Zingler, with some additional support from Vince and Kathy Katter. This year, the ministry experimented with welcome socials at the rector's house, and they seem to have been very successful.

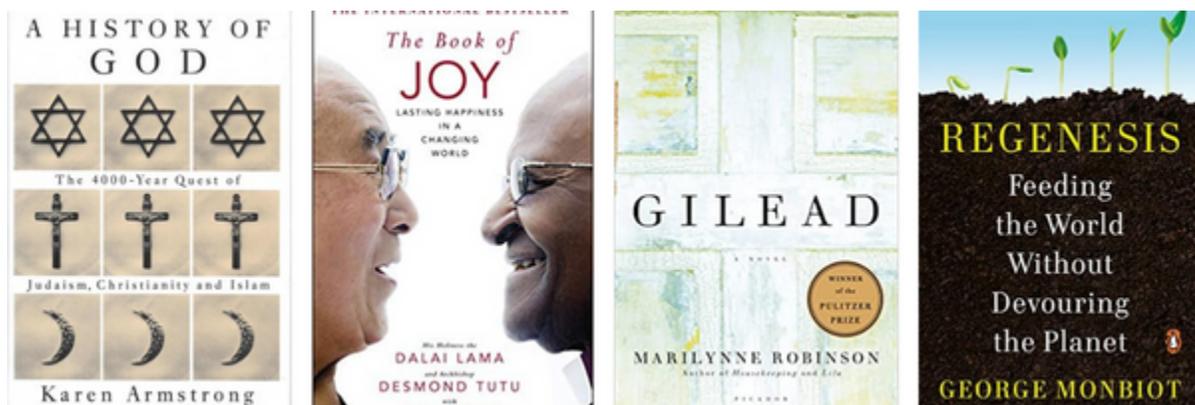
We have managed to invite over 35 new people to an event, and they were warm and friendly affairs. It's hard sometimes to get to know newcomers on a busy Sunday morning, and the intimacy of a small group seems to set people up well for flourishing as future members of St. Mark's. I often think that the transition of people from strangers to friends is some of the most

important work we can do as a church, and I am grateful for the work of this ministry. For 2023, it is time to recruit two-three new members of the Shepherds Ministry, and if you are interested in that work, contact Fr. Ian Burch.

Submitted by Ian Burch

Thursday Night Book Club

The Thursday Night Book Club is another creative invention of the COVID lockdown. Each Thursday, 5-10 parishioners come together to discuss a portion of a book that we have read together. We read broadly – environmentalism, spirituality, indigenous wisdom, science, and good old-fashioned fiction. We meet most weeks of the year, taking time off for holidays and sometimes between books. The rector leads most meetings, with sometimes leadership coming from either the assistant priest or from within the group.



For 2023, our goals will be to continue reading to deepen our faith, our friendship, and our commitment to living out our Christian values in the world. The group has been offered the opportunity to meet in person but has preferred Zoom. I imagine this group will continue to meet all year, and we warmly invite anyone to join.

Submitted by Ian Burch

Women's Book Group

We meet every six weeks on Monday night. Members select the books, each taking a turn as discussion leader. This past year we met on Zoom but will be switching over to a combination of in-person and Zoom in 2023. During the winter months, we will meet on zoom and the rest of the year in person in our homes. We have about 8-10 members with two new people joining us this past year. We read mostly fiction but have read some nonfiction.

Submitted by Ellie Moseley

Administrative Programs

Building and Maintenance

Here are the following significant changes to the existing 1911 Sanctuary and 1949 Parish Hall structures in 2022:

- The sign plexiglass was replaced and stair edge markers were installed on the main exterior stairs to the sanctuary entrance by John Schmitt. Many thanks to John!
- The alarm system panel located on the 2nd-floor rear alcove of the curate apartment was upgraded to use cellular communications, allowing the church to disconnect a landline.
- Existing parish snowblowers were recycled as the cost of their repair was the same or more than the cost of new snowblowers.

Sexton/Housekeeper changes:

In preparation for the expected demolition of the 1949 Parish Hall building as part of the construction project for the new Parish Hall, the apartments used to compensate the sexton and housekeeper were vacated.

Sexton duties have been divided up as follows: opening and closing the building for services is done by clergy and for events by specific volunteers, coordinated by the parish administrator. Light bulb replacement and minor maintenance is done by the junior warden, with the assistance of volunteers, typically on parish workdays. The parish hall will be left set up for coffee hour as a default, with changes as necessary communicated to the parish administrator. The junior warden performs hall resets with the assistance of volunteers. Snow removal is done on a hybrid basis. Skrauss (our previous sexton) will shovel our walkways on a fee-for-service basis. We are third on his list for this service, as he is now a sexton at two other churches. An on-call list of parish volunteers has been established to shovel walkways if a snowfall occurs on a Wednesday, Saturday afternoon, or Sunday morning prior to services. Parking lot snow removal is done by the junior warden and his snowblower, as our previous plow service declined to renew with us, and there are no current slots available with a range of providers contacted.

Housekeeper duties have been divided up as follows: staff and ministry heads empty the trash cans in their areas as needed. General cleaning of the parish hall and sanctuary is done twice a month by Jyoti (our previous housekeeper) on a fee-for-service basis. The junior warden does a weekly walkthrough on Saturday to assess and address any housekeeping issues prior to Sunday worship.

If you are interested in assisting with building and maintenance tasks, please contact me at vkatter@gmail.com or by phone at 414-403 4596.

Submitted by Vince Katter

Stewardship

St. Mark's continues to be a parish full of great generosity. This year's stewardship campaign was the biggest it's ever been, and we raised over \$320,000. Our median pledge increased, and our church growth continues to be reflected in the number of new pledgers. I would like to thank this year's stewardship committee for its fabulous work: Kathy Katter, Craig Frizzell, Maryclaire Torinus, Graicey Van Spankeren, and Laura Peters-Shimko. Thank you as always to the Rev. Ian Burch for his support and leadership that allow us to continually break our fundraising records.

Submitted by Travis Trott