



THE
LION'S MARK

NEWSLETTER FOR SAINT MARK'S CHURCH, PHILADELPHIA

A COMMUNITY THAT GATHERS IN FAITH, SERVES IN LOVE, AND PROCLAIMS HOPE, THROUGH JESUS CHRIST.

FAITHFUL, TRUE & BOLD.

A POST-COVID MANIFESTO FOR THE PARISH

FATHER SEAN MULLEN

Saint Mark's is a eucharistic community. We are called by Christ to gather in his Presence (bearing our oblations of bread and wine) and to be knit together to become his body in the world as we share his Body and his Blood.

Saint Mark's is a sacramental community. We rejoice that God has given us outward and visible signs of the regular and frequent gifts of grace with which he showers us; and that God has called us to hold those sacramental signs up for the world around us to see, so that others, too, will be called into the fellowship of God's grace and love.

Saint Mark's is a countercultural community. We foster holiness, beauty, generosity, and selflessness in one another and our environment, and we see the giftedness of all things in the midst of a market-driven world in which everything is bought and sold. We raise in song that which might otherwise be left to mere speech. We are working to extend the reach of the Gospel in a context in which the church is often in decline.

We believe that God has called us and inspired us by the Holy Spirit to follow the way of Jesus, to stand for his truth, and to rejoice in the gift of new life bestowed on us by Christ with the power of his resurrection.

For nearly 175 years Saint Mark's has gathered a community to worship and to pray, and to be nourished by the Body of Christ, and formed into a living temple of God's praise, and to serve God's people in the world.

The Covid-19 global pandemic disrupted every aspect of ministry here one way or another—but it has not diminished the power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. As we emerge from the pandemic, God is calling us to revive, renew, and increase our work and ministry here, and to prepare for the next 25 years. We have every reason to believe that we'll continue to be countercultural in this next quarter century. May God help us to be faithful, true, and bold!





FAITHFUL, TRUE & BOLD.

A POST-COVID MANIFESTO FOR THE PARISH

CHURCH IN THE WAKE OF PANDEMIC

The last 16 months or more of pandemic have served as an accelerator of processes taking place throughout society, including the decline of mainline Christian churches in number and influence. The church was waning as an influencer in much of America, and it is unlikely we can catch up again with the forces that have displaced us.

Perhaps it never was a matter of real importance or identity that the church must function as an influencer. As we emerge from the pandemic, we are challenged to articulate anew what will be the work and ministry of the church.

I have been encouraging the leadership of the parish to think about our emergence from the pandemic not so much as a door to be opened and then walked through, but as a ramp that needs to lead us over time into the next phase of our life together as God's people. Some of us will need a shorter or longer ramp; some will be okay with a steep ramp; others will need the slope to be gradual.

This ramp can take several configurations. What's important is to *be well aware of what planks we be needed to build the ramp*—these will be the substance and content of the life of the church for the foreseeable future.

Here are my reflections about the planks we'll need to bring to build the ramp to find our way into whatever it is that God is calling us on the other side of this pandemic.

You will see that the planks *I imagine* are made of familiar material—aspects of ministry that we have been practicing here. It's our capacity for ministry that allows us to live into our mission, to be the community and the people God is calling us to be.

So in many ways, identifying these planks amounts to a reiteration of many parts of ministry we have always been aware of here. But there are some new aspects to keep in mind, too.

WORSHIP + PRAYER

CARE OF GOD'S PEOPLE

CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP

HOSPITALITY

THE PARISH

WORSHIP + PRAYER

Like God's people in every age, the church today is called first and foremost to worship God.

When we worship God we are:

- Acknowledging God as our maker and our redeemer.
- Tethering ourselves to the covenant of love into which God called us through the death and resurrection of his Son, Jesus.
- Aligning ourselves with the historic faith of the church as expressed in the Apostles' and Nicene creeds.

As Episcopalians, we draw on the Prayer Book tradition to ground our faith in the ancient practice of the church as expressed in our own Anglican heritage. This tradition also grounds our parish community in the rhythm of daily prayer, which is part of the life of prayer taking place throughout the broader church all around the world at every moment of every day.



Children and their families belong in church. This is an axiom of our parish life. We rejoice in the places that children take in the life of worship and prayer here.

Children have a heightened religious potential and therefore are ready for Christian formation, and their prayers and praises enrich the life of the church. Whether in a Christian formation program, as acolytes, or singing in the choir, we know that children and their families belong in church. When kids are in church worshipping, it becomes clear that they belong in every other aspect of the life of the church, too. And we are poorer without them.

Repetition is a hallmark of our approach to corporate, public worship and prayer. We repeat patterns and prayers because it is by repetition that these patterns and prayers are engraved on our hearts and shape our lives. Variety and novelty may still be found within the repeated patterns of our worship and prayer.



THE ESSENTIAL STRUCTURES OF REPETITION ARE:

1) **The Mass.** Celebrated daily at Saint Mark's since 1884, it is here that we find our most immediate encounter with the living God in word and sacrament, as we follow Christ's command to "do this in remembrance of me;" and we form the community of faith that is shaped by the Holy Spirit. The daily Mass is the quiet heartbeat at the center of our life in the city. For in the Mass, the Gospel is proclaimed every day, the Spirit's work is encountered every day, the living Presence of Christ is among us every day, and the people of God are strengthened, formed, and sent out into the world, every day.

2) **The Daily Offices of Morning and Evening Prayer,** which provide a steady rhythm of prayer that's built around the regular recitation of the Psalm—the heart of the prayer life of ancient Israel—an ongoing reading of Scripture, and the articulation of prayers for the world and the church. We say some combination of the Daily Offices in Church every day.

Christian practices at home. Worship and prayer can and should happen at home as well as in church. Whether you are a family, a couple, or single, we hope you'll adopt some Christian practices to be part of your daily life. Saying grace before meals is a great example; or daily spiritual or scriptural reading; praying the Angelus three times a day; or regular meditative prayer. We try to equip people with resources to help adopt Christian practices as a habit at home.



CARE OF GOD'S PEOPLE



All of God's people need care and attention at some point in their lives. The church has always been affected by what's often called Jesus' preferential option for the poor, the church cannot be fully and authentically herself if she is not ministering meaningfully to the poor and those in need. We take seriously Jesus' teaching that if we have not cared for the poor, the outcast, and those in need, then we have not cared for him. The gap between rich and poor is ever-widening in our nation today, and the church cannot ignore this reality. We have expanded our outreach ministry during the pandemic, and we have no reason to think that we have finished expanding.

THE PRINCIPAL OUTREACH MINISTRIES ARE:

THE SATURDAY SOUP BOWL

Providing food to hungry people has also created a place of community on Saturday mornings at Saint Mark's. We hope to restore that sense of community when it is again safe to gather people in numbers here on Locust Street. Meanwhile, we have taken the ministry to the streets to ensure we are doing what we can to feed those who are hungry.

THE FOOD CUPBOARD

Providing staples to households for nearly 40 years, we expanded this ministry during the pandemic in two ways. First, we formed partnerships with two parishes in South Philadelphia to support their food programs by providing what we have access to as an authorized Food Cupboard in the city.

Second, we launched PBJ&L (Peanut Butter, Jelly, & Love) which puts a simple bag lunch in the hands (and tummies) off those who need it on the days that the Food Cupboard is open Tuesdays through Fridays. We are actively discussing the expansion of this aspect of our outreach during the week.

PARISH PARTNERSHIPS

We work with the Church of the Crucifixion and St. Simon the Cyrenian extend the ministry of the Food Cupboard. Ministry Residents and volunteers pick up food from the Philabundance Food Bank and deliver it to Crucifixion on Tuesday mornings and St. Simon's on Friday mornings, which we help distribute there on Saturday mornings.



ST. JAMES SCHOOL

As its parent church and founding institution, we support the school in every way we can. We rejoice that the ministry of the school is not only education but transformation—the ministry of the Gospel—of entire families. The expansive vision of mission at the school affects the entire neighborhood.

PEACE & JUSTICE

The prophets called for justice and promised peace. We believe that this call remains a part of God's intention for his people. This community has historically felt called to stand up for two specific expressions of justice:

EQUALITY AND RESPECT FOR PEOPLE OF ALL GENDERS AND SEXUAL ORIENTATIONS

No one should be despised or excluded because of sexual orientation or gender. God's call to equality and respect, will, we hope, lead us individually and together to behave with a responsible and healthy ethical vision that understands the human body as the work of God's hand, a temple of the Spirit, and an object of holiness.

ANTIRACISM

The Vestry and clergy are actively engaged in a discussion about antiracism, into which we expect to invite the broader parish, as we discern how God is calling us to actively address the sin of racism in our own hearts and in our society, that has resulted in so much injustice for so much of our history, and which the Gospel calls us to work against.

NEIGHBOR CARE

Establishes a "structure of caring" within the parish community, linking members of a large and diverse body to one another. Neighbor Care clusters provide ways for parishioners, both new and old, who are in close proximity to one another to connect with one another in fellowship on a regular basis, strengthening our relationships with one another, and providing a space in which to deepen relationships, so that we can better care for one another in good times and in hard times. During the pandemic, several Neighbor Care clusters have adopted an occasional habit of praying Compline together online toward the end of the day. This practice of prayer has been a great encouragement and a strong tie, binding neighbors together at a time when we've so often been kept apart.

CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP

Stewardship is often thought of as a euphemism for fundraising—and perhaps sometimes it takes on that meaning.

Real stewardship, however, is a process of developing an aspect of Christian character: **generosity of spirit and good judgment in using the gifts with which we have been provided.**

Caring for our beautiful buildings here on Locust Street is an aspect of Christian stewardship, just as is the development of ministries for families and children.

Cutting the grass and dead-heading the roses are acts of Christian stewardship, as is saying Morning Prayer, or taking a long walk every day for exercise.

As stewards of God's gifts we are cultivating an awareness that every part of our being and everything we have are gifts from God. Becoming a Christian steward means we are cultivating a generous spirit in each other so that each of us, made in God's image, will discover a godly impulse to give, to share, and to enrich others, not just ourselves.

Like households, most churches need to be prepared for at least three kinds of expenses:

1. **Regular operating expenses** that recur year after year, just to carry out the daily ministry of the parish.
2. **Funds to help in times of crisis**, whether to provide to those in need, or to be prepared for emergencies here. Ideally, we make funds available for both contingencies.
3. **Long-term, future-oriented planning and preparation**, because the church's ministry goes on, generation after generation, and we want to enable the future, not handicap it.

A generous spirit has possessed so many of you who have continued to give to Saint Mark's during these days when the pandemic affected every single aspect of our lives and ministry. As we look to the upcoming celebration of our 175th anniversary we'll be looking at what kind of stewardship will be needed to prepare this parish for the next 25 years of our life, and beyond.



HOSPITALITY

The Mass is a highly ritualized form of table fellowship in which we gather at a table on which is placed bread and wine.

The blessing and grace that flow from this supreme moment of fellowship extend to every other table at which we gather for company—to break bread together, especially when we do so in Christ’s name.

We are called to offer hospitality, to one another and to the stranger.

We could probably run the church without a sacristy, but can you run a church without a kitchen? Food (and sometimes wine) enliven our fellowship

and give us occasion to extend our gatherings, as we often do (especially on Sundays and feast days).

A call to hospitality also drives much of our outreach ministry. During the days of pandemic, it has been a sadness that the guests we feel called to feed have been unable to feel welcome and gather inside our building. But, since the call to feed the hungry did not disappear, we have also learned to take hospitality to the streets. Hospitality is a Christian practice and a Christian virtue, and we hope that Saint Mark’s will always be a place where hospitality is practiced well, its virtue upheld.



THE PARISH

We assert and affirm the place of the parish community as the primary locus of the work and ministry of the Gospel in the world today. Parishes are where Christians are formed, and where we are welcomed into the baptismal covenant, and where we live out part of that covenant. Parishes are where we receive instruction and encouragement for implementing Christian practices at home. Parishes are where we learn to be good Christian stewards of the gifts God has given to us. Parishes are the communities in which we learn to offer and seek forgiveness. Parishes are the communities from which we are sent out to go into the world proclaiming the Good News of God in Christ, and to be Christ's hands and feet in the world.

The parish remains the fundamental and indispensable institutional organ of the church in the first half of the 21st century. In this century, program-sized parishes (with average Sunday attendance of 200 persons or more) are more likely to be healthy and sustainable. Parishes that are growing are more likely to be healthy and sustainable, since there is not really any such thing as stasis for a living organism. If you are not growing you are probably in decline (maintenance is a form of decline). Parishes that adopt an outward-facing posture are more likely to be healthy and sustainable, since the Gospel, by its nature, demands us to be engaged in ministry that leads us outside of ourselves, beyond ourselves.



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EMERGENCE

With these planks, we can build a ramp that brings us out of this pandemic and into the next phase of our common life.

We can revive, renew, and enlarge our ministry here. As usual, doing so requires us to expand our capacity for ministry. Every time we have found or built new capacity for ministry, God has blessed us richly, and we have every reason to believe that pattern of blessing will continue, as long as we remain faithful, true, and bold!



Thanks be to God!



SINGERS

NEW MUSICAL OPPORTUNITY

LED BY BRYAN DUNNEWALD

Saint Mark's is looking for passionate volunteer singers. Beginning in October, we will establish the Saint Mark's Singers which will focus on performing beautiful music beyond the scope of what we currently sing in our other choirs.

We will offer two concerts this season and grow our musical offerings as time goes on to include additional services and performances. Our Sunday evening rehearsals will leave members feeling inspired and energized, and we will gather in a supportive, friendly community united by a shared love of singing.

This is a great opportunity for those who would love to sing at a high level with a manageable time commitment. The only time we meet—for rehearsal and performance—is Sunday afternoons, allowing members flexibility throughout the rest of their week.

- ⊕ Rehearsals take place each Sunday from 5-6 p.m. October-May (with holiday breaks).
- ⊕ Concerts will be held on December 19 and May 15 at 4 p.m.
- ⊕ Anyone who has basic music-reading skills and can carry a tune is encouraged to join us for a rehearsal and meet with Bryan about joining the Singers.
- ⊕ Opportunities for leadership positions and solos within the choir are available to our volunteers.
- ⊕ The Saint Mark's Singers will be led by Bryan Dunnewald, Saint Mark's Assistant Organist and Choirmaster. He is a dynamic young conductor who has led world-class ensembles of volunteers and professionals alike, from the Buffalo Philharmonic to Marble Collegiate Church, not to mention our own choirs! His rehearsals are marked by a warm, friendly atmosphere centered around high-caliber musicianship. These rehearsals leave musicians inspired to grow musically, and lead to fulfilling, engaging performances for everyone in the room.

Please contact Bryan via email (bdunnewald@saintmarksphiladelphia.org) if you're interested in joining.



FROM THE ORGANIST & CHOIRMASTER

ROBERT MCCORMICK

It was wonderfully gladdening to be able to have all nine of our professional staff singers for the last few weeks of the choir season, Ascension Day through Corpus Christi. For singers and choirmaster alike, it provided a much welcome sense of almost normalcy (albeit with masks).

Further, after the High Mass on Corpus Christi, many of our boy and girl choristers, as well as adult volunteers, joined the staff singers for an outdoor choir photo, followed by ice cream sandwiches, lemonade, and unsweetened iced tea (the latter of which seemed only to appeal to yours truly ... have I somehow been transported back to my native state of Georgia?). It was a good and joyful gathering, as we all are optimistic about the season to come.

I am looking forward to Choir Camp, July 26-30, and the anticipated resumption of in-person rehearsals for all our boys and girls. It is as of yet unclear as to what extent they will be able to sing for services in the fall, at least in full, and likewise, I'm not sure exactly when guidelines will permit us to once again have the much-missed sounds of adult volunteers singing as well in our liturgies. Certainly I hope and pray it will be very soon, and as I wrote a few sentences ago, we are optimistic!

Speaking of anticipation and optimism, elsewhere in this issue you will read from Bryan Dunnewald, happily now full-time as Assistant Organist & Choirmaster, about an all-new choir to be composed of all volunteer singers, beginning sometime in

the fall of this year. We plan to cast the net wide, and hope to draw in talented folks eager to sing together. This will in no way be a lesser group to our present mixed choir of adults, merely different. One key difference will be the time commitment; the present choir requires an average of 5 hours per week. The new choir will only require something like an hour or so per week, and it will embark on musical endeavors beyond the scope of what we are able to do at present. Do reach out to Bryan if you would like further details: bdunnewald@saintmarksphiladelphia.org.

We are also eager to hear from those who may be interested in auditioning as volunteers for the parish (Sunday morning) choir. In addition to the time commitment, the musical demands of that ensemble require a good deal of previous choral experience, strong sight-reading ability, and a voice and ear ready and able to blend. Please reach out to me for further information: ramccormick@saintmarksphiladelphia.org.

I would also be delighted to hear from parents of boys and girls who may be interested in our professional Boys' and Girls' Choir. No previous experience is required (we will teach them!), and children of any or no religious affiliation are warmly welcomed.

In the meanwhile, I am grateful to hear again the marvelous strains of congregational singing. I fear the first Sunday with a congregational hymn, I nearly couldn't keep the organ loud enough (ha!) to support a glorious rendering of "Praise, my soul, the King of heaven." The congregation's singing is a huge, essential part of our worship, easily as important as any choir, and we surely have missed it over these difficult months. Thanks be to God for all these many blessings, and for new opportunities to come.



CHILDREN'S AND FAMILY MINISTRIES

MOTHER BRIT FRAZIER

We are eager to welcome our children and families back to Saint Mark's this fall. As we continue to monitor ongoing public health concerns, we are committed to a season of in-person Christian formation that is as safe as it is transformational, lively, and prayerful.

On Sunday, September 12, join us after the 9 a.m. Family Mass for Sunday Sundaes! All are welcome for ice cream and a host of delicious toppings in the garden. Families and children will have the chance to meet one another and to hear from our Associate Rector, Mother Brit Frazier, and our newest Saint Mark's Ministry Residents.

Beginning on Sunday, September 19, we'll be kicking off the beginning of the formation year for all Saint Mark's children. Children and youth of all ages are welcome to join us at 10 a.m. each Sunday following the 9 a.m. Family Mass. These long months of pandemic-tide have been a challenge for each of us, and yet we continue to trust in the Lord and to give thanks for his merciful love for us. No matter how old or young our children may be, it is this love of Jesus that shines through our lessons, our music, our prayer, and our play.

PRE-SCHOLA

For children from birth through age 3, our Pre-Schola program offers our littlest ones their first glimpses of God's love. We invite parents or caregivers to join their children for a time of simple Bible stories, songs, and prayer. With age-appropriate storytelling and movement, children are encouraged to learn and pray.

SCHOLA

For children ages 3 to 7, Saint Mark's Schola program combines music, games, and storytelling to explore the Christian faith. In Schola, children make a joyful and beautiful noise to the Lord, learning simple songs to sing together with their classmates and also as a family at home. Schola is also when children begin to encounter the larger Bible narrative in a systematic way in Godly Play, an imaginative Montessori-based curriculum that emphasizes wonder and play in exploring the great stories of the faith. While Godly Play is rooted in Scripture, it is deeply liturgical and sacramental in its understanding of the Christian faith.

YOUNG DISCIPLES

Children ages 8 to 10 are invited to join in our Young Disciples. Young Discipleship offers an opportunity for children to gain a more hands-on familiarity with the Bible while continuing to gain a deeper appreciation of the overall Scriptural narrative. Young Discipleship uses Weaving God's Promises, an Episcopal curriculum with lessons spanning three years. While using a story from Scripture as the focal point of each session, Weaving God's Promises also seeks to draw connections between scripture, liturgy, prayer, and daily living as rooted in the Anglican understanding of Christianity.

SAINT MARK'S CONNECT

Children ages 11 and up are welcome to join in Saint Mark's Connect. While allowing youth to continue to engage Scripture in a profound way, Connect invites youth to ask challenging questions about God and their faith while providing a more in-depth understanding of the Episcopal tradition and the larger Anglican expression of Christianity. Youth

are encouraged to put their faith into practice by engaging in occasional service and outreach activities. Youth also gather occasionally for fun group events.

YOUTH CONFIRMATION

Returning in the beginning of the new year 2022, Bishop Daniel Gutierrez will be visiting in April to help us celebrate Saint Mark's Day. On this celebratory day, youth and adults from our parish will be baptized, confirmed, and received into the Episcopal Church. Stay tuned for more information later in the fall regarding confirmation classes for youth ages 12 and up. Parents and families are welcome to contact Mother Brit Frazier directly with questions or for more information about confirmation preparation for youth.





NEIGHBOR *Care*

FATHER STEPHEN MOORE

Caring for someone is almost universally instinctive and natural, a behavior as human as being cared for and the need to be valued. Nearly all of us have this in common: how it's lived, expressed, and received varies up and down the scale; shaped by personality, circumstance, and a host of other tangible and intangible influences. The imperative to care—apart from its anthropological and intuitive character—is fundamental to our belief in Christ, whose life and teachings personified the good and need of the other ahead of oneself. It comes to life at Saint Mark's in every possible way all the time, from the greeting of the usher on entering the church, to serving with respect and dignity at the Saturday Soup Bowl, and everything in between.

Day and night the parish clergy do what they can to care for all, but inevitably this happens in response to an immediate need, which is where Neighbor Care fits in. Through its seven clusters and dozen leaders, it aims to show care at the less pressing and acute level by supporting, empathizing and helping one another just in ordinary ways. In each action is the grounding of Matthew 22:37-39: *"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."*

On the fourth anniversary of the start of Neighbor Care this month, there's an abundance of evidence of a caring community of faith that's living out Christ's call through this unique structure of kindness, for which we can only say, *Thanks be to God.*



NEIGHBOR CARE IN THE PARK

BILL & ZITA KREINDLER, CENTER CITY NORTH CLUSTER LEADERS

It has been a long, sobering and traumatizing pandemic during which many of us were unable to spend time together in person. For much of the time it was not even possible to attend Mass or sadly, to receive Communion. There were some ways to reach out to one another; ways to help alleviate some of the isolation and anxiety experienced by many of us. One of those ways was through Neighbor Care.

David Marshall, who headed our cluster for many years, did a wonderful job of keeping in touch with the members during this difficult time. A few months ago he passed the baton to Bill & I along with much good advice and ideas. We accepted this role with some trepidation as David and Dominic were sympathetic, caring, cluster leaders with a great deal of experience as hosts. Father Moore provided us with spiritual guidance and encouragement to help us with the transition.

After surveying cluster members, we agreed to meet for an in-person get together in Fidler Square a lovely, pocket sized park created from a former brickyard in the late 19th century that had also suffered through dark times. It was vandalized several decades ago and became unkempt and uninviting. Today, the park is a delightful spot with a gurgling fountain, sturdy trees, and fragrant flowers visited by families and people eager for a quiet place. It seemed fitting to have our first cluster get together in this place which has experienced a resurrection due to the efforts of the

people in the community who tend to it.

For those in attendance it was an opportunity to chat, break bread and wine together, and most importantly, to enjoy a renewed happiness by simply being in the presence of one another. It was an uplifting experience to pray Compline together again under God's trees surrounded by picnicking families and others, some of whom stopped to observe or to smile listening to our prayers. We were afforded a God-given evening of gentle breezes, soft clouds, birdsong, and the company of cluster members eager to share conversation, ideas, and prayer. We hope more members will be encouraged to attend in future.



SOUTH PHILLY CLUSTER GATHERING ON THE ROOF DECK OF CLUSTER LEADERS JOHN & TED SCHMIECHEN.



REVIVE. RENEW. EXPAND.

MINISTRY AT SAINT MARK'S POST-PANDEMIC 10 a.m. Forum and Ministry Highlight

It's early to declare ourselves arrived at the other side of the pandemic, but it's not too early to be thinking, praying, and preparing for the next phase of ministry at Saint Mark's.

The pandemic has been enormously disruptive to the life of the church since it has greatly diminished our ability to gather together. But ministry has not come to a screeching halt, nor could it, since the love of Christ urges us on to continue to worship God in a meaningful way, and to continue to serve God's people in meaningful ways—especially those in need.

During the first four weeks of the new program year, Father Mullen and Mother Johnson will explore themes that inform our work and ministry as we look ahead, and try to discern what new aspects of ministry God might be calling us to as the church emerges from the pandemic. The sessions are held at 10 a.m. so those who attend either the 9 a.m. Family Mass or the 11 a.m. High Mass can attend. They'll be held in the Parish Hall.

Also, each week, we will highlight an area of ministry that's in need of revival, renewal, or expansion and tell you a little something about it, and encourage you to get involved!

SEPTEMBER 12 | WHAT IS A PARISH?

We'll talk about several ideas of what a parish is, and look at why the parish remains the fundamental organizational structure of the church. We'll consider a little of Saint Mark's history, we'll review our mission statement, and we'll look at why the dynamics of size are so important to the vitality, health, and sustainability of a parish.

HIGHLIGHTED MINISTRY: SUNDAY AND WEEKDAY SERVERS AT MASS

SEPTEMBER 19 | GETTING TO 200

Soon we'll celebrate our 175th anniversary (2023). What lies ahead of us in the next twenty-five years that will get us to 200? We'll do a short exercise of appreciative inquiry focusing on three questions to explore not only the things you have most appreciated about Saint Mark's, but also what's changed in your life and our common life over the years, and what you dream about for the future of the parish.

HIGHLIGHTED MINISTRY: ALTAR GUILD

SEPTEMBER 26 | SEX, GENDER,
GOD, & THE CHURCH

Many people at Saint Mark's consider this to be a welcoming and inclusive parish. The ecclesiastical battles over sexuality and gender have mostly faded into the past. And yet, sex, sexuality, and gender remain areas of great importance in our lives and in society. What bearing does God have on these important aspects of our lives? What does the church have to say about them now? Are we the kind of parish we think we are? What does it mean to be welcoming and inclusive?

HIGHLIGHTED MINISTRY: USHERS

OCTOBER 3 | RACE & ANTIRACISM
AT SAINT MARK'S

Many churches in America supported and left unchallenged the institution of slavery in this nation. Saint Mark's was founded shortly before the Civil War, in a city that lies very close to the border states. What's our history around the topic of race and racism? And what kind of parish are we now? The Vestry met twice a month during June, July, and August to engage in a discussion about antiracism and the church. This year we will expand that discussion to the wider parish. How might God be calling us to respond to the call to antiracism that we so often hear today?

HIGHLIGHTED MINISTRY: HOSPITALITY



10 A.M. FORUM IN OCTOBER

Thinking again: four figures from Christian history and what they might mean for us in the twenty-first century.

OCTOBER 10 | SAINT PAUL

Many of us are more than familiar with Paul's position as the great voice of early Christianity and the foundational thinker of our tradition. Thinking about Paul has been a way of thinking about who Jesus is, who we are as believers, and how God operates in human history. Join a vivid discussion of Paul's influence in our faith today.

OCTOBER 17 | SAINT BENEDICT

The great founder of monasticism, Benedict continues to shape the ways we talk about living together as Christians. Benedict's work has been interpreted and re-interpreted in our divisive era. Perhaps surprisingly, he is a major figure for the intersection of religion and political life today.

OCTOBER 24 | SAINT TERESA
OF AVILA

We may often think of Teresa as a mystic whose experiences and teachings are far removed from contemporary faith. This class will begin to trace some of the ways that her teachings help to open up our interior lives even as we struggle to pray and believe.

OCTOBER 31 | KATHERINE PARR

Henry VIII's sixth wife was lucky to survive him, but that fact has largely overshadowed her importance as a figure in the shaping of the English Reformation. Her writings are actively under reevaluation by scholars of religion, and they have much to show us about dividing lines between protestants and catholics, and the various functions of gender in a life of faith.

STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE UPDATE

ADDIE PEYRONNIN,
STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE,
CHAIRPERSON

When the Stewardship Committee began its planning year back in March, there was an excited and joyful buzz about the arrival of Covid-19 vaccines.

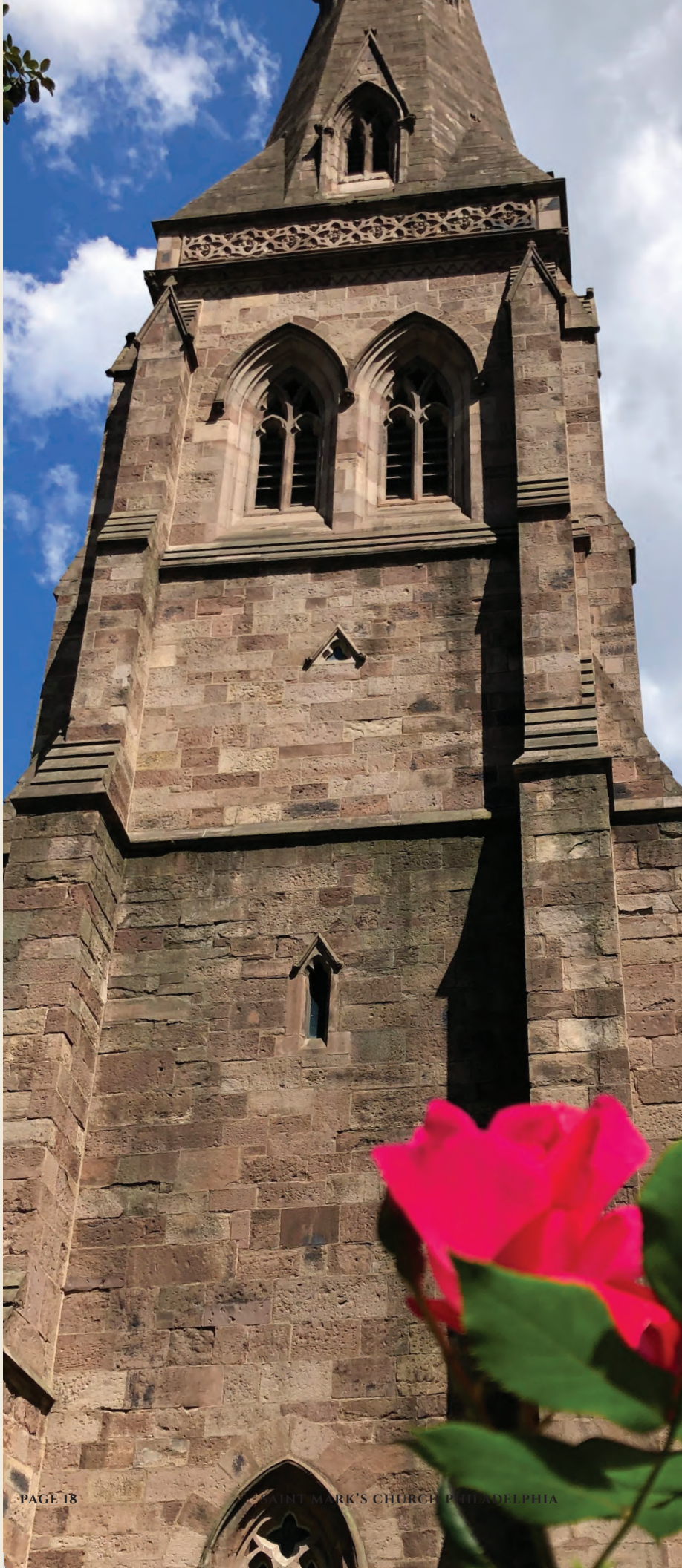
In between discussing the vaccine—which we received and whether we had side effects—we started to talk about hallmarks of memorable stewardship campaigns. Across the board, the resounding theme was “hospitality.”

Saint Mark’s prides itself on its hospitality. Coffee Hour, special receptions and potlucks on feast days, Soup Bowl—we love to celebrate it all, and celebrate it all together.

As the programmatic calendar for fall and winter at Saint Mark’s begins to unfold, and we start to daydream about the resumption of our particular favorite aspects of parish life, the Stewardship Committee is also planning some wonderful opportunities for celebrating our life together as a community, “a community that gathers in faith, serves in love, and proclaims hope, through Jesus Christ.”

Look! Even our mission statement is grounded in hospitality!

We look forward to being with you and sharing news of the wonderful things that happened, against all odds, at Saint Mark’s in 2020 and 2021. And, with even more rejoicing, raising a toast to the future that is ahead of us. Stay tuned for more!



ANSWERING THE CALL

MARK SANDS, MEMBER OF THE STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

I'm supposed to write about stewardship and giving at Saint Mark's, but please permit me a brief detour to tell you about how I came to the Episcopal Church.

Growing up, my family was Methodist, but we drifted away over my childhood, and by my teenage years, I barely thought about churches at all. Starting college, I was busy with my friends, activities (I coxed for our rowing club), and studies, and my Sunday mornings were for catching up on sleep. One weekend my junior year, I drove a car full of rowers to Chattanooga for a race. On the way back to Chicago, we hoped to make it to Louisville or at least Nashville in the evening before finishing the next day. One by one, the passengers fell asleep. Then so did I.

I woke up when an airbag went off in my face. Stumbling out of the car, I learned that we had rear-ended a tractor-trailer. A quick census determined that my passengers were in as good of shape as one could hope—some minor whiplash, but no serious injuries—but over the next day, it became increasingly clear that I had a severe concussion. I got a headache at the slightest provocation, I could barely carry on a five-minute conversation, and any attempt to walk was more of a zig-zag-patterned stumble. Back in Chicago, I went to student health, where they thought I just needed some rest and perhaps counseling, then to student counseling, where

they were confident, I had a concussion and also that concussions were outside their purview. Ultimately, I ended up standing alone on a sidewalk about a mile from my dorm unsure how or if I could make it back.

In that moment, I somehow recalled meeting the chaplain from my school's Episcopal campus ministry at a freshman orientation event and that its building was a block away. I managed to find her phone number online, then called and said something like "Help! I'm on the corner, I can't really walk, and I don't know what to do." She came, took me to the ministry, made me some tea, and got me back to my dorm with a gentle suggestion to come by in a day or two so she could make sure I was ok. I went back that week, kept going back, and then ended up Episcopalian.

That story did not take place at Saint Mark's, but it could have. I strongly believe in the ability of our church in places like these to be there when someone says "Help!" Our Presiding Bishop Michael Curry preached at his installation that "God has not given up on the world, and God is not finished with the Episcopal Church yet." I believe he was and will be correct in that statement, but the world he envisions can only exist if we work towards and support it with our time and money. For me, that work starts at home at Saint Mark's.

DID YOU KNOW?

In 2020, Saint Mark's not only maintained its outreach ministries but also added new ones? Twice a week, volunteers from Saint Mark's pick up 700 pounds of food to distribute at the Church of the Crucifixion on Tuesdays and St. Simon's on Fridays. That's right . . . at least 1,400 POUNDS a week! We are thankful to join with Philabundance in this important work.



20s/30s MINISTRIES

Saint Mark's welcomes everyone in their 20s or 30s to join us this year for a series of Simple Suppers, events, and speakers. While our official calendar will be announced shortly, we invite you to mark your calendars for the first in our fall series with:

SIMPLE SUPPER

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 14 • 6:30 P.M.
SAINT MARK'S PARISH HALL

Saint Mark's members and friends will gather for food, fellowship, a simple said Mass, and some good discussion about the ministry year ahead. We look forward to welcoming you back in person!



UPCOMING EVENTS

8/14 GARDEN DAY 9 A.M.

9/6 PARISH OFFICE CLOSED FOR LABOR DAY; LOW MASS AT 10 A.M.

9/11 GARDEN DAY 9 A.M.

9/14 20S/30S SIMPLE SUPPER 6:30 P.M. IN SAINT MARK'S PARISH HALL

10/3 BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS & CHORAL EVENSONG



SAINT MARK'S CHURCH
PHILADELPHIA

1625 LOCUST STREET
PHILADELPHIA, PA 19103



SUNDAY MASS

BEGINNING SEPTEMBER 12
HOMECOMING SUNDAY

8 A.M. LOW MASS

9 A.M. FAMILY MASS

10 A.M. FORMATION FOR ALL AGES

11 A.M. HIGH MASS

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