



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.

# LIGHT & SOUND

— FATHER SEAN MULLEN —

LIGHT AND SOUND AFFECT US  
EVERY TIME WE WORSHIP,  
EVERY TIME WE PRAY.

Sometimes we go to church to escape a measure of light or sound. Sometimes we go to church in search of light and sound. The light and sound inside a church change by the hour, sometimes by the minute. What we see (or do not see) and what we hear (or do not hear) are very much a part of our experience of worship, of the church, and in some important way, these are dimensions of our encounter with the living God.

Recently, we have been spending a lot of time thinking about light and sound at Saint Mark's. In the course of the pandemic, we have invested more than \$50,000 in cameras, microphones, and control systems to allow us to livestream liturgies. We will soon be adding to these investments in our audiovisual system by upgrading the loudspeakers in the church, with sophisticated electronically controlled speakers that will "steer" sound to various parts of the church. Our trial of this system brought nearly unanimously positive feedback. We are working on plans for installation of the new loudspeakers, which amount to another \$50,000 of investment, late in the summer. The costs of all this audiovisual technology are being met thanks to a grant from the Wyncote Foundation, generous gifts from Isabelle Benton and Aileen White, a generous gift from Bob Motes, and memorial gifts from a variety of parishioners last Christmas.

For nearly four years the Buildings & Property Committee and I have been working on plans to install a new lighting system inside the church. A generous gift of \$300,000 from a parishioner who wishes to remain anonymous allowed us to move forward with these plans, and after a competitive bidding process, we signed a contract with an



electrical contractor in January. We expect installation to begin in the next several weeks or so. This project will cost about \$350,000. We have some additional funds available for the purpose, that should cover the difference between the final cost and the gift made for this purpose.

The new lighting is intended to improve the experience of worship by improving the quality of light throughout the building, making it easier to read the written word in Prayer Books, Hymnals, etc, and highlight the beauty of the building. It will also have the effect of improving the quality of the livestream video. The current nave lighting relies entirely on the hanging pendants in the arches. Presently those hanging fixtures have to be made so bright to enable us to see that they create a glare that obscures the visual experience of the building. Even so, the level of light is often inadequate to the task. Our lighting designers measured the typical light levels in the church, with all the lights on, and found that they are on a par with light levels recommended by lighting experts for an indoor parking garage. The new lighting system will be highly flexible. Most light in the nave will come from new fixtures installed very high up, where the roof trusses meet the walls. All fixtures will be LED, and will be dimmable.

One of the aims of our ministry, and especially of our liturgy at Saint Mark's is the nurture and fostering of holiness in one another and in the world. Some places are holy, and this is a claim I am very happy to make about Saint Mark's. Our church is a place of holiness, where we are ushered into the living Presence of God. Light and sound help to direct us toward that Presence—sometimes with our eyes or our ears, and often with our hearts. Our church was built with light and sound in mind, and construction materials were chosen to enhance the experience of both light and sound. Nearly 175 years later, technology allows us to make improvements to the light and sound systems of the church that respect the integrity of the vision that built this holy place, while still allowing us to use it effectively, seven days a week, in person and online.

Offering worship to God with costly beauty is a kind of sacrifice. Saint Mark's was built and formed as a parish in the tradition that regards this sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving with excellence and beauty as a high expression of the offering all Christians are called to make.

From those to whom much has been given, much is required; and we recognize that we have been given a great deal at Saint Mark's, especially in terms of the beauty of holiness. It is not immediately apparent to many people today why you would bother with such offerings, but it is a part of our vocation to offer worship in a way that conveys the weight and purpose of costly worship. To do so requires light and sound worthy of the task.

Part of our tradition teaches us that costly ministry of worship spurs us to costly ministry of service to one another. We pray that the more intent we are in our worship the more

intently we will also respond to God's call to care for one another, especially those in need. We try hard to be faithful to this virtuous cycle of worship and service at Saint Mark's, knowing that the cycle begins and ends with the worship of God, for all things find their beginning and their ending in God.

God comes to us in light and sound. There are other ways, too, that God reaches us, but reliably in light and sound. Insofar as we can control light and sound, as we do in the church building with these systems, we should try as best we can to make sure that our own involvement in the systems never becomes an obstacle to the experience of God. Sometimes light and sound need to be restrained; sometimes they need to

be strengthened. We hope that our new systems will allow us to use the control we have with good judgment to help open pathways of worship, prayer, adoration, and praise.

In my estimation Saint Mark's is never more beautiful when the only light inside is the sunlight finding its way through the stained glass windows. At midday in early spring, you can see the building at its best, from top to bottom, and every inch of it feels like a temple of the living Presence of God. The new lighting system, will, I hope, allow us to experience the mystery and beauty of this holy space, while strengthening the ministry that's unfolding inside it. Silence is hard to come by in Center City, and not my favorite way to encounter God, anyway. Voices in song speak to me most powerfully of our encounter with God. We have a ways to go to improve the quality of the acoustics of our sandstone building for polyphonic choral music; and someday I hope we will be able to take those steps. But the new loudspeakers will do a lot for the clarity of the spoken word. This installation is the last stage of a three-stage process we set out on years ago to improve the quality of the amplified spoken word in the church, and I am grateful to all those who have enabled it.



# BY THE SIDE OF YOUR ALTARS . . .

— MOTHER FRAZIER —

One of my very favorite psalms has always been Psalm 84. The second verse proclaims,

*The sparrow has found her a house  
and the swallow a nest where  
she may lay her young;  
by the side of your altars, O Lord of hosts,  
my King and my God.*

It is this verse that has been singing in my own heart as I have begun to serve the people of Saint Mark's as your new Associate Rector. In the midst of a strange and difficult year, I find myself in a new home alongside a new altar, feeling a little bit like a sparrow suddenly met with God's own sweetest blessings. And it is such a blessing indeed to be with you!

My husband, Mark, and I have just moved to Philadelphia from the suburbs of Washington, DC. For the past two years, I have served as the Associate Rector for Liturgy and Formation at All Saints Church in Chevy Chase, Maryland. My ministries involved planning our services from week to week, shepherding our parish's adult formation, and (before the onset of the pandemic) leading pilgrimages. At Saint Mark's, I am happy to be joining Fr. Mullen in sharing the liturgical commitments of the parish, as well as overseeing Children's and Family ministries, the 20s/30s group, assisting Mother Johnson with adult formation, and taking up whatever else our beloved Lord has in store for this season of reimagining parish life post-pandemic.

Originally, I am from a small town in Wisconsin on the shores of Lake Michigan. I am the oldest of four children, and I enjoy trips back homeward to spend time with my family who still live there. I attended college in Massachusetts, and I spent some time as a Roman Catholic nun before God made it quite clear he had some other ideas for me! I was warmly received into the Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Los Angeles, and my Anglican formation took shape within the Anglo-Catholic community at St. Thomas the Apostle in Hollywood. The rich sacramental, liturgical, and musical traditions of this expression of the faith are dear to me, and it is a joy to be called to serve at Saint Mark's. Truly, it feels like coming home.



While we're still under certain pandemic restrictions, I know it might be more complicated to spend some time together. I look forward to meeting everyone in person as we are safely able, and I am eager to pray and dream alongside you regarding the future of our parish ministries, particularly those that serve our children. Please don't hesitate to reach out to me directly with your hopes or ideas (or to just say hello)! Each day I am more and more encouraged by the sense that Jesus has something wonderful in store for us, and I know we are going to see some marvelous things together. As Psalm 84 continues:

*Those who go through the desolate valley  
will find it a place of springs,*

*for the early rains have covered it  
with pools of water.*

*They will climb from height to height,  
and the God of gods will  
reveal himself in Zion!*

What a gift it will be to encounter our living God together as we, too, climb from height to height.



## FROM THE ORGANIST & CHOIRMASTER

ROBERT MCCORMICK

As summer approaches, so do the great feasts of Ascension Day, Pentecost, Trinity Sunday, and Corpus Christi, most or all of which will likely have passed by the time you read this. Corpus Christi usually marks the end of the full choir season, and this year is no exception.

Happily, however, reduced restrictions mean that for each of these feasts, all 9 of our professional staff singers will be able to sing together, and move back into the choir stalls as well. I would like to thank these professional singers for singing beautifully and faithfully this year in far less than ideal circumstances: Ari Carrillo, Abbi Chapman, Aryn Freeman, Hannah Grasso, Josh Hartman, Rachael Lipson, Addie Peyronnin, Priscilla Wortman, and Doug Yocum. I continue to hope and pray that early in the fall or shortly thereafter, we will be able to welcome our terrific adult volunteers back to the choir as well.

The staff singers will sing at the High Mass on the morning of Corpus Christi, June 6, and that afternoon, there will be one final virtual Choral Evensong, prerecorded by adults, boys, and girls. These have been nearly a monthly feature, as they allow for more than a small group to sing together. I am particularly grateful to Bryan Dunnewald not only for his immense musicianship, but his extraordinary technical expertise in putting these virtual services together. Each represents hours and hours of work on Bryan's part.

Since mid-April, we have been able to hold small in-person rehearsals for boys and girls ages 12 and older, which has been a blessing to all involved. Our online rehearsals, via Zoom, have continued alongside the in-person gatherings. It is my hope that by the fall it will be safe and possible for all choristers to rehearse in person. I extend my enormous appreciation to all these choristers and their parents for remaining so dedicated and committed during this whole period: their faithfulness has been a true inspiration to me at some very challenging junctures over the past 14 months.

Elsewhere in this issue are further particulars of our Choir Camp to be held in late July, as much detail as we are able to give by publication deadlines, due to changing guidelines and restrictions. I am glad that we will be able to be in person for the camp, though of necessity there will have to be adjustments to our customary model.

It has been heartwarming, as more and more are vaccinated, to see your faces back in church. I have missed everyone greatly, and I eagerly anticipate seeing yet more of you soon!

## 20s/30s MINISTRY

Saint Mark's 20s/30s have been gathering for a series of outdoor events in the city's various parks over the spring, providing an opportunity to reconnect and more safely come together for fellowship.

**There will be two more outdoor opportunities over the summer. Save the date for both events and details will be sent out closer to the dates.**

**JUNE 13 • 11:45 A.M.**

20s/30s will meet at Saint Mark's and bike to St. James School. Once there, we will have a tour of the school and church, then picnic on the grounds. (Plan to join us for the picnic portion even if you don't have a bike).

**JULY 18 • 6 P.M.**

We will host our annual garden party in the Saint Mark's garden.



# NEWFOUND NEIGHBORS

JOHN AND TED SCHMIECHEN  
SOUTH PHILLY NEIGHBOR CARE CLUSTER LEADERS

Neighbor Care calls each one of us to be aware of the needs of those Saint Mark's neighbors in our Cluster. Here is a story of how that call for caring has gone beyond our cluster neighbors and brought us into a relationship with others right here in our neighborhood.

Charlie Miller is a relatively new member of our Parish and Cluster. In early 2020, he was church shopping and once he visited Saint Mark's, he found that the "beautiful liturgy and music is what I wanted and decided that this is where I belong." Then one Saturday after Mass, Charlie peeked into Fellowship Hall and observed Jeremy making sandwiches for the homeless. Right then, Jeremy put him to work, and Charlie has been making sandwiches ever since.

After Charlie joined the Outreach Committee, Father Mullen brought up the opportunity to partner with St. Simon's, and asked if Charlie would meet with the Senior Warden (Paul Jackson) to evaluate the opportunity for a possible partnership. Aaron Smith (one of our ministry residents) had already been working with Paul in a trusted capacity, which enabled Saint Mark's to step in and help.

Paul shared that he wanted to see more fresh food distributed on Saturdays, as he passes out free hot meals Tuesday through Sunday. Charlie then contacted Philabundance to see how they could get more food. Happily, they were approved for 700 pounds of food weekly starting in January. Charlie then faced a real challenge—he needed to coordinate two separate groups to volunteers, food pickup on Friday and distribution on Saturday. "I felt it was really important that the volunteers, at least at first, come from the same geographic area of the partner site, so after a discussion with Gabi Machado, I reached out to Ted and John Schmiechen as my Neighbor Care Cluster Leaders. They then sent out an appeal for help to our South Philly Cluster on Realm."

Now, Charlie states, "We have a group of highly committed volunteers from our South Philly Cluster: Mara Blake-Ward, Shelby James, Brian Alvarez, and Robbin McCarthy! We serve fifty Point Breeze households a week! I love engaging with people at the place of their most immediate need and this allowed me to connect to my actual neighbors."

St. Simon's is currently in transition. It is right in the middle of the Point Breeze neighborhood at 22nd & Reed, a traditionally Black neighborhood that is currently undergoing rapid gentrification, while still being a food



dessert. Charlie's main goal since starting this ministry was to move to a farmer's market style distribution because, "I hate handing people a prepackaged bag with no decision on what food they get." Through Charlie's relationship with Gabi, this model has also expanded to a partnership with Mother Jessie Alejandro, the new Hispanic Missioner at the Church of the Crucifixion at 8th and Bainbridge Streets in South Philly.

Thanks to Fr. Mullen, Jeremy Hutcheson, Gabi Machado, Charlie Miller, Daniel Russell, Aaron Smith, and the members of our South Philadelphia Cluster for making this happen! **Our question:** *Are there any other Clusters where such a need exists?*

# RECLAIMING DIGNITY

## MINISTERING WITH PEOPLE IN CRISIS

JEREMY HUTCHESON

We often talk of our delicious homemade soup, bread pudding, and bread from Parc and Metropolitan when we talk about Saint Mark's Saturday Soup Bowl; and about how our vision of food and hospitality is inspired by Scripture's account of Abraham's visitation by the three strangers in Genesis, and how he lavished the strangers with the best food that he could muster. And we talk about Jesus washing the feet of his disciples when we talk about the Foot Care Day and the Boot Project.

These biblical stories inform and inspire our ministry with people experiencing homelessness, whom we consider to be our most vulnerable neighbors. Like many lessons from Scripture, our connection with these stories has a real-life application for those we serve. Our focus on feet and foot care came from our experience of poor foot health and hygiene among our guests who are on their feet more than anyone else, and rely on socks and shoes to keep their health and wits especially in the winter.

Our emphasis on having healthy, tasty food served in an atmosphere of hospitality also has a practical application for those we serve: we want our guests to know that people care about them and want to give them the best they can offer. People experiencing homelessness often encounter one crisis after the next, which can have an understandably demoralizing effect on their mental health and sense of self-worth. The more that we can make their interactions a little lighter and healthier, and their food a little tastier and more

sustaining, then perhaps that will translate into making our guest's days a little easier to bear. As you know, we've had to change our traditional model of ministry to a mobile meal delivery during the pandemic, but we do our best to carry our model of love and dignity with us with every packed meal and every caring interaction. We brought new insulated gloves and hats, blankets, and socks out in the winter, and continue to deliver socks, masks, and around 200 meals every Saturday.

Thinking about how we can better serve people in crisis is central to our mission at the Saturday Soup Bowl, and, more broadly, important to all our outreach ministries at Saint Mark's. It takes a keen focus, an expanded understanding, and the ability to act and react to situations that may seem counter-intuitive. We have the opportunity in every interaction with our vulnerable neighbors to restore their dignity and help them understand their value as sisters, brothers, and siblings made in the image of God.

As a step toward helping our volunteers gain a broader sense of working with people in crisis, Saint Mark's is teaming up with Pastor Violet Little and the Welcome Church (ELCA) to deliver an Outreach Volunteer Training focusing on deescalation techniques and recognizing and responding to harassment. We feel that these two topics are vital knowledge areas for ministering with people in crisis, whether you're volunteering for the Soup Bowl, the Food Cupboard, as an usher, or anyone else who is interested. We're holding two identical online sessions to better accommodate people's schedules. The first is June 12 from 4-6 p.m. and the second is June 13 from 2-4 p.m. You can register on by visiting the parish website, [saintmarksphiladelphia.org](http://saintmarksphiladelphia.org). We look forward to seeing you!



## FOOD CUPBOARD HAPPENINGS

KATIE CUMMINGS

Saint Mark's Food Cupboard is returning to an indoor model of letting our clients choose their own food items on June 1. There was an orientation for new and returning volunteers on May 27. It covered some things that are essentially the same, like government requirements and how many of each item folks can have in their bags. It also included discussion of new components to this ministry, both safety precautions and how we're trying to assist a wider variety of people.

It's not too late if you're interested in volunteering but missed the orientation. We are always glad to have more people available to help serve our neighbors. Feel free to contact Katie Cummings by phone at the church office 215.735.1416 or email at [klcummings@saintmarksphiladelphia.org](mailto:klcummings@saintmarksphiladelphia.org).

# QUESTIONS WORTH ASKING *AND ANSWERING*

ADDIE PEYRONNIN, STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE CHAIR

MEMBERS OF THE STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE SPEND A LOT OF TIME DISCUSSING A NOT-UNREASONABLE PERENNIAL ANXIETY:

**What do we do if we feel uncomfortable talking about money?** The lazy, and actually unreasonable, answer to this question would be “if you don’t feel comfortable talking about money with your fellow parishioners, why did you agree to be on this committee?”

We all know the sacrosanct three things never to talk about. I’ll give you a hint: starts with death, ends with taxes, has money in between. It makes sense that this hesitancy is compounded when spirituality, religion, and our church are mixed in. *It’s hard! It’s complicated!*

But here’s the most important thing to remember, and our Committee and the Vestry all agree—at Saint Mark’s, there is no “membership fee.” We welcome you to participate in the life of the church, and we value your participation, no matter your giving status. *We are grateful for YOU.*

But, as our committee has discovered, talking about giving is actually inspiring! And we are immensely grateful to Saint Mark’s for modeling what it means to be the cheerful giver that God loves.

**AT OUR LAST MEETING, WE REFLECTED AS A GROUP ABOUT OUR ANSWERS TO THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:**

What does good financial stewardship mean to me?

What motivates me to give to Saint Mark’s? A result of childhood education and training? Saint Mark’s mission and outreach? *“I know that I should?”* All of the above? More than that?

Do I ever wonder if I give more to assuage my own knowledge that stewardship is an important responsibility, and less because of the pure joy of giving? Is that complicated? Is it problematic? Or can both exist at the same time?

How would I describe my “style” of giving? Am I impulsive (choosing a random amount and then sticking to it)? Self-denying (choosing a difficult amount and cutting my budget elsewhere)? Systematic (tithing; making a decision based on months, or percentages)?

If applicable: Does my practice of giving to Saint Mark’s include my whole family? How do my spouse and I discuss our pledge? How do we share it with our children? Guess what? You probably can!

**ALL OF US HAD COMPLETELY DIFFERENT ANSWERS.**

Some of us allocate our giving based on the **traditional tithing method**. Others **budget based on monthly income** and how much of the pie is left over at the end of expensive city living. Some **feel a general responsibility** to give. Others feel an **intense desire and longing** to give. Some like giving **weekly as a ritual**. Others like giving at the **beginning or the end of the year** and focusing on the liturgy the rest of the 51 weeks.

There is no right or wrong way to determine your financial participation at Saint Mark’s. Always—always—the most important thing is that you are here with us!

But, because we found the above questions to be so valuable, we would be grateful if you would consider them in your own heart and/or with your family. You will likely learn some things about your connection to our wonderful church, its mission, and its outreach!

DO YOU LIKE TO  
**SING?**



SAINT MARK'S CHURCH OFFERS AN EXCITING CHOIR CAMP FOR TWO AGE GROUPS!

# 2021 MUSIC & CHOIR CAMP

MONDAY, JULY 26 — FRIDAY, JULY 30

SAINT MARK'S ANNUAL CHOIR DAY CAMP  
WILL BE IN PERSON THIS YEAR!

SCHOLA IS OPEN TO CHILDREN AGES 3-7

CHOIR (WITH THE SAINT MARK'S BOY AND GIRL CHORISTERS AT ITS CORE)  
FOR GIRLS AND BOYS WITH UNCHANGED VOICES AGES 8 AND UP.

**Registration opens Monday, May 24 at [SaintMarksPhiladelphia.org](http://SaintMarksPhiladelphia.org)**

*Please stay tuned for further details!*