

st. Mark's

Episcopal Church



RETHINKING ENGAGEMENT



A MID-YEAR PARISH UPDATE

Dear parish family,

At the beginning of this month, I heard someone express disbelief that the year was already half way over. It started me thinking about all that has transpired since our January Annual Parish Meeting, and it has since occurred to me that it might be helpful to provide a mid-year recap to the parish.

The 'theme' of this year's Annual Parish Meeting was 'moving forward with engaging parishioners' in the ministries of St. Mark's. And by all measures, we were heading in the right direction with better engaging parishioners: a renowned speaker, the Rev. John Rice, set to come for our 2020 Bowen Conference; youth ministry numbers were growing; our neighborhood gatherings initiative was launched; the monthly Marksmen speaker-meeting and dinner was gaining momentum; the Safari Lions group continued to have successful turnouts; our outreach partnership with St. Mary's, Springfield, and Sulzbacher continued; four parishioners were inducted into the Order of the Daughters of the King. And then what happened? Something completely unexpected. Global pandemic. And so, for the past 19+ weeks, we have had to completely rethink everything.

In a mid-March communication to the parish, I had to announce the suspension of all in-person worship services, and closing of our campus. And since that time, we have: learned how to 'livestream' and offer virtual worship; engaged with the Diocese to offer a first ever 'Diocesan Holy Week Journey'; offered an Eastertide formation video series; prepared and delivered meals to parishioners weekly; connected youth and adults via Zoom conferencing; acknowledged our graduating seniors on Youth Sunday; provided outdoor worship services on Baker Green, including a special Pentecost celebration; gathered food for St. Mary's, Springfield, and baby items for Community Health Outreach; distributed 'we miss you' signs to parishioners; celebrated the ministry of the Rev. Deacon Sandra Kidd; welcomed the Rev. William Stokes as Assistant Rector; commemorated the 50th anniversary of St. Mark's Episcopal Day School, having Bishop Howard with us for the special marker dedication; offered a 'Summer of Miracles' virtual Vacation Bible School, and more.

It's extraordinary, really, what God has done in our midst. And none of it would have been possible without the help and support of so many. I'd especially like to thank our Re-gathering Task Force, and note that the guidance they've given me, the amount of time they have contributed, and their commitment to the safety of our parishioners is very much appreciated. They represent a diversity of perspective, and have been a model for how to 'agree to disagree' for the sake of the greater good. I'm also grateful for the senior staff, and their flexibility and commitment during this complicated time, and to the vestry for their ongoing support and willingness to assist whenever possible, including calling parishioners to just check in.

"St. Mark's can still be your anchor, you just have to be open and willing to experience church community in a different way."

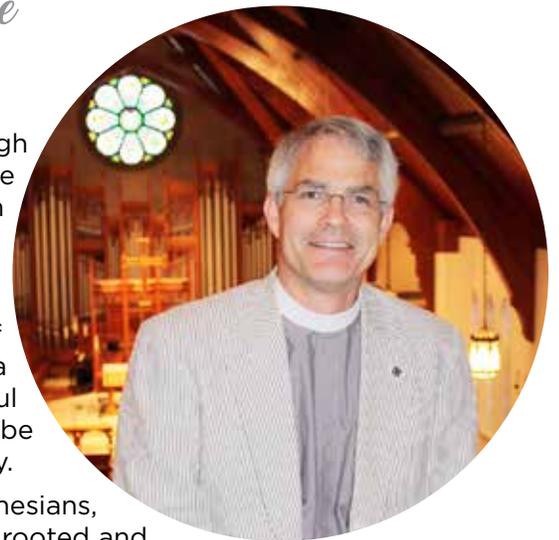
Given the current environment, it certainly appears as though we're likely settling into some type of virtual engagement for the foreseeable future. But as we've already learned, that doesn't mean slowing down our commitment to being disciples of Jesus Christ. It simply means being receptive to doing that differently. As I've said previously, throughout history the people of God have experienced periods of time when they were displaced from their places of worship. This is an opportunity for us to be the Body of Christ in a significant way; unlike what we're used to, but incredibly meaningful nevertheless. St. Mark's can still be your anchor, you just have to be open and willing to experience church community in a different way.

My prayer for each of you is the same as Paul's prayer for the Ephesians, "that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have power to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God" (3:17-19).

Grateful to be in this with you,

Tom +

The Rev. Tom Murray



In January, St. Mark's embarked on another great year...

Epiphany

Three kings visited during a special Sunday service and dinner to celebrate Epiphany. The season continued with seven Epiphany concerts held weekly in the chapel followed by Grace Lunch in Leatherbury Hall.



Parish Meeting

Highlights of this year's annual meeting include saying thank you to the outgoing vestry, welcoming our new vestry members William Boozer, Shannon Graham, Jason Richards and Jerry Potts, and honoring Melody Hainline with the St. Mark's Cross Award.



Shrove Tuesday, Ash Wednesday & Lenten series

We continued our tradition of partnering with St. Mark's Mothers of Preschoolers (MOPS) for a delicious Shrove Tuesday pancake supper and celebration. Ash Wednesday services the following day began the annual Lenten journey and time of self-reflection and repentance. The next week, the Rev. Cn. Dr. Douglas Dupree began our Lenten series "On the 7 Deadly Sins".



Mission & Service



The Girls Breakfast Club (once again!) raised money to support Episcopal Relief and Development and adult parishioners continued to serve those in need at Sulzbacher and abroad.

...And then, in mid-March, the whole world changed!

Holy Week & Easter

Congregations across the Diocese of Florida partnered together to offer a combined, virtual Holy Week. St. Mark's was honored to host the Good Friday service for the entire Diocese.

In addition to Holy Week, St. Mark's parishioners had the opportunity to walk, bike or drive the Stations of the Cross displayed on St. Mark's campus and in the neighborhood.



Virtual Offerings

St. Mark's has been able to stay connected with parishioners by providing a variety of virtual offerings including worship services, adult and children's Sunday school classes, EYC, Youth Sunday and VBS.



Pastoral Care and Outreach

St. Mark's parishioners delivered meals to homebound members and also collected food for St. Mary's Church. Vestry distributed yard signs to our church community, letting them know we MISSED seeing them.



Outdoor Worship & Communion under Special Circumstances

A special celebration of Pentecost was held outdoors on the Baker Green and each week Communion under Special Circumstances is taking place in the church.



SMEDS 50th Anniversary

St. Mark's Episcopal Day School celebrated its 50 year anniversary with a special anniversary marker and the burial of a time capsule.



Financial Stewardship

Thank you for supporting St. Mark's through your generous gifts and offerings! Throughout this challenging time, we are finding ways to serve and support our parishioners and neighbors. Our current financial position reflects a congregation willing to give generously so we can provide meaningful worship and ministries that connect our church community. Thank you once again for your generous financial support!

St. Mark's Episcopal Church Statement of Activities | Through June 30, 2020

REVENUE	
Pledges	\$705,452
Non-Pledge Offerings	18,909
Open Offerings	4,237
Restricted Gifts	47,368
Interest Income	118
TOTAL REVENUE	<u>\$776,084</u>
EXPENSES	
Administrative/Operations	\$542,047
Buildings & Grounds/Insurance	141,364
Commissions	17,114
Diocesan Pledge	73,481
TOTAL EXPENSES	<u>\$774,006</u>
NET GAIN/(LOSS)	\$2,078



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