



## PARISH ADMINISTRATOR—RETIRING



As parish administrator, Diane Chandler has been the “gatekeeper” of St. Mark’s for the past 15 years. She oversees a wide array of duties, ensuring the “business” of the church runs smoothly. As the person who answers the phone in our office, she is often the first person to greet newcomers.

But after 15 years of service, Diane has decided to retire. “I have loved every minute working here!” she says.

Diane’s retirement will become effective next spring, and the Vestry has already made plans to fill Diane’s position. A search committee will be formed in January, with plans to advertise the position by February. Interviews are planned for February and March. The vestry hopes to hire a new administrator by the end of April, so that Diane is available to help acclimate the new administrator to the job.

When Diane interviewed for the job in 2004 with Paul Briggs, our rector at the time, she was sure she got the job. “I felt like we just clicked,” she says. Since then, she has continued to be an important part of the parish. “The St. Mark’s community just took me in, and I have formed personal, close relationships with several members,” she said;

She calls Fr. Peter Swarr “a great boss,” and praises him for his energy and sense of humor. “He really knows how to introduce change painlessly, move things forward, and is willing to do the work to make it happen,” Diane said. “He has been a wonderful mentor to me.”

Although she will miss St. Mark’s, Diane says retirement will bring some exciting changes. She and her husband, Steve plan on spending more time with three of their grandchildren in Longmeadow . They will become “snowbirds,” spending the winter months in Alabama, where her youngest son and family live.”it will be fun to spend some extended grandparent time” with her grandchildren down South, she says.

The parish will honor Diane at the upcoming Annual Meeting in January. If you have any questions about Diane’s retirement, please speak to Fr. Peter or any vestry member.

## PREPARE YE THE WAY OF THE LORD: ADVENT BEGINS DECEMBER 1

The season of Advent arrives on December 1st, marking the beginning of a new church year and calling us all to stop and **Get Ready**. Advent is when we wait and prepare for the arrival of Jesus...as an infant in a manger, and as the Lord of all.

And that quiet preparation can be hard because on the one hand, the world around us is in the midst of Christmas celebrations, decorations, carols, shopping, and Christmas parties. It’s almost as if December 25<sup>th</sup> has already come and gone! And yet the Church invites us, urges us to be still, to breathe, to look with long-ing eyes to something that has not yet appeared; not to jump straight into Christmas but rather savor the expectation of the coming of the Christ-child. We get ready, slowly, intentionally, thoughtfully...

Our common worship this year will help us all enter into this season of preparation and watching for Jesus. Our common worship space will be transformed as we change our seating arrangement and face a new direction, as if we were turning our heads and hearts to look to the horizon watching for the light of Christ to dawn in our midst.

Similarly, our music will change, things will become quieter, stiller, songs will repeat. We will be invited by our Advent worship to slow down and get ready, to wait and to watch for Christ’s coming.

Outside of worship I invite you to slow down...even for a moment, and **prepare**.



**MISSION STATEMENT:**

St. Mark's is called to serve all people in greater Springfield, MA. as a guiding light and a spiritual home where Jesus' spirit is known through inclusive, joyful worship, spirited formation, thriving ministries of service, and powerful outreach. Christ welcomed all, we welcome you.

**St. Mark's Episcopal Church**

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 Web: [www.stmarksma.org](http://www.stmarksma.org)  
 Office Hours: Mon-Thurs 9am-3pm

**Sunday Worship: 8am & 10am,  
 6:30 pm**

**Wednesday Worship:  
 12:00pm Eucharist**

Rector- Rev. Peter Swarr  
 Sr. Warden - Sue Schneider  
 Jr. Warden - Peter Fairman  
 Director of Music - Susan Matsui  
 Parish Administrator - Diane Chandler  
 Good News Editor - Diane Chandler

The *Good News* is published monthly by St. Mark's Church. The deadline is usually the **3rd Tuesday of every month** unless otherwise noted.

**Next deadline is  
 Tuesday, Dec 10, 2019**



Submit articles to:  
 Diane Chandler, Good News Editor  
[office@stmarksma.org](mailto:office@stmarksma.org)

**ADVENT**

*Cont'd from pg. 1*

As we prepare, the Church invites us to wait expectantly for Jesus in two different ways.

As individuals we are invited to use our **Advent reflection books** to pray throughout the week and consider the different ways we prepare for Jesus to come. If you would like to enter into an online conversation about this Advent reflection Meg Galbreath has created a Facebook Group which can be accessed here: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/629534820916165/>

Similarly, the Formation Ministry Team invites you to take part in **intergenerational activities** which help us all watch and prepare for Christmas on Sunday December 1, 8 and 15. Together we will meet from 9:00-9:30 am in the Great Hall and create Advent Calendars, Plant bulbs and use them as symbols of our expectant hope for Christ's birth, and create a Jesse Tree which tells the story of Salvation.

Make this Advent a Season where you make space for God, where you prepare for the Christmas miracle, where there is space in your life for wonder, awe and grace. Get ready for Advent.

I hope and pray that your Advent is filled with stillness, with hope-filled waiting...and with deep peace,

Father Peter

**CHRISTMAS AT ST. MARK'S**

St. Mark's will celebrate the birth of Christ at two special Christmas Eve services this year.

**At 4:00pm St. Mark's will hold its Christmas Eve service with Drop-in Christmas Pageant.** This family friendly service will welcome all children to come and help tell the story of Jesus' birth. ANY and ALL children who would like to participate are welcome!

Simply arrive at 3:30 pm to get a costume and learn the basic stage directions for your role (shepherd, sheep, angels, and other barnyard animals).

The 4:00 pm service is a wonderful, friendly, joyful celebration with music which all are welcome to!



**At 10:00pm St. Mark's will hold its festive candlelight Christmas Eve service.** The choir will be singing, the handbell choir will play, and the music will be beautiful. A full sermon will be given and we will welcome with joy the newborn king. This service (which is our early version of a "midnight mass") is full of beauty, peace, and joy. Come and welcome the newborn Christ.



## DECK THE HALL PARTY



Deck the halls with boughs of holly....falalala...la....la....la. Join us for an afternoon of fun and festivities as we turn the Great Hall into a winter wonderland, make ornaments, enjoy cookies, a Jesse tree depicting Jesus's family lineage music & good company. Pizza will be provided, please bring a salad, dessert or beverage to share There will be activities for people of all ages!

## CHRISTMAS FLOWERS

Christmas flower offerings are a way of giving thanks to God for the gifts of life and remembering and celebrating loved ones. Flowers as an offering to God are an ancient way that Christians have shown their thanksgiving and love. May your offering be one of joy and beauty unto the soon to be born King.



Christmas Flower envelopes are due in the church office no later than Sunday, 12/15/19 in order to include the names in the Christmas bulletin.

**Please print clearly!**

# DECEMBER

*Happy  
Birthday*

*Happy  
Anniversary*

12/01 Mark Rodrigo  
12/04 Ron Brenner  
12/07 Kathleen Rice  
Thomas Rice  
12/10 Meg Galbreath  
Mayra Bustamante  
12/14 Dolly Nicoli  
Peter Rosengarten  
Angela Swarr  
12/15 Tanya Picking  
Grant LaBonte

12/16 Tracie Wood  
12/19 Michael Derose  
12/21 Christine Whitehead  
Julianna Berselli  
12/23 David Wicks  
12/24 Bill Hardy  
12/25 Jessica Lister  
12/26 Carey Noonan  
12/29 Dick Volker  
Dominik Rodrigo  
12/31 Michael Solitario

12/21 Peter & Mindy Rosengarten  
12/22 Bill & Bonnie Hardy  
12/28 Roy & Jackie Butler

## OUTREACH NEWS



Our Advent Warming Tree will once again be set up in the sanctuary until December 22. We will bring all the hats, gloves, warm socks, new or gently used blankets, sleeping bags and coats under the tree directly to the homeless in downtown Springfield through our Big Blue ministry on Tuesday nights during the winter months. Let's fill that tree to the top!

We will once again be helping two single moms make the Christmas season brighter by providing gifts for their children. Please take a tag off the display board in the Great Hall and then place the items in the box in the Great Hall by December 15 so that we can distribute them in time for Christmas.



Also Saturday, December 14 is our Loaves and Fishes day when we will be preparing and serving a hot meal at South Congregational Church on Maple street in Springfield from 4 to 6 p.m. If anyone would like to carpool from St. Mark's to Springfield, contact Claire at 413-348-6178 or ckerr1@aol.com. No experience is necessary and all are welcome!



## THANK YOU TO ALL FOR MAKING ART & CRAFT FAIR A TREMENDOUS SUCCESS!

Our 9<sup>th</sup> annual Art & Craft Fair was held on Saturday, November 23<sup>rd</sup>, and we could not have asked for better weather, a better team of volunteers, a better collection of local artisans and, ultimately, a better final result.

We had 44 different artisans filling our Great Hall, sanctuary, library, Founders Room, Williams Media Room and parts of our youth education area, putting their talents on display for hundreds of visitors to purchase. In addition, we had spectacular homemade food prepared by a wonderful team of kitchen volunteers, a raffle with more than 80 items and our 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Cookie Walk featuring more than 4,000 homemade cookies, most of which sold out! What's more, our Thrift Shop remained open throughout the day and did wonderful business all day long.

In the end, thanks to the efforts of more than 50 tireless volunteers who helped put it all together, St. Mark's Church raised a net total of more than \$7,000 from the Art & Craft Fair, a significant increase from our goal of \$5,000. This is great news for the ongoing ministries we support both inside St. Mark's and out in the greater community, and the best part of it all is it was generated in the spirit of cooperation and faithful collaboration in which St. Marks' mission has always been rooted.

The 2019 Art & Craft fair was a warm, welcoming and friendly event that showcased the very best of St. Mark's as a community partner. Each week we say in one voice during our services, "Christ welcomed all, we welcome you." This year's Art & Craft was one more example of this mission coming to life in our parish.





## Advent 2019

### St. Mark's Church

Advent, a version of the Latin word meaning "coming", is a time of expectant waiting and preparation for both the celebration of the birth of Jesus at Christmas and his coming again in glory.

**Join with us** as we watch and wait.

**Set time Apart:** Ongoing throughout Advent.

Pick up an Advent Reflection Booklet and take a few minutes each week to reflect on the gifts of the earth, our church and our homes which God has given to us. You will also have the additional opportunity to share your reflections with others in our community via an online chat group on facebook <https://www.facebook.com/groups/629534820916165/>.

**Make your own Advent Calendar:** Sunday, December 1<sup>st</sup> @ 9:00 AM.

Advent calendars are not just for kids! Instead of opening daily doors with pictures or retrieving small gift from pockets, adults and children can create their own calendars which will help mark the day-by-day journey to Christmas by praying for a person or meditating on an Advent word each day. A simple **BREAKFAST will BE SERVED!!!**

**Caroling at Area Nursing Homes:** Saturday, December 7<sup>th</sup>, 9:30am (at the church)

Spread a little cheer and brighten someone's day. All are welcome, no previous singing experience required. 😊

**Wait in Expectancy:** Sunday, December 8<sup>th</sup>, 9:00 AM

One way to learn about watching and waiting is with bulbs. We will each have a chance plant and then tend to a flower bulb as we watch and wait for the bloom to emerge, just as we wait and watch for Jesus.

**Deck the Hall Party:** Sunday, December 15<sup>th</sup>, 11:30 am

Deck the halls with boughs of holly...falalala...la...la..la. Join us for an afternoon of fun and festivities as we turn the Great Hall into a winter wonderland, make ornaments, enjoy cookies, a *Jesse Tree*, depicting Jesus's family lineage, music and good company. Pizza will be provided, please bring a salad, dessert or beverage to share. Activities for people of all ages.

**The Greening of the Church:** Sunday, December 22<sup>nd</sup>, 11:30 am

Join us as we prepare and beautify our worship space with greens in anticipation of the coming of the Christ child.

In an ongoing effort to relay information about the work of the church to all in our congregation, please find the most recent monthly Vestry Minutes and Financials immediately following.

Additionally, members of the Vestry will be available on the last Sunday of each month in the Great Hall from 8:45 to 9:30 AM to provide updates, information and answer any questions. All are welcome to attend.

Minutes of the October 22, 2019 Meeting  
St. Mark's Vestry

Present: Fr. Peter Swarr, Sue Schneider, Rob Fitzpatrick, Claire Sygiel, Peter Fairman, Ellie Otto, Scott Conrad, Nancy LaBrie, Jon Robichaud, Jake Berry, Doreen Tapper, and Rich Bruns.

The meeting was called to order with an opening prayer at 7:00 p.m.

Vestry spent some time reflecting on who is leading the church, laity or clergy and how best to fill the upcoming positions on vestry for 2020. The suggestion was made to ask ministry team leaders for ideas and look to members of the leadership group, the recently received and confirmands..

Jon made a motion, seconded by Peter F, to accept the September minutes as submitted. The motion carried unanimously.

Vestry members reviewed the information sheet about various activities in the parish. Fr. Peter put some numbers to the activities listed, noting that 50-plus people attended the Pet Blessing at A.W. Brown, the food packing event resulted in 16,860 meals being packed by more than 60 people. The Way of Love Pray event had 35 people. The Mexican dinner had about 70 attendees and netted \$982.35.

It was noted that the Sunday service is now being live streamed into the nursery. Peter Rosengarten is training to be assistant treasurer. Sue reported that the Art & Craft Fair preparations are going well and that Jess Lister's email was handled thoughtfully by the fair committee, who recognized the work Jess has put into the fair in years past.

Under Updates, Rob reported the large tree that fell down by the memorial garden will be taken care of on Saturday. Jon noted that the HVAC in the admin wing was taken care of, the permanent railing around the sump pump hole was finished and that the playhouses in the playground did not survive the windstorm. Fall cleanup will be November 16. Scott said the sink in the kitchen has been worked on as well as two of the three coffeemakers.

Fr. Peter reported that the new welcome sign should be arriving on Oct 23 and plans were discussed for unveiling it to the congregation. It was decided that an FAQ sheet would be developed by Sue, Nancy and Doreen to be distributed and an opportunity to talk after the church service about the sign would be made available.

Sue announced that vestry retreat will be held January 31 to February 2 with a departure time on Sunday of 2 p.m. The annual meeting is scheduled for January 19.

The vestry went into executive session.

Under Discussion Items, Fr. Peter informed the vestry that an area business approached him with the desire to sponsor Holy Grounds. After much discussion about the pros and cons, Fr. Peter made a motion, seconded by Ellie, to take the request under advisement to give vestry members a chance to think and pray about it. The motion carried unanimously.

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systems that would enable the lights to be either on, low or off. Sue suggested changing the former idea of a Matching Gift initiative to a Keep The Lights On initiative and aim for the entire \$10,000 cost.

Scott updated the vestry on the financial picture, noting that problem with last month's financials has been rectified. Gail will create steps for the counters and a training breakfast for counters is planned. Fr. Peter reported 44 out of 135 estimate of giving cards have been returned with 24 showing an increase, 7 reduced and 13 staying the same. Five of the cards are from new members.

Sue pointed out the ministry team budgets for 2020 and Fr. Peter made a motion, seconded by Nancy, to accept the recommendation of the ministry team budgets. The motion passed unanimously. Sue also showed vestry the fixed costs estimates for 2020.

Under Quick Action Items, Sue noted that the Fire Safety committee streamlined the evacuation process in the case of fire at the church and a training will be held on October 26. The Vestry Person of the Day will be responsible for seeing that the positions are filled every Sunday.

Sue reported that the meeting on Keep The Lights On initiative will be held November 6 at 6 p.m.

Fr. Peter updated the vestry on pastoral concerns.

The meeting was adjourned at 9 p.m.

## St Mark's Church

### Monthly Financial Report

10/31/2019

	Actual YTD 2019	Projection 2019	Budget 2019
<b>Income</b>			
Other Offerings	6,414	9,010	8,500
Pledges-current year	160,266	192,320	205,000
Endowments	7,722	7,722	7,682
Building Expense Recovery	13,872	16,646	16,600
Special Gifts	3,584	4,000	2,000
Fund Raising	2,958	12,250	10,500
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>194,816</b>	<b>241,948</b>	<b>250,282</b>
<b>Expenses</b>			
Outreach & Stewardship	21,266	26,557	27,116
Salaries and Fringe Benefits	118,848	143,580	149,166
Church & Rectory Utilities	21,457	25,903	25,440
Office Expense	7,795	9,202	6,875
Christian Education	3,617	4,687	4,815
Clergy Expense	2,351	2,821	3,200
Altar Expense	701	841	1,185
Music Expense	599	1,430	1,510
Welcome & Mutual Care	785	1,750	1,850
Buildings & Grounds	19,823	25,012	25,847
Debt Management	12,900	17,480	15,200
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>210,142</b>	<b>259,262</b>	<b>262,204</b>
<b>(Deficit) Surplus</b>	<b>(15,326)</b>	<b>(17,313)</b>	<b>(11,921)</b>





Love Your  
Neighbor

who doesn't

 Look like you

 Think like you

 Love like you

 Speak like you

 Pray like you

 Vote like you

Love Your Neighbor

No exceptions

St. Mark's Episcopal Church

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