



New Year's greetings and blessings St Mark's family,

Let us all take a deep breath and utter a prayer of thanks and praise.
I can't think of a better way to begin 2021.

This New Year might bring with it a mixed bag of emotions and memories. While each of us may have experienced 2020 in a different ways, there is no doubt that it has been a year laced with challenges and joys, tears and laughter, and the longing for a precious embrace. The hanging of a new calendar on the wall brings with it hope for the healing of our hearts, our families, and the community that surrounds us. We are reminded once again that we do not live our lives in isolation, that we are called into the greatest truth of all – We are God's people, beloved of the One who created all. Christ, the newborn king, is ever with us and in us.



I have lately been enamored of the inspired poetry of Wendell Berry, farmer, novelist, poet and conservationist. I have especially appreciated his plain way of expressing what I can make so very complicated. A random page I encountered on Christmas Day spoke directly to my heart; a heart often troubled with how to meet the great need in our own and neighboring communities. Berry's earthy wisdom provided just the balm to soothe and encourage me to listen deeply for the spaces hidden within.... the realm where the voice of *Emmanuel, God with us, resides.*

*"The Incarnate Word is with us,
is still speaking,
is present always,
yet leaves no sign
but everything that is."*

As we enter unto this new year, may we be present to each other and listen deeply in these days ahead to the utterings of the Holy in and around us. May those utterings lead us and guide us to find the Christ in all people and all things.

Blessings and Peace, today and always,

Sandi+

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

One Porter Road

East Longmeadow, MA 01028

413.525.6341

Email: office@stmarksma.org

Web: www.stmarksma.org

Office Hours: Mon-Thurs 10am-2pm
& Fridays 8am-12pm by appointment

Rector- Rev. Sandi Albom
Sr. Warden - Sue Schneider
Jr. Warden - Peter Fairman
Director of Music - Susan Matsui
Parish Administrator - Darcy Dumaine

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
January 19, 2021**



Submit articles to:
Darcy Dumaine,
office@stmarksma.org

Weekday Prayer Update

St. Mark's continues to be committed to offering multiple forms of weekly prayer to support you in your journey of faith.

- ♦ Monday, Thursday, & Friday ~ Morning Prayer with St. David's at 8:00am.
- ♦ Tuesday & Wednesday ~ Morning Prayer with Alan Druckenmiller and Chris Pryce at 8:00am.
- ♦ Monday ~ Compline with Hannah Fitzpatrick & Linda Taupier at 8:00pm
- ♦ Tuesday ~ Bedtime Stories with Rev Sandi+ at 8:00pm
- ♦ Thursday ~ Celtic Compline with Sue Schneider, Sue Matsui & Rev. Sandi+ at 8:00pm
- ♦ Friday ~ Compline with Cele Schmaelze & Deacon Eric Elley at 8:00pm.
- ♦ Sunday Service at 10:00am.

If you are interested in being part of the team of prayer leaders and livestream computer workers, who make these times of prayer and connection possible, please email (office@stmarksma.org) or call (525-6341) the church office.



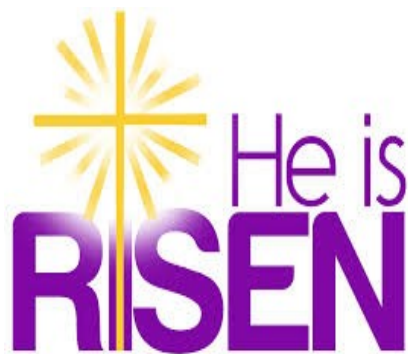
A hearty thank you goes out to everyone who brought in items during our Advent giving season. The outreach team delivered the Christmas gifts to the two families and took the warm hats, gloves, blankets, sleeping bags and coats to the Cathedral for the Big Blue ministry to the homeless in Springfield. We also provided a hot meal for Loaves and Fishes and put together 12 backpacks filled with personal care items for Mary D'Alessandro's Women in Transition program at the Chicopee House of Correction. God is working in us and charges us in this coming new year to remember that we are his hands and feet in the world.



***By popular demand..... A Second Devotional Book
by St. Mark's Choir!***



As the new year gets underway, the St. Mark's Choir will begin assembling stories, essays, poems, prayers, and artwork for a second St. Mark's Devotional. We're hoping to create a new volume with a theme of Spring, rebirth and Resurrection, and have it ready to be published by Easter. Hopefully by then we will be celebrating a rebirth of in-person worship and fellowship..... including the re-convening of the St. Mark's choir! Many thanks to individual choir members who have continued to provide their beautiful singing voices to our worship through solos, small ensembles, and remote performances. Submissions for the Second Choir Devotional Book may be sent to Sue Matsui at susan.matsui1@gmail.com or to Gail Gurney at ggurney8433@gmail.com



Looking ahead to an Old Testament Pageant for Easter Eve!

Did you love the St. Mark's 2020 Christmas Pageant? Children and adults came together in an amazing video performance that told the story of Christ's birth. Now we are looking ahead to the Great Vigil of Easter, to dramatizing one of the Old Testament stories that are told in the liturgy of the Saturday before Easter. Two years ago, we did "Noah's Ark." Last year, we had started work on "Jonah and the Whale," but coronavirus got in the way. This year, we're planning another video pageant, using Zoom as we did for the Christmas pageant. What will the story be? Either "Jonah" or "King Nebuchadnezzar and the Israelites" (the story of the Hebrew youths who trusted in God and walked through the fiery furnace without a single hair being singed, causing King Nebuchadnezzar to worship the God of Israel).... Whichever story we choose, you can bet it will be full of high drama and plenty of great roles for children - and a few for adults! Stay tuned.... (Director, Sue Matsui; producer, Rob Fitzpatrick.)

Dear friends ~

2020 undoubtedly is a difficult one for all of us. Whether it is because of economic, health, family issues, or change and transition, we are all experiencing challenge. This year the Vestry invites you to join us in reaffirming our commitment to the good work that continues at St. Mark's Church in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ and ask that you support the church in whatever ways you are able.

If you are able to give your time to support the work of church ministries or teams, we welcome and give thanks for your offering.

If you are able to share a talent or skill in service to a St. Mark's activity, program, or event, we welcome and give thanks for your offering.

If you can financially support the church, whether you are able to increase your giving, keep giving at the same level as last year, or decrease your giving because of your current circumstance, we welcome and give thanks for your offering.

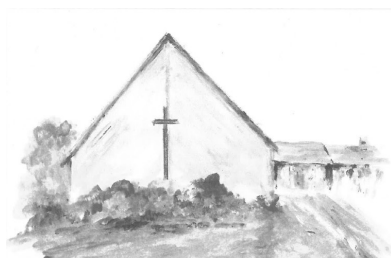
As long as we continue to love each other and join in supporting the good work that God has begun here at St. Mark's Church, God will continue to be faithful and see us through this time of transition, change, and uncertainty.

Thank you for your prayerful consideration of this invitation to reaffirm your commitment and connection to St. Mark's in whatever way you feel so moved.

(link to our stewardship video) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=82pybT3gAp4>

(link to our pledge card)

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScZwJXWgKK-NeBS1BOo2zS->



REAFFIRM

St. Mark's Church 2021 Giving Card

We invite you to join in reaffirming our commitment to the good work that continues at St. Mark's Church in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Blessings,

* Yes! I want to REAFFIRM in 2021!

My financial gift will be _____ (monthly/yearly)

My time and or talent gift will be _____.

* I want to fulfil this gift **electronically** (via online banking or the church website)

Name: _____ Signature: _____

Your St. Mark's Vestry

Given the uncertainty of these times and the challenge it presents for in person worship, St. Mark's has found that electronic giving is beneficial for the church and the giver. For this reason, we encourage everyone to consider making your pledge electronically through our website. Details on how to set up electronic giving are found below.

Vanco Electronic Pledge Setup

Depending on the form of payment you wish to use, you will need either, a credit card, the routing number and account number from your checking account, or the routing number and account number for your savings account. Once you have this, proceed to the steps below.

1. Go to www.stmarksma.org on your web browser.
2. In the upper right portion of the Home page select **"Give"**.
3. Click the blue box the says **"Click here to Give Online"**.
 - Click the **"Create Profile"** button located center right in the grey box.
Enter the email you want to use for this account. You will enter it two times.
This will also be your User ID.
 - Complete all fields in the Profile and select a good password that is both strong and memorable.
4. Click the **"Add Transaction"** button.
5. In the box next to General Operating enter the dollar amount of your pledge based on The frequency you will be paying (One-time, Weekly, or Monthly).
- 6. Go to the drop down located below the **"Total"** and select the appropriate Donation Frequency (One-time, Weekly, or Monthly).
7. Click on **"Continue"** once you are certain the amount and frequency are correct.
8. Donation Information- This is where you select your payment options.
 - You may select from Checking, Savings, or Credit Card.
 - Complete the appropriate information for your selection.
9. Select **"I am not a Robot"**, complete the questions and press **"enter"**.
10. You will be sent to an Online Donation confirmation page. Be sure to review this to be certain it is setup as you desire.

Thank you for using our electronic format for paying your 2021 pledge. With all of the inconsistencies caused by COVID this year, and likely next, this ensures that pledges are received predictably and are deposited directly at the bank. Thank you for your faithful support of St. Mark's.

**Minutes of the December 22, 2020 Meeting via Zoom
St. Mark's Vestry**



Present: Rev. Sandi, Sue Schneider, Peter Fairman, Claire Sygiel, Doreen Tapper, Don Edwards, Carlos Dias, Doreen Tapper, Michelle Stallworth, Rob Fitzpatrick, and Eric Elley.

The meeting was called to order with an opening prayer at 6:02 p.m.

Rob made a motion, seconded by Peter, to accept the November minutes as submitted. The motion carried unanimously.

Under Updates, Don reported that the November pledges were below average and December totals were not looking good either. He predicted that we would be close to net zero at the end of 2020.

Claire reported that the transition team presented Rev. Sandi and her husband with a gift basket when they moved into the rectory and then Meg Schoenemann arranged for meals to be brought to them during their first week in residence.

Rev. Sandi updated the vestry on all the plans for the virtual services on Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, the bonfire on New Year's Eve, and the Hymn Sing on Jan 3.

Claire told the vestry that the Outreach Ministry Team delivered all the Christmas gifts that were donated to the two moms and that items were being dropped off in the Advent Warming bin. Twelve backpacks had been put together for Mary D'Alessandro's Women in Transition program and that the Loaves & Fishes meals and the sandwiches for Church Without Walls efforts were ongoing.

Sue said the Adult Formation Ministry team put together the Advent virtual book that was sent out to everyone and that the Youth Ministry, led by Gina Parent, have Christmas boxes which will be delivered to families who requested them.

Rev. Sandi reported that Sue Matsui is very busy putting together all the music for the upcoming services and that poinsettias were delivered to many of our homebound parishioners. Sue noted that the Welcome Ministry Team sent out a Christmas card to everyone in the parish.

Doreen reported that she will serve as senior warden and Melinda DeCesare and Meg Galbreath have agreed to serve as members at large on the 2021 vestry.

Under Discussion Items, the vestry continued to work on the 2021 budget. Sue reported that the projected income for next year is approximately \$197,000 with projected expenses of \$284,000, leaving a projected deficit of \$87,000. Places where cuts could be made included \$44,000 that Buildings & Grounds requested for HVAC replacements that could be considered more of a capital expenditure. Also \$8,000 could be cut from the rectory expenses as much work was done by volunteers prior to Rev. Sandi and her husband moving in.

(continued from page 7)

There was discussion about the sexton's salary, the music director's continuing education credit and paying only the interest on the line of credit for next year as other possible areas where cuts could be made. This could bring the deficit down to about \$14,551. Sue reminded the vestry that we have had a deficit before but that we should work to reduce it as much as possible during the coming year.

Rich Bruns of the Buildings and Grounds Ministry Team joined the vestry to update us about the HVAC situation. He said he would like to obtain more quotes from contractors before making a recommendation to vestry about possible HVAC replacements. He said the units in the admin wing are the oldest and could possibly be done piecemeal. He would like to see someone come in and do a thorough evaluation of the units. Sue noted that Marty Schoenemann suggested that there may be utility incentives that would help with the cost of the unit replacements.

Sue said we need some hard numbers to work with while Rob noted that this same discussion has been held every year and we need to put out heads together to come up with a plan before the heating units give out in the middle of winter.

Rich agreed that the \$8,000 number for rectory repairs could be reduced to about \$1,000. Rev. Sandi reported the dishwasher in the rectory is quite loud and Sue said the deck needs a few boards replaced.

Discussion resumed about the budget with Sue noting her reluctance to cut monies from ministry teams and Don remarking that many times he has come to the church and noticed the lights left on in the basement and the heat on in the Great Hall when no one is present. Rob noted that the LED lights in the sanctuary should save some money on electricity. Sue said Marty suggested that we be more proactive in requesting donations from the congregation.

There was discussion about the formation of the profile and search committees with Rob agreeing to be the vestry liaison to the profile committee. Meg Schoenemann and Marj Bruns were mentioned as possible candidates to be the chairperson of the profile committee. Peter agreed to be the vestry liaison to the search committee and Mallory Labonte was mentioned as a possible chairperson for that committee.

Rob made a motion, seconded by Don, to accept the resolution for clergy living in church-owned housing. The motion passed unanimously.

Sue noted that a special vestry meeting will be held January 12 to approve the 2021 budget and then the vestry agreed to hold the annual meeting virtually on January 24 where votes taken conditionally will need to be ratified at a later date when we can have a quorum present.

Sue noted that this was her last regular vestry meeting and thanked vestry members for all their support throughout her tenure as senior warden.

The meeting was concluded at 7:47 p.m.

November 2020 Financials

Page 1 of 4

Account #	Account Name	Beginning Balance	YTD Balance
Assets			
1.003	United Bank Ck. Acct.	35,324.94	41,679.03
	Bank Accounts and A/R	\$35,324.94	\$41,679.03
1.101	Trustees Bement Scholarship	4,453.84	3,937.94
1.103	Trustee Childrens Education	25,376.77	22,437.30
1.104	Trustee Mem. Garden Burial	24,581.08	21,733.78
1.105	Trustee Memorial Funds	1,891.57	1,672.45
1.107	Trustee General Endowment	51,645.36	45,663.12
1.108	Trustee - Organ Maint	2,306.13	2,039.01
1.109	Trustee - RDF	2,162.32	1,958.59
1.110	Trustee Larch Gift	44,198.35	39,078.71
1.111	Trustee Stockwell Gift	13,848.34	12,244.25
1.112	Trustee Farquharson Gift	22,218.09	19,644.49
	Trustee Accounts	\$192,681.85	\$170,409.64
1.215	Furn and Cont - Church	2,716.00	2,716.00
1.229	Pipe Organ - Church	97,000.00	97,000.00
1.243	Major Improvements (Church)	123,949.55	123,949.55
1.244	Major Imp/add-Parish Hall	111,796.60	111,796.60
1.245	Major Imp/add Rectory	48,501.95	48,501.95
	Fixed Assets	\$383,964.10	\$383,964.10
1.999	All other Assets	4,859.24	4,859.24
	Total Assets	\$616,830.13	\$600,912.01
Liabilities			
2.000	Accounts Payable/Vendors	3,071.40	746.40
2.201	Loan (Bldg) United Bank	162,808.72	151,622.77
2.601	Next Years Pedges	6,040.00	620.00
2.602	Prepaid Special Gifts	0.00	0.00
	Total Liabilities	\$171,920.12	\$152,989.17
Fund Balance			
3.001	General Fund Balance	(37,731.22)	(38,278.46)
3.003	Transfer Fund Balance	191.67	191.67
3.090	Trustee Accounts	192,681.85	170,409.64
3.900	Net Fixed Asset Fund Bal	243,945.78	255,131.73
3.902	Good Friday Fund Balance	418.60	120.00
3.904	Episcopal Relief & Developement Fund Balance	0.00	0.00
3.906	Annual Plant Sale Fund Balance	0.00	0.00
3.907	Flower Fund Balance	148.06	138.06
3.909	Special Events Fundraising Fund Balance	0.00	0.00
3.910	Rector's Discretionary Fund Balance	2,203.73	2,645.49
3.914	Holy Grounds Cafe Fund Balance	526.01	624.97
3.920	Memorial Fund Balance	5,949.72	4,876.89
3.921	Special Gifts (Transfer) Fund Balance	804.00	2,934.36
3.922	Prepaid Building Use Fund Balance	600.00	0.00
3.923	Bement Scholarship Fund Balance	174.14	223.56
3.924	Missions Outreach Fund Balance	3,337.31	722.87
3.925	Meal Expense Fund Balance	1,000.00	1,000.00
3.926	Organ Fund Balance	0.00	113.60
3.927	Summer Formation Programs Fund Balance	463.16	463.16
3.928	Youth & Children's Formation Fund Balance	0.00	0.00
3.930	Big E Fund Balance	0.00	0.00
3.931	Receptions/Socials Fund Balance	0.00	0.00

November 2020 Financials (continued)

Account #	Account Name	Beginning Balance	YTD Balance
3.932	Retreats/Conferences Fund Balance	(590.00)	0.00
3.933	Memorial Garden Care Fund Balance	2,697.63	3,908.63
3.934	Memorial Garden Burial Fund Balance	229.00	661.50
3.935	Adult Education Fund Balance	0.00	0.00
3.948	General Endowment Fund Balance	0.00	0.00
3.951	Buildings & Grounds Capital Fund Balance	12,041.64	12,041.64
3.953	Pilgrimage Fund J2A Members Balance	1,395.18	1,653.88
3.961	Pilgrimage Fund - Parents Balance	0.00	0.00
3.962	Pilgrimage Fund Parish Balance	2,313.74	3,788.74
3.964	Craft Fair Fund Balance	0.00	(50.00)
3.965	Clergy Sabbatical Fund Balance	5,031.51	4,020.70
3.968	Mission Trip Fund Balance	569.00	569.00
3.969	Altar Guild Fund Balance	0.00	11.75
3.973	GSGC Program Fund Balance	35.10	140.10
3.980	Men's Retreat Fund Balance	0.00	0.00
3.981	Leadership Grant Fund Balance	0.00	0.00
3.982	Thrift Shop Fund Balance	0.00	751.00
3.983	Digital Gospel Grant Fund Balance	0.00	0.00
3.984	Church Play Balance	0.00	0.00
3.985	Men's Wine Ministry Balance	43.57	43.57
3.986	2017 Couples Ministry Grant Fund Balance	0.00	0.00
3.987	Website Maintenance Fund Balance	0.00	0.00
3.988	Community Garden Fund Balance	0.00	0.00
3.989	Refresh Great Hall Fund Balance	0.00	6,300.00
3.990	Digital Communication Fund Balance	0.00	0.00
3.991	Leadership 2 Fund Balance	4,312.29	2,416.49
3.992	Way of Love Part 2 Grant Fund Balance	2,118.54	1,017.80
3.993	Jester Music Fund Balance	0.00	9,327.50
3.994	2020 Account Fund Balance	0.00	3.00
Total Fund Balance		\$444,910.01	\$447,922.84
Total Liabilities and Fund Balance		\$616,830.13	\$600,912.01



St. Mark's Annual Meeting- January 24, 2021

Please join us for the Annual Meeting which will be held following the 10 AM service on Sunday, January 24, 2021. The meeting agenda will include the election of new Vestry members and Diocese Convention Delegates, reports on the mission and ministry of the church as well as an update on the financial and budgetary status. In observance of the safety guidelines around gathering due to the pandemic, this year's meeting will be held virtually via Zoom. The meeting links and more details will be sent out prior to the meeting via email. Please mark your calendar and plan to attend this important meeting.

To prepare for the elections, please take a moment to read the following bios.

Doreen Tapper: Senior Warden Bio

I have been a member of the St. Mark's community for nearly 40 years. I have served the church in a variety of roles - Sunday School teacher, children's formation director, Vacation Bible School leader, Stewardship Ministry Team member, and choir member. For the past four years, I have served on the St. Mark's vestry. I live in Suffield, CT with my husband, Dan, our college-student son, Sam, and my mother, Ann Williams. I am an educator, working with special needs children in the Suffield Public Schools. I look forward to serving as Senior Warden in these unusual and dynamic times.

Melinda De Cesare: Member at Large Bio

Hi, my name is Melinda De Cesare. My husband, Felix, and I live in Hampden. I am a life-long Episcopalian. I have wonderful memories of growing up in the church life at St. Andrew's in Longmeadow and I enjoyed being a camper and a counselor at Bement Camp and Conference Center during the summers. As an adult, I spent many years participating in parish life at St. Barnabas and All Saints Church in Springfield. I have been at St. Mark's for 13 or 14 years, usually attending the 8 am service. I spent 27 years teaching in Catholic schools in the Diocese of Springfield, most recently teaching 5th grade at St. Michael's Academy in Springfield. While I have retired from teaching, I continue to work part-time at Felix's auto repair shop in Springfield. I enjoy reading, walking, and biking. Felix and I enjoy spending time at his family's home in Italy and traveling in the United States. We also love spending time with our grandchildren. I am a grateful child of God and I look forward to serving on the vestry.

(continued on page 11)

(continued from page 10)

Meg Galbreath – Member at Large Bio

Greetings and Seasonal Blessings! My name is Meg Galbreath. I have two sons, 29 and almost 26, an almost daughter-in-law and a 7 year old grandson. During the day I am a Youth Services librarian at the Indian Orchard branch of the Springfield City Library. I work with children from 0-18 years old (the best ages!). I have been active in various roles at St. Marks beginning in February 2013. I have taught Rite 13, served on the Vestry, have been a representative to the Diocese Convention three times, and am currently the coordinator for Adult Formation and the librarian of the Families of Faith Library. Through Adult Formation St. Mark's was the recipient of a grant from the diocese focusing on the Way of Love. I've been part of two plays, and have volunteered for many projects. Personally, I ran a FaceBook group focusing on The Bible Challenge (reading the Bible in a year) starting at Pentecost 2018. I am an Associate of Holy Cross Monastery. In summer 2022, I will be a Diocese Deputy to the General Convention. Looking forward, I am aware that the next few years will be very challenging for St. Marks, and our larger community. We will be continuing our online presence, and worshipping via the internet, this may never change. This is a blessing in disguise-we are reaching well beyond East Longmeadow, and welcoming new people who have never been within our walls. Hopefully we will be opening up again, although this might take some time. Very shortly we will be beginning the process of searching for a new priest. This will be exciting, challenging and very thought provoking. All during this we will be keeping our faith in God and that the Holy Spirit will guide us with love, strength and wisdom.




Barbara Gibbs	1/8
Cathy Stevens	1/8
Nicholas Dufresne	1/10
Alix DeGregory	1/14
Patricia Kelly-Bedard	1/23
Shamim Najeebi	1/24
Sydney Russo-Appel	1/24
Brian Banker	1/26
Gail Gurney	1/26
Ryan Moreau	1/27


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

One Porter Road

East Longmeadow, MA 01028-1348

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