



ST. MARK'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

CALLED TO BE CHRIST CENTERED

Touching Lives + Transforming Hearts + Teaching God's Word

On July 13, 1877, the first service of record for what was later to become St. Mark's Parish was conducted by the Rev. William Robards Wetmore, who pedaled his bicycle here from Lincolnton. Early services were held in the old Academy on the north side, as well as at City Hall and the old YMCA on Main Avenue and South Street. A church building was erected on West Long Avenue and consecrated November 20, 1903, by the Rt. Rev. Junius M Horner. St. Mark's officially became a parish in 1915 with 74 communicants.

The present location of St. Mark's was acquired from the ARP church and converted in 1948 and the Parish Hall added in 1955. Upgrades with additional meeting space were done in 2005 and our playground was added in 2012. We continue our ministry in this historic space.

St. Mark's Episcopal Church

258 W. Franklin Blvd.
Gastonia, NC 28052
704-864-4531

www.stmarksgastonia.org

office@stmarksgastonia.org

The Very Rev. Shawn Griffith,
Rector and Piedmont Dean

The Ven. Brenda Gilbert,
Archdeacon

Mrs. Julia Bozarth, Organist &
Director of Music

Ms. Dionne Browning, Parish
Administrator

Mr. Kris Kiser, Sexton

Mrs. Polly Redd, Director of
Formation & Communication

He answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself." Luke 10:27

I had lunch the other day with an old friend who is a retired Presbyterian minister. We were talking about his ministry while he was here in Gastonia. After much discernment and prayer Jerry started Southminster Presbyterian with a handful of people in order to offer the community a new way of worshipping as well as a place where people could serve the community in many varied ways. In 17 years, the church grew from about 24 people to a membership of over 700. I told Jerry that I felt like it was easier to build a church from the ground up, meaning a new start, then working with a congregation that is over 100 years old and is often resistant to making changes to strengthen and grow the faith community. He agreed. We discussed many things about church, but the most important topic that is applicable to both new start ups and historical congregations was finding ways to invite church members to invest themselves in the life of the parish. Everyone who came to Southminster was asked to take an instructional class before joining. The class covered the Outlines of the Faith, the purpose of the church, and a pledge of commitment to the work of parish. People were asked to serve both inside the parish in one or more of several ministries and to serve in one or more of their outreach missions to the world. Jerry explained that people who are committed to serving God through the mission and ministry of the faith community were the people who make a difference in the Kingdom, create a healthier congregation, and lead enriched spiritually lives.

There is an old expression that says, "What we get out of something depends on what we put into it." I am proud to say that the members of St. Mark's are devoted to helping people in Gastonia with assistance that changes the lives of those in need. If you were to speak to people in the parish about their service in and outside the church, you would find that most people are involved in several areas.

There are two areas of ministry that I want to highlight because of their impact on our common life. We are blessed to have a wonderful Pastoral Care Ministry led by Jay Barnes. Jay and his outstanding team give generously of their time to bring the church to those no longer able to attend. These people visit members in the hospital, take communion to individuals at home, help with assisting people to and from doctors appoint-

Worship Services

Service Schedule

Saturdays 5:00 pm Mark's

Place - a contemporary Eucharist in the Parish Hall

Sundays

8:00 am HE Rite I

9:00 am Breakfast

9:30 am Sunday class for all

10:30 am HE Rite II

5:00 pm Youth Group

Weekdays

Wednesdays 12:00 pm

Morning Prayer w/ HE

Thursdays 7:00 pm HE with Healing

First Wednesdays 3:30 pm

HE each month at Covenant

Holy Baptism is the main way to join the Episcopal Church and is generally done during Sunday worship on All Saints Sunday in November, Epiphany in January, the Saturday of Easter weekend, and the Feast of Pentecost in May or June, or as needed. **If you are interested in a date for baptism, speak to the clergy or the church office.**

Confirmation is an adult affirmation of faith that occurs when our Bishop visits the Parish. Our Bishop comes about every 18 months and was last with us April 2018.

Speak to the clergy or office about becoming a member of St. Mark's by scheduling baptism or confirmation or by having your letter transferred to St. Mark's from another Episcopal Church.

ments, and much more. It is important that our people who have been members of St. Mark's for decades are not forgotten. If you are interested to learn more about this ministry, talk to Jay or one of the clergy.

The other area of ministry I want to lift up is our Altar Guild. Unless you have served on an Altar Guild team you probably are unaware of the many gifts these people share in preparing our worship space so that we might have a Holy experience. This ministry is done with prayer and reverence. Setting the Altar and making ready the Sanctuary for our faith community to praise God is a joyful offering of self. After the service, to remove the consecrated bread and wine, the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, is a humbling and awesome privilege. This ministry does wondrous and glorious things with very few people. We invite you to pray and discern your call to serve God and your neighbor in this way.

There are many other ministries that are a part of our common life together, ministries like nursery, teacher, coffee hour, safety team, greeter, usher, reader and more. All are important in their own way. The important question is are you involved in St. Mark's. If not, then you need to be. Studies have shown that people who join a church and do not get involved in a ministry within the parish will more than likely leave the church after about 6 months. If you are new to St. Mark's, we want you to stick around so please get involved. If you have been here at St. Mark's for some time and have the excuse "I've done that before, it's time to let someone else do that now", get over yourself and step back in.

Eight people carry a lighter load than two people. Find your calling, and be involved. Why? Because as Paul says, *"For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. ¹³ For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit."*

God needs us involved with all our heart, and with all our soul, and with all our strength, and with all your mind.

Peace, Fr. Shawn +

**You are reminded
that Fr. Shawn
is available
for emergency
contact anytime
you need to call.
His cell phone is
704-718-7034.**

Time change - Nov 2nd

**Set your clocks back
Saturday night**



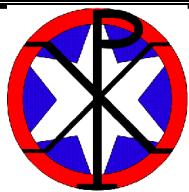
or you may accidentally show up an hour early Sunday when we do Christian Formation before the service.



St. Mark's Acolyte Day Sunday, November 10

Grand Procession of Our Acolytes Blessing of the 2 new torches

Join with the parish to celebrate our wonderful Acolytes and their ministry during worship. Over 20 young people will process with lots of crosses and flags and we will have a special preacher to talk about acolyting. Plan to come celebrate with us.



A Message from the St. Mark's Safety Team

We have had a safety team at St. Mark's for many years. As we have a lot of new initiatives going on related to safety and security, we would like to invite all interested members of St. Mark's to join our team.

What does the Safety Team do?

St. Mark's Safety Team is responsible for knowing all policies on safety and security. We help manage any event that comes up and advise the clergy and vestry on any recommendations to improve safety and security. The main areas we cover are physical security and personal safety with specific policies for child safety, medical issues, shelter-in-place and evacuation (for weather or fire), and physical threat. It is a very rewarding ministry to help the church grow and improve our mission to the community while keeping us all safer.

We want everyone to feel safe, secure, and welcome as they participate.

If you are interested in our group, speak to a staff member or contact Dan Gilbert (d.gilbert@yahoo.com). Watch for an open session in December to learn about the Safety Team and its activities.

Dan Gilbert



Annual Convention of
The Diocese of Western
North Carolina
November 8 and 9
Trinity Church
Asheville



For All the Saints
Sunday, November 3 is
All Saints' Sunday.

Send in any names you wish to be
included in the Remembering the
Saints reading and candle-lighting.

On-Going Activities

Office Hours: There are **new office hours this fall**. The office is open Monday through Thursday from 9 to 5 and closed on Fridays. Dionne Browning and Polly will generally be in the office Monday through Thursday and will both be at church on Sunday mornings. Dionne will be there to answer questions, greet visitors, and update information. You are reminded that **if you have a pastoral emergency and need clergy, you can either call the church office for assistance or call Shawn's cell @ 704-718-7034 or Brenda's cell @ 704-221-0248 directly.**



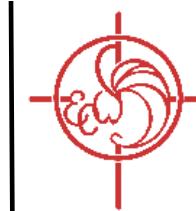
Our Bible Study Groups meet on Wednesday each week. The morning **Bible 101** (Balthis) group meets at 10:00 am and the afternoon **Covenant Bible Study group** meets at 4:30 pm. The **Belmont Evening group** meets at the Rudisills' home and will meet Wednesday, November 13 at 6:30 pm. All are welcome.

Our Faith & Health Ministry Group provides blood pressure checks on the 4th Sunday of the month, and answers other health related questions as best they can. Thanks to Reba Childers and Jay Barnes who coordinate our health/parish nurse ministry.



The Prayer Shawl Group meets the 4th Monday at Caravan Coffee, Belmont to make shawls and prayer squares for people who need to be "wrapped in prayer". Shawls and squares are in the narthex of the church and can be blessed by clergy at any time. Nancy Brewbaker (704-868-4493) coordinates our prayer shawl group.

St. Mark's hosts an Aikido group, led by Dan Gilbert which meets Tuesday and Thursday evenings and on Saturday mornings. Aikido is a peaceful martial art and a philosophy of practices, techniques, and movement designed to be complementary to Christianity. Speak to Dan for information about this martial art or about the group.



ECW Women's Ministry: St. Mark's has two circles of women who meet on a regular basis.

There is a **day group that meets at Covenant Village on the first Monday of each month at 10:30** from Sept to May. This year they are learning about the lives of women saints. Any woman who wishes to meet during the day is welcome to join.

An **evening group meets the first Tuesday of each month** and is reading the book **The Friendship of Women**, by Joan Chittister, which looks at how Biblical women and we support each other as friends.

Any and all women are encouraged and welcome to join either group.



LEV Ministry: Our dedicated Lay Eucharistic Visitors ensure that everyone is included in our services by taking communion and visiting our sick and shut-ins who cannot get out. Be sure to let the Church Office know if you are in the hospital or otherwise can't come to church as hospitals no longer contact us with that information. Jay Barnes coordinates our LEV group. We are currently working to "Live Stream" the services so that you can watch online if you can't be in church. Be watching for details as that develops.

Bereavement: St. Mark's Bereavement Committee provides either a reception after funerals or a family meal after a death. They set up, fix food, serve, and clean up for the reception or provide food for a meal. If you are interested in being part of the Bereavement Committee or have questions, text or call Nancy Brewbaker at 704-460-2496 or speak to Lynn and John Moore.



"Comfort Kids" Ministry: Julia Bozarth and others are working to provide dolls to DSS and other groups for children who are being removed for whatever reason or are in a "crisis" situation. If you can help sew, stuff, embroider, or cut out material, you are needed. There is lots of work to do and groups can gather to work together or separately. Speak to Julia or Brenda if you are interested in this work.

The Deacon's Corner

Jesus told his disciples a parable about their need to pray always and not to lose heart. He said, "In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor had respect for people. In that city there was a widow who kept coming to him and saying, "Grant me justice against my opponent." For a while he refused; but later he said to himself, "Though I have no fear of God and no respect for anyone, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will grant her justice, so that she may not wear me out by continually coming." And the Lord said, "Listen to what the unjust judge says. And will not God grant justice to his chosen ones who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long in helping them? I tell you, he will quickly grant justice to them. And yet, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?" Luke 18:1-8

We recently held A Day of Encouragement and Prayer workshop at St. Mark's. Three speakers and I shared our stories about the affect of prayer in our lives and how without God, our situations would have been much different. If you were not able to attend, don't fear! We plan on doing it again with different members of our parish next year.

One of the consistent comments that was made about the types of prayers we tend to pray was the "911 prayer". You all know the one I am referring to - "Jesus, I need you NOW!" Sound familiar? If we are honest, I believe it is one prayer that we have all used on more than one occasion! I just wondered if, when we have used this prayer, we've followed the "operator's" instructions.

Let me explain. If you have ever needed to call 911, what are the questions the dispatcher asks you? What is your emergency? Do you need fire, ambulance, or police departments? After we describe our need, we may be asked to LISTEN to any instructions that may be given to keep someone breathing or their heart beating. Lastly, we are told to STAY ON THE LINE UNTIL HELP ARRIVES! Are you beginning to see where I am going with this?

Jesus is sitting at the right hand of the Father praying and interceding on our behalf without ceasing. When we place our call, our prayer, He answers us. Some of our prayers are answered right away, others may take a little longer. Are you persistent as the widow was? Do you "stay on the line listening" for instructions that will aid you or others with your emergency?

God longs to be in relationship with us and that can only be accomplished through time spent in prayer. 911 prayers are a part of life but I believe that just as we long to hear from our loved ones on a regular basis, God longs to hear from us not only in emergencies but just to hear that we acknowledge all that God has done on our behalf. Like my grandmother would say, "Have you counted your blessings lately? Have you told God how in love and thankful you are?". As a parent, I can tell you how much it means to hear from our kids "just because", and when I don't hear from them for weeks on end I tend to get a little testy! As a human parent I enjoy and long to hear the voices of my children. How much more do you think our heavenly Father longs to hear ours?

My prayer is that we will be faithful, persistent, and thankful in our relationship with God.

For His Sake, Deacon Brenda +



The Fishermen - A Monthly Men's Gathering

A new men's group is forming in November called The Fishermen. On Saturday November 16 from 9:00 to 10:30 all men are invited to come for breakfast and conversation about meeting regularly for whatever is wanted or needed. Come be part of the discussion and see where God might be calling you this coming year.

St. Mark's Youth Groups

The young people of St. Mark's gather for food, fellowship, and fun Sunday evenings from 5 to 7. This group is open to all young people in 6th through 12th grade and is a welcoming and enjoyable group.

Club 45 meets for 4th and 5th graders usually on the first Sunday of the month. Be watching for the Club 45 dates and all these upcoming activities:

- Nov. 1 EYC/Club 45 Fall Lock-in - Club 45 are invited from 6-8 pm for dinner and movie, 6-12 for dinner/movie and the night.
- Upcoming Service Project for Backpack Ministry - Date TBD
- Nov 15-17 Diocesan Fall High School Conference; see Sophia for details.
- Nov 24 Community Youth Potluck at 1st Methodist, 6 pm
- December 13 Friday night Child-care Fundraiser from 6-9pm. Plan a night out or get your Christmas shopping done and support the youth group.
- Coming in January - Dismantling Racism workshop, Jan 10-11.

Follow our youth on Instagram at
[Instagram @ _stmarksyouth](https://www.instagram.com/_stmarksyouth)

Thank you from the Brewbakers

 The Brewbaker family thanks the parish for your thoughts and prayers during the recent death of Nancy's mother, Grace Garrett. Your support has helped us get through the sadness.

Parish Transitions

Births: **Mae James Knight**, daughter of Christopher & Tara, granddaughter of Kevin & Peggy, great-granddaughter of the late Tom & Della Kirkland, 10-18, Gastonia.

Deaths: **Parker Lee Hatcher**, Heather Griffin's father, 9/27 in Dugspur, VA
Bobby Dwight Mullis, Jody White's father, 10/20



December Dates to Remember

- **December 1** - Advent begins
- **Sunday, December 8** - Christmas Dinner
- **Sunday, December 22** - Greening the Church
- **Christmas Eve:**
 - Family Service at 5pm
 - Midnight Service @ 11 pm
- **Christmas Day:**
 - Casual HE at 11 am
- **December 29** - Christmas Lessons and Carols; Family Promise week
- Coming in January - Epiphany Pageant 1/5; Annual Meeting on 1/12



Stewardship

Fall is the time when churches begin to think about budgets and pledging and stewardship. Many churches have Every Member Canvases that often send out members to meet with every person in the parish to talk about giving and to deliver the pledge cards. At St. Mark's we have generally used a less involved approach and sent out letters detailing the needs for the coming year and requesting each member respond with a pledge to the operating budget of the church. Be watching for these letters in early November and prayerfully consider how you can support the great work that is happening at St. Mark's each and every week. When we give to St. Mark's, whether our time, talent, or treasure, we are being good stewards of the gifts God has given us. Pledge cards will be due November 24.

Michael Whatley is our Stewardship Chair.

REALM

St. Mark's has made the conversion to REALM as the online way to make both one time donations and pay recurring pledges. Every member who wishes to give to St. Mark's online is invited go to the REALM pages and sign up for whatever they want to do.

There are several ways to get connected to REALM.

- You should have received an **invitation** to join REALM. If you did, use that to set up your profile and get started. If you didn't, contact the office and Dionne can send you an invitation.
- You can **text givestmarks \$75** (or any amount) to **73256** and you will receive a return text with the steps you need to take.
- You can go to the St. Mark's **webpage** and look for the Give Now button to get started.

Questions: contact Dionne in the church office and she will help.

Get involved in Ministry - There are so many ways to help at St. Mark's

- **The Salvation Army:** needs paper products and people to cook and serve. Speak to *Patti Tambarella, Brook Crawford, or Deacon Brenda* to get connected.
- **Blessing Bags:** We pack over 200 bags every month for the police, Salvation Army and others to hand out. Come help pack on the 4th Monday each month from 9-10 am and from 6-7 pm. If you want to donate or have questions, speak to *Vicki Burns or Louise Ridgeway*.
- **Heritage Oaks:** We have a group that goes to this nursing home every Friday at 9:15 to talk to and help these residents who have no one else. Join with the Deacon when you can.
- **CAM:** CAM provides assistance with food, utilities, rent, and medicines for people in our community who might otherwise not have anything. We have just "stocked the pantry" but you can always add food to their bin in the Parish Hall. Volunteers are also needed to help Speak to *Chuck Forbes or Karen Schaeffer* if you want to help.
- **Backpack Weekend Food Program** provides food for children over the weekend. *Sara Sprague* coordinates. We need volunteers this fall to pack the food and to deliver. Speak to Sara to help.
- **Odd Socks:** Put all your odd and used socks down the chimney of our Sock House for people around town and around the world.
- **Family Promise:** St. Mark's hosts families working to get into their own housing. We provide meals, beds, and companionship for a week at a time. *Kenna Watts* is coordinator and will gladly answer questions. Our next date is in late December.
- **Second Helping:** There is a cabinet in the Youth Room of non-perishable food and a shelf in the kitchen freezer for anyone experiencing a food need. You are welcome to take as needed.



November 2019

SCHEDULE FOR LAY LEADERS – NOVEMBER

	November 3 All Saints Sunday	November 10 Pentecost 22 Acolyte Festival	November 17 Pentecost 23	November 24 Last Pentecost
Lay Readers 8:00 am	Eden Isbell Ed Galda	Jeff Bozarth Mary Stamey	Liz Willett Pat Townsend	Ed Hoerning Judy Jackson-Malina
Lay Readers 10:30 am	Rachel Varriale Rosie Dedrick Michael Whatley	OT: Ethan Barker Psalm: Zachary Major NT: Sophi Jolley Prayers: Maggie Griffin Chalice: David John Major, Anthony Varriale	Alex Williamson Richard Martinez David Burns	Jay Barnes Cathy Wesson Bob Ridgeway
Ushers	Alan and Christi Jolley	Duane Pendleton Walter Hobbs	Don and Pat Miller	Tim and Candy Grooms
Greeters	Suzie and Mary Kate Whatley	Blaine and Cookie Rudisill	Tina and Valerie Queen	Jane Cauthen with "friend"
Acolytes	Sophi Jolley Kenya DeCastro Ella & Jack Carsner	Acolyte Festival All acolytes should plan to attend.	Emma Grey & Andrew Taylor Mason McCarey	Ethan and Jake Barker Tori and Mike Murray Matthew Jackson
Nursery	Tracy Murray	Betsy & Travis Johnson	Tracy & Tori Murray	Graydon & Emily Stallard
Breakfast	Sherry Miller	Dale Ward	Jeremy McCarey	Jim Redd
Children's Chapel	Penny & Ethan Barker	No Chapel	Terri Williamson, Mary Kate Whatley	Polly Redd
Coffee Hour/ Lunch	Coffee Hour— Price Thrower and Ann Brown	DOK - lunch reception for Acolytes	Christi Jolley	Martha Stone
Vestry Lock-up	Bob Ridgeway	Walter Hobbs	John Watts	TBD



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258 WEST FRANKLIN BLVD.
GASTONIA, NORTH CAROLINA 28052



CHRISTMAS MEMORIALS/HONORARIUMS

St. Mark's parishioners and others are invited to make monetary contributions to help cover the cost of flowers and greenery to decorate God's house for the celebration of the birth of His Blessed Son, Jesus Christ. Your generosity is greatly appreciated. Fill out this form and place it with your check in the alms basin on Sunday or mail it with your donation to the church office. Please print on the form so that we are able to read your requests.

Deadline for Christmas Donations is Wednesday, December 11.

Your Name: _____

Phone Number: _____

Given in loving memory of: _____

Given in honor of: _____

Amount enclosed _____