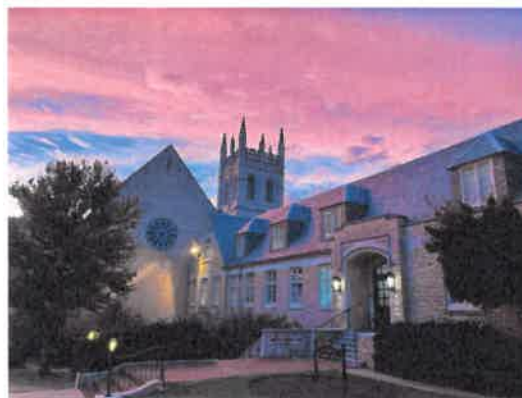


ST. MARK'S --- CATHEDRAL



ANNUAL REPORT 2021

Parish Statistics 2021

Sacraments and Services:

Holy Eucharist	
Sunday	82
Weekday	73
Private	90
 Daily Office	
Sunday	33
Weekday	92
 Holy Baptism	
candidates 16 years and older	0
candidates under 16 years of age	16
 Confirmation	
candidates 16 years and older	3
candidates under 16 years of age	12
 Holy Matrimony	8
 Burials	27

2020

Sunday attendance Year-to-date	6,869
Average Sunday attendance	132.1

2021

Sunday attendance Year-to-date	20,901
Average Sunday attendance	401.94

We remember in our prayers those who in the last year have entered into larger life:

Frederick Hickman Plitt, Sr., Lucy Violet Denton Burton, Marilyn Dinger Osburn, June Tschoi, Kimberly Cady Stroud, Johnston Harman Chandler, James Cronan Egan, Jr., Paul Ratcliff Winder, Gilbert R. Shanley, Jr., William Lloyd Overdyke, Jr., Kenneth Francis Maher, Zoe Collins McCombs, George Frederick Ingersoll, III, Wiley Hunter Mock, Nita Payne Renshaw, Thomas Kalford Ratcliff, Nancy Elaine Ellington, Harriet Spanberg, Hollis Thames Rogers, Jr., David O. Short, Russell Wayne Higginbotham, Nancy Jean Stacks Jennings, Lucille Ridinger Teague, William Chandler Teague, Warren David Long, Jr., Bruna Delorme, Carolyn Sheridan, Kathryn Prestridge, Blanquita Collins, Eleanor Armstrong.

Report of the Dean

Thank you for joining us for the Annual Parish Meeting 2022. My sense of 2021 at St. Mark's Cathedral is that we have been living through a year of transitions, change, and the need for flexibility and resilience.

You might recall as we returned to "in person" worship around Ash Wednesday, we were caught in the midst of a Winter storm that left everyone in Shreveport stranded. By Easter it seemed that we were beginning to find a new normal in terms of worshipping together, and then later in the year we were hit with new strains necessitating additional precautions and protective measures.

Throughout the COVID crisis, we have seen transitions in our Cathedral staff. Over the course of 2021 we have said good bye to:

Bryan Mitnaul – Canon for Cathedral Music

Drew Christiansen – Cathedral Canon and School Chaplain

Wayne Carter – Cathedral Clergy

John Scheel – Facilities Manager and Program Support [Jan. 2022]

Given the commitment and compassion with which these individuals worked and lived among us, we were sad to say our good-byes. However, Bryan and John have stepped into retirement, and we hope they are enjoying themselves. Father Drew and Father Wayne have cast their boats upon new waters of ministry, and we are grateful that they continue to serve the Body of Christ in their new locations.

We are pleased to welcome new members of the staff Derrick Meador and Beth Hendrix and {Priscilla McClean} to St. Mark's. They are each making fresh contributions to our Cathedral life, and I hope that you will take time to visit with them about their ministries at St. Mark's.

I would like to give thanks to our retiring Vestry members –

Marilyn Kirkland, Lisa Love, Cody Mayo, William Weaver, Bud Westmoreland.

Marilyn and Bud have served on the Executive Committee of the Vestry, which invites a bit more participation and commitment in terms of time and attention to Cathedral matters. It has been a joy to serve with them, and they have certainly contributed greatly to the life and welfare of our members and our Cathedral.

William Weaver has served in a dual capacity at times; serving both on the School Board and the Vestry. As many of you know, William regularly contributes to our Adult formation groups on Wednesday nights, and has been a tremendous volunteer and advocate with our youth and young adults through the years.

I will continue to call upon Cody Mayo for advice and counsel on a number of matters, but especially in the area of giving and stewardship. I have found Cody's friendship and advice in this area both informative and encouraging. And although he is retiring from the Vestry, I do plan to keep him "in the camp" as a friend and advocate for St. Mark's Cathedral and School.

I would like to thank Lisa Love for accepting the call to become our Junior Warden. Lisa has dedicated herself fully to the tasks associated with being Junior Warden by offering support and leadership in decisions pertaining to the physical plant. She continues to be our Vestry liaison with the Catechesis of The Good Shepherd program, and lends a hand in the organization and training of the volunteers in the most important area of our parish life.

I want to thank our Senior Warden, Bill Kalmbach, our Chancellor, John Reeks, our Treasurer, Murry Viser, and our Treasurer Emeritus, Ron Roberts. These individuals, week in and week out, offer their gifts of discernment, prayer, and dedication to the life we share at St. Mark's. The gift of their time, attention, and counsel in matters pertaining to the health and spiritual growth of our Cathedral are essential.

We owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to Renee Deupree, the chair of our Wedding Guild, as well as all the members of our Wedding Guild. The individual members of our Funeral Guild. Our Flower Guild. And of course a huge note of thanks to our Altar Guild.

Given that our 2020 COVID experience more or less closed the Cathedral for a period of time, we had something of a backlog of weddings and funerals when we opened 2021. The Wedding Guild simply rose to the occasion, as we proceeded to celebrate 8, 9, perhaps 10 weddings almost in a row. The same was true for the Funeral Guild and their ministry to families during times of grief and loss.

The hands and hearts of perhaps a hundred volunteers keeps the pastoral and liturgical heart of this Cathedral alive. I know that I speak for my colleagues on the Cathedral staff that we are grateful and humbled to work within a community of faithful disciples.

My general sense is that we are continuing to walk uphill following the COVID situation of the past few years. Our Sunday attendance is slowing building, as are our other programs and ministries.

2021 Annual Meeting goals included the following:

Pay off the debt on the Little School of \$770,000

Member liaisons to assist new families when they join the Cathedral.

Greater communication via social media.

Greater member visitation to the sick and shut-ins via Stephen ministers.

Feature our music/choir and bell-ringers on our website.

Post a sign facing either King's Highway or Fairfield with our regularly scheduled Eucharists and Evensong.

- Undertaking a Pew Renovation project with the help and direction of a newly formed Memorials Committee. More information is forthcoming.

- The pre-planning for a memorial within the Cathedral honoring those who have given their lives in the service of our nation, as well as those who are veterans of the Armed Forces.

- The creation of a Discipleship Group to assist me in planning and providing for lifelong Christian formation at St. Mark's, with a special focus on those areas where I see gaps – college and young singles, the church in mission, the widowed, personal prayer, and fun and fellowship for Middle and High school. These are projects for 2021, and we have already taken steps in each of them as we anticipate returning to our “regularly scheduled programming” within the coming months.

Of the goals I mentioned last year, this is our current progress:

- The Little School debt has been retired through the generosity of many members, as well as the leadership and constant, constant, faithfulness of John Meldrum. Even with COVID interrupting our plans, John never flagged our failed in his optimism and support for this effort. I thank him deeply for these wonderful qualities.

- We are communicating more via Social Media.

- We are in the midst of reinvigorating our Lay Eucharistic Visitor team for visits to the sick, the elderly, and those who cannot travel to the Cathedral.

- The website is a work in progress.

- The sign is still in the future.

- The Veteran's Memorial is in the works and plans are underway.

- The pew renovation project is underway.

- We have formed a “Dean's Cabinet,” which is a kind of Junior Vestry, to being addressing some of the issues I mentioned last year.

The items I identified at the 2021 Annual Meeting are still live concerns, and I continue to work toward their resolution. The one item I would like to add to this list is the expansion of our current outdoor columbarium.

We have approximately 28-30 niches remaining in the outdoor columbarium. I have asked members of the Vestry to serve on an exploratory committee of how best to address the expansion of our outdoor columbarium.

In the near future we will begin asking members of the Vestry to take up particular tasks in terms of architecture, construction, and financing. This will become our next “project.” It is clear that the role and presence of the current columbarium has taken root at St. Mark’s; therefore, we must plan for additional niches.

I believe that Mr. Anan, in his initial architectural vision of St. Mark’s, has given us the doorway into a graceful and beautiful solution to our columbarium needs. We need to begin this project very soon.

The last note of this report is reserved for someone that I have sometimes called the “Lay Rector,” or the “Lay Dean” of St. Mark’s. He will not be replaced. It is not possible to find his replacement. John Scheel has carried the life and ministry of this place, this congregation, deep within his heart for over fifty years. Vestry, Verger, Warden, Sunday School teacher, chief bottle washer, counselor, friend of the outcast and the homeless, etc., etc. John Scheel has worn all the hats, at least all the important hats that come with being a faithful servant and disciple of the Gospel. We have been negotiating John’s “retirement,” or “transition” for a number of years. I was always reluctant to move too quickly, as I knew how much this Church would change with his departure from the staff.

John is an example of the “Priesthood of All Believers,” and he is part of that cadre within the Church who hear the Lord calling, “Who will go for us?” And from somewhere deep inside, these individuals hear their own voice replying to God, and they answer, “Here am I – send me.”

Thank you John for answering that call. Thank you for being a good friend, fellow laborer, and someone that we can love; and someone who we know also loves us in return.

As I have said in the past, it is my belief that the Christian Church, The Body of Christ, is sustained first by the Holy Spirit and the promises that Jesus made to his first friends and followers; that He would be with them until the end of the ages. However, without response, without individuals willing to serve, willing to carry the “project” of the Gospel when there is no reward, when there is no applause, and sometimes when there is no certainty – this community of faith would not exist; and would simply become a footnote in history.

I cannot thank John enough, and I will miss our time together. John, I can say in thanksgiving to Christ that I have grown in my own faith, my own witness to Jesus, by serving with you. Thank you.

His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a little, I will set you over much; enter into the joy of your master.’

We have a small gift of appreciation for John today, and we will be presenting John with the customary “purse” in the coming months.

Respectfully submitted,

Alston Johnson

Dean – St Marks

Report of the Senior Warden

The State of St. Mark's Episcopal Cathedral is strong.

Through a very unusual year, St. Mark's, its Clergy, its Vestry, its incredible staff, its volunteers, and its devoted parishioners have found the faith and strength to carry on. For many of us, church may be a once or twice per week occurrence, but it is important to know the St. Mark's never sleeps. Every day this facility and its inhabitants are busy with the business of the church, the temporal and spiritual education of children and adults, the preparation of food for the needy, the visitation of the sick, the celebrations of marriage and life, the maintenance of our campus, the fiscal planning for this generation and the next, and a hundred other actions and services that will never be generally known but help ensure St. Mark's is and remains an important and valuable asset to its parishioners, to Shreveport and Bossier City, to the Diocese of Western Louisiana, and, most importantly, For the Greater Glory of God.

From a financial perspective, St. Mark's is sound. Early last year, the Paycheck Protection Act loan we received from the Small Business Administration, which allowed us to maintain and pay our staff during the Covid19 shutdown, was forgiven in full. We are proud that despite the economic uncertainty caused by the pandemic, our employees did not have to fear for their income.

St. Mark's is also rising to the challenge of retiring the remaining debt incurred in the construction of the new Little School. As most parishioners know, a new facility was strongly needed in order better to serve our youngest students and to remain competitive in the local education market. We have accomplished our goals and now are close to paying for them in full.

The one area of Church finance which needs the attention of the parishioners is a review of our annual stewardship. Although we remain fiscally strong and are grateful for our generous donors, we must focus on the annual expense of our programs, personnel, and facilities. Operating a Cathedral and its extensive activities is an expensive endeavor. In addition to our annual stewardship campaign, please look forward in the new year to some discussions of and opportunities for planned giving.

We also bid fond farewells to Father Wayne Carter, Canon Bryan Mitnaul, and, facilities manager John Shields. Each of these servants is a prime example of why St. Mark's works, and they will be greatly missed. Fortunately, the work of St. Mark's has and will continue, with the addition of Mother Beth Hendrix, Canon Derrick Meador, and a new role for Mark Deverts.

Respectfully Submitted,

Bill Kalmbach
Senior Warden

Report of the Junior Warden

The facilities at both St. Mark's Episcopal Cathedral and St. Mark's Cathedral School are in good order and repair. Since returning from a very quiet 2020, where our worship services, school and adult education had been in a holding pattern from COVID-19, we gradually returned in 2021 with the state of our facility and its cleanliness as a priority. In that regard, the facilities have been thoroughly "deep cleaned," including the Cathedral, kitchen, Ministry Center and School. In addition to prioritizing a clean environment in which to worship and learn, the most significant facilities work of 2021 included installation of a new and updated phone system in both the Cathedral and School, repainting of the Ministry Center Garden Room and two Youth Lounges, upgrading the Livestream and Sound System in the Cathedral and repair of one of our chillers. In response to a cyber security breach at the School, we are currently in the process of upgrading and separating the phones, servers and security cameras from the School in order to protect both the Cathedral and the School from any future breach.

We have also completed some special projects. Through the guidance and insight of Sara Herrington and Mary Alice Roundtree we added a new front office area with a new reception window, countertop and insets for brochures and handouts. Our original Audubon print has been restored and reframed and is currently hanging in the front entrance area. In addition, our original World War I and World War II Veterans War Memorial has been refurbished and restored, as it had been damaged when it was taken down from the wall a few years ago. It will be located on an easel in the back of the church for viewing. Finally, John Scheel has taken the pew refurbishing and repair project to new heights. A number of pews have been refurbished, and we currently have received funds for the refurbishing of approximately twenty (20) additional pews, including new engraved brass plates, kneelers, four (4) new prayer books and four (4) new hymnals, each book also memorialized and placed in the refurbished pew. (In this regard, if you would like to honor or memorialize a family member or friend, John Scheel has committed to continue his work on this project in his retirement, so please contact him).

A number of smaller projects and repairs have also been completed, each designed to ensure that our buildings and grounds will continue to serve our needs and the needs of future parishioners. In this regard, we maintain cash reserves for all current and anticipated maintenance of our facility.

We would specifically like to recognize and thank our facilities manager, John Scheel and the Cathedral staff for smooth operation of our campus. Their day-to-day efforts and hard work have provided the space and opportunity for worship and education.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lisa Love
Junior Warden

Report of Canon Rowena White

Pastoral CARE: My primary area of ministry at St. Mark's involves providing pastoral care for those in the hospital and rehabilitation units, and in the homes or care facilities of our sick or homebound parishioners. The need has greatly increased due to the isolation and loneliness of COVID precautions. Therefore many of my visits have been by phone, and have been very warmly welcomed and lengthy! When circumstances allow, I have taken Holy Communion and enjoyed a visit. In addition, I provide brief pastoral counseling in my office for those who request it, as well as spiritual direction. I also assist in our various worship services, including funerals. Even though my position my position is half time, I continue to be active in all the areas above.

STEPHEN MINISTRY PROGRAM: Our program continues to be strong. In spite of the fact that we have several who have had to take a temporary leave of absence, each of the twelve remaining (plus our four leaders) have been very active and committed Care-Givers to those in grief, crisis, transition, or any of the other many life difficulties. The parish has been supportive of this confidential, one-to-one Christian care provided by those who have been especially trained to listen, encourage, and provide quiet emotional and spiritual support. When a potential care-receiver is referred to us, I interview each one, and when appropriate, prayerfully pair each with the care-giver who can best relate to them in their particular situation. Care-receivers do not have to be members of this congregation. We continue to be available to the larger community.

In fact, we led a two hour seminar in November for the public as well as those in our congregation who were dreading the holidays because of a recent loss and missing the presence of a beloved family member who had previously been very involved in their holiday celebrations. We had received from our headquarters a video, leaders guide and participants guide for a seminar entitled "Surviving the Holidays When your Heart is Heavy with Grief." We publicized the November event to the congregation and to the larger community and had nearly twenty participants. All of them stayed after the video presentation to participate in small groups of six or seven, each led by one of our Stephen Ministers. Since then I have met with several individually at least once or twice, to help them discern whether they would benefit from having a Stephen Minister or becoming involved with a grief support group in the community.

Some of the Stephen Leaders lead a Supervision Group while others fill in as needed and have other responsibilities. All participate in peer supervision with the other Stephen Leaders: Rosemary Lafargue, Anne Lasseigne, Pat Viser, Thomas Nsubuga, and the undersigned. The Stephen Ministers have these Supervision Groups every two weeks, along with a monthly Continuing Education program provided by the leaders. In the Supervision Group, names of the Care-Receiver are never mentioned, nor are any details given other than to say that the person is going through a difficult time. The supervision is to help the Stephen Minister with any personal problems they are having which may be getting in the way of their ministry. I am the only one who knows the exact details of their care receivers situations so that they can be assured that their names and circumstances are kept confidential.

The Stephen Ministers have all spoken of how much this ministry has blessed *them*! The emphasis on active listening has helped all of us be more present and attentive to others; this has been an unexpected gift! Most have also talked about how this program has helped them in their own spiritual growth and trust in God to lead, guide and work through them, often with amazing results! Gratitude abounds! We are eager to begin the training of another group of Stephen Ministers as our congregation is witnessing their value and becoming more eager to refer friends or family members who may benefit from having a Stephen Minister to walk with them on their difficult journey, especially when one doesn't want to burden friends with their problems.

SPIRITUAL DIRECTION GROUP: This group is open to all who desire to grow spiritually. We commit to following a process of daily gospel lectionary reading, prayer, listening to God, weekly journaling and briefly sharing with the group. It is a model that many have found helpful here and in other parishes. We meet on Mondays at 10:30 in the church library. All are welcome. We are also planning to start a new group in this Spring to meet from 12:00 to 12:30 for those who work! It will be different in that personal sharing will be strictly limited to reading our reflection from our journal.

OTHER ACTIVITIES: On the Diocesan level, I attend all clergy functions including the bishop's weekly ZOOM meeting. At the Bishop's request, I often provide Spiritual Direction for postulants during their seminary education and beyond and for those in discernment. When asked, I also do spiritual direction for others. I have been able to do some supply work (preaching and celebration of Eucharist) for churches who were temporarily in need. Also I have continued to be the Chaplain for the Diocesan Board of ECW. When COVID restrictions are over, I will continue to present the talks, meditations and spiritual direction for both of the ECW annual retreats: Time for Joy in April and Celebration of Women's Ministries in September. On the Provincial level, I served for three years as Chaplain for the international association for the Daughters of the King, a religious order that emphasizes prayer, service and evangelism. This involved quite a bit of travel and giving talks and meditations plus spiritual direction.

This has been a busy year that I've found also to be very fulfilling. It is a privilege to serve this warm and giving congregation.

Respectfully submitted,

Rowena White+

Canon

Report of St. Mark's EYC

While 2021 continued to bring change and challenges to EYC, it also brought us together. We are still functioning through the times of COVID with restrictions and hesitations. We had to say goodbye to our EYC leader, Father Drew at the beginning of the summer, and he has been dearly missed! We take the guidance and traditions he instilled in the program to continue to grow our EYC in numbers and substance. We kicked off the fall semester strong with a trip to Cypress Black Bayou with swimming and games. On the way home, the kids were already asking when we could return! We continued with weekly meetings filled with fun games and quality time together. We played life-size Mario Kart, carved and catapulted pumpkins, and had an outdoor movie night on the lawn! EYC also participated in the Advent Meditations and provided group reflections on two of the passages that were featured in the booklet this year. We were very proud of the kid's involvement and they seemed to really enjoy being a part of this. We also wanted to participate in something that would help our community and include the members of St. Mark's so we took one EYC gathering to assemble care kits. These care kits included essential items such as socks, wet wipes, toothbrushes, water, snacks, and each care kit was completed with a hand written note of encouragement from one of our youth! These care kits were placed in the Cathedral and we encouraged all members to take one and keep it in their car for when they came across someone in our community who was in need of a care kit! I think this was a reminder for all of us to slow down and appreciate the many blessings we have.

We are looking forward to 2022 with Stephen Burnett and myself continuing as EYC mentors and are always looking for others who feel called to help our youth join our team. We are keeping up with our social media (@smceyc) as well as sending out weekly emails to parents to inform them about upcoming events and encouraging volunteers to provide dinner for our Sunday evening gatherings. We will continue to adapt to the changes and obstacles to make sure there is always a place for our youth to feel welcome and involved at St. Mark's EYC.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah Kaye Wilkes

Report of the Music Department

This past year was filled with both new beginnings and renewal for music ministry at Saint Mark's Cathedral. Since I began my tenure in June 2021, we have worked to bring back many of the musical offerings enjoyed prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. I am very grateful to all members of the cathedral choir for their loyalty and hard work, and I am sure the congregation will join me in extending sincere thanks to them. It remains our goal to educate, encourage and provide a nurturing environment for all who serve the cathedral community through music ministry.

During my first few months on staff, we were able to execute a beautiful evensong and dinner honoring former Canon for Cathedral Music, Bryan Mitnaul. The entire weekend was a special time for former choristers and friends to make music together, share a meal, and celebrate Bryan's many gifts and lasting contributions to music at Saint Mark's. We were also able to coordinate a memorial service for William and Lucille Teague. The Teague service was a collaborative effort from three organists, Baroque Artists of Shreveport, clergy, and many musicians from our community.

The cathedral choir continues to provide some of the world's most beautiful music during our weekly services. We are very fortunate to have strong volunteers and a congregation that expects and supports the quality of music which is presented each week. In addition to weekly services, the cathedral choir provided special music for funerals, Christmas Lessons and Carols and two beautiful Christmas Eve services. We also reinstated choral evensong on the first Sunday of each month. This is a wonderful opportunity for collaboration with musicians from outside the Saint Mark's community.

The Saint Mark's Boys and Girls Choir resumed weekly rehearsals in September and rehearse each Wednesday from 4:00 – 5:30 p.m. These young musicians are continuing their study of music theory and learning the fundamentals of good singing. In addition to monthly evensong, they are now expected to participate with the cathedral choir each Sunday morning at 10:30 a.m. This is a rigorous environment for these young musicians and they are rising to the challenge each and every week. If you have a young child or know of another young musician in the Shreveport/Bossier community, please share with them this wonderful opportunity to learn new skills, travel and form a lifelong love for making music and the liturgical arts. It is our goal to foster a love of music and liturgy among our children. A healthy parish choir begins with vibrant programs for children of all ages.

I am continuing to build relationships between our local secondary schools, universities, and other arts organizations. We enjoy the talents of several Centenary college students each week in our cathedral choir. These student positions offer financial assistance and an opportunity for them to develop their skills in a liturgical environment.

We also saw the return of Baroque Artists of Shreveport for their 2021-2022 season. I've had the pleasure of participating in each concert and am very pleased with the support for these events. I look forward to 2022-2023 season, where we will continue to build on the many wonderful musical traditions at Saint Mark's, both in concert and worship.

If you are looking for a new way to serve the Saint Mark's community, please stop by and visit with me about opportunities in the music department. The music ministry family is warm and welcoming and we hope to see you at a rehearsal in 2022!

"Choral music is not one of life's frills. It's something that goes to the very heart of our humanity, our sense of community, and our souls. You express, when you sing, your soul in song." – John Rutter

Respectfully submitted,
Derrick Meador

Report of St. Mark's Cathedral Altar Guild

Altar Guild Duties

St. Mark's Cathedral Altar Guild is responsible for all tasks associated with the preparation and maintenance of the altars as well as setting up all liturgical services. The duties include: procuring all items needed for the liturgical services; clean and have repaired all silver, linens, vestments, and altar hangings; arrange for two annual cathedral clean-up days; maintain Hargrove (children's) Altar and Preschool altar; provide service set ups for all St. Mark's Cathedral School Eucharists; arrange for cleaning of Stonewall Chapel in preparation for the All Saints' service.

Altar Guild Leadership Term – 1 year

Directress: Carol Peterson

Co-Directresses: Rebecca Bryant & Lindsay Atkins

Members: 37 Active 15 Inactive

Trainees: 1

Three Standing Committees:

Wedding Committee – Chair – Renee Deupree

Members advise brides of the wedding customs of St. Mark's Cathedral and assist with rehearsals and ceremony.

Flower Committee - Chair – Debbie Hall

Members arrange altar flowers from Sunday services, weddings and funerals and have small arrangements taken to parishioners in hospitals, nursing homes, or homebound.

Memorial Flowers – Coordinated by Sherri Skrivanos

Linen Committee - Chair – Jane West

Members select linens to be used during each week's services and special services and provide for the washing and ironing of the small pieces. Ora washes and irons the Fair Linens and cover cloths.

Altar Guild Projects 2021

A new cope was donated in memory of James Harvey Eddy, Jr. by Marletta Eddy

A church family who wishes to remain anonymous has donated the remaking of the red hangings; the embroidery was transferred to new silk, and a new chasuble designed to match the set was created.

Services Performed in 2021

Sunday Eucharists --- 146

Weekday Eucharists -- 84

Private Eucharists- -- 215

Baptisms – 16

Confirmations –

Candidates 16 years & older -- 3

Candidates under 16 years -- 12

Funerals/Burials 27

**Respectfully submitted,
Carol Peterson, Directress**

Report of Community Ministries

The Community Ministries committee is a committee of the Vestry charged with considering requests for financial and volunteer support for worthwhile community activities locally, nationally and around the world. Our mission is to assist entities which seek to serve the poor and disadvantaged, relieve suffering, and provide sustenance, both spiritual and physical, to those in need whose needs are not met by existing levels of governmental or charitable support. We are particularly concerned with the needs of children, the homeless, elderly, and the victims of poverty, crime, disaster and religious persecution.

Committee members perform due diligence in evaluating each request. Completion of a formal funding application template is required for larger funding requests. Committee members have direct contact with ministries supported with Cathedral funds.

In 2021, entities receiving CM funds included Community Renewal International, the Caddo Council on Aging Meals on Wheels program, the Love your Neighbor revitalization initiative whose founders include two St. Mark's parishioners, Community Support Programs, providing housing and services to homeless individuals with mental illness, and the Martin Luther King Health Center founded by Sister Margaret McCaffrey, with funds providing diabetic supplies for low-income patients.

Ministries serving children funded in 2020 include Jewel House - a shelter for homeless girls ages 13 – 20, The Gingerbread House, serving child victims of physical and sexual abuse, the Caddo Parish Schools Homeless Children's program, and Community Support Program's Portals Program, providing case management for indigent foster children. Our sponsorship of a child at *Our Little Roses*, an Episcopal home and school for girls in San Pedro Sula, Honduras, continues.

The new St. Mark's ministry, "*Meals for Medical Heroes*" developed in 2020 to serve health care workers impacted by COVID-19 continued into 2021. From January 2 through March 21, 2021, meals were provided for 14 health care professionals working the Saturday midnight shift at the nearby Ochsner/University Health ICU through Phase 2 of the pandemic. As cases fell and the ICU patient count became more manageable, the weekly meals were suspended temporarily, knowing cases would likely rise again in the fall

After a respite of several months, area COVID-19 cases spiked again in August, as Phase 3 emerged and the committee ministry "*Meals for Medical Heroes*" resumed delivering meals each Saturday evening to the ICU. Utilizing food from three local neighborhood businesses a Community Ministries committee member delivered meals for 12 – 14 ICU staff each Saturday night for over 2 months.

In November, the Omicron variant struck Louisiana, and the Saturday night meal ministry resumed for Phase 4 of the pandemic. It continued through December 2021 and has remained active throughout January. Over the course of 2021, 420 meals to midnight shift ICU health care workers were delivered on 30 Saturday nights, funded primarily by donations from St. Mark's parishioners.

With one brief blessed exception last fall, the Community Ministries Committee has met primarily by email, phone and text during 2021, but is hoping to return soon to our regularly scheduled meetings on the second Monday of each month at 5:30 p.m. in the parlour. All parishioners are welcome to attend committee meetings and participate in this outreach ministry. If you know of a nonprofit or critical community need you would like to see considered for support, would like a copy of the CM funding application, or more information, please contact Candace Higginbotham, at 470-3001.

Respectfully submitted,

Candace Higginbotham

Report of Outreach and Events

Outreach is such an important aspect of our Christian lives. Just look to Acts 20:35," In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'" Below you will find a list of activities parishioners participated in throughout the year.

- Collected Christmas gifts and gift cards for Shriner's Hospital
- Bittersweet farewell dinners for Father Drew, Father Wayne Carter and organist Bryan Mitnual
- Resumed Rally Day
- Filled volunteer positions for Meals on Wheels routes
- Collected school supplies and backpacks for Community Renewal
- Collected stuffed animals for the CARA program for abused/neglected children
- Provided fresh fruit for the Community Renewal program
- Collected 80 turkeys for Cooking Crew.

We also had several wonderful events this past year that were within our church:

- Our annual meeting and lunch kicked off 2021 in January.
- Continued to grow both Men and Women's Cooking Crew
- The Cooking Crews provided close to 1,100 pans of food in addition to meals for Thanksgiving and Christmas for 900 people, this included 84 turkeys, dressing, green bean casserole, sweet potatoes, gravy, rolls, and brownies!
- The Cooking Crew serves the 10 Community Renewal Houses, Jewell House, Hope House, Common Ground, Woody's and the Volunteers of American Veterans Program.

Keep your eyes open for new and continued outreach opportunities in 2022! We will still have opportunities to serve, just in different ways. These are wonderful occasions to make a difference in the community and your fellow man! You will be surprised how helping someone can leave a lasting effect on yourself! Additionally, if you ever have an idea for the church, please contact me!

Respectfully submitted,
Jennifer Beruvides
jennifer@stmarkscathedral.net

Report of the Cooking Crew

The Cooking Crew was back on track for 2021!

First of all, the Cooking Crew would not exist if it were not for the AMAZING people that come together and make it happen!!! The Cooking Crew consists of five daytime cooking crews and one evening Men's Cooking Crew!! These amazing people cook only ONE ½ day each month.

This year, the Cooking Crews provided close to 11,000 servings of food (2,200 pans) in the form of a variety of casseroles that can provide nutrition and happy tummies.

The monthly food we cook is utilized by the Shreveport-Bossier Community Renewal Friendship Houses (there are 5 neighborhoods, each of which have 2 houses), The Jewel House, The Hope House, Common Ground, Volunteers of America in addition to our own shut ins within the congregation.

During the holidays, we prepare complete holiday meals (turkey, dressing, sweet potato casserole, green bean casserole, rolls, cranberry sauce, and brownies). These holiday meals serve several parishioners in addition to: The Friendship Houses, The Jewel House, Volunteers of America, Woody's Veteran Home, The Hope House, and Common Ground. Don't forget - we always have meals in stock for those in need – within and outside the parish. This year we provided approximately 900 servings for the holidays. This included 84 turkeys, dressing, green bean casserole, sweet potatoes, gravy, rolls, and brownies!

It is truly amazing to see how a handful of parishioners, giving on average only 4 hours a month, can touch so many lives!

No cooking experience needed; all are welcome to join at any time! If you have any questions or would like more information, contact Jennifer Beruvides at jennifer@stmarkscathedral.net.

On a personal note, I would like to thank all the ladies and men who have committed throughout this year to help this worthy cause and look forward to welcoming any newcomers!

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Beruvides

Report of St. Mark's Cathedral School

In reviewing the past two years' Annual Reports, I note that the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic upon our school and our students were a significant topic each year. I had hoped that this year's report might be different, but alas, Covid continues to affect both our daily operations and our spirits. Much of the fall was spent in a gradual return to normal operations and traditions, with a return to twice-weekly chapels in the Lower and Middle Schools, allowing parents to begin attending Chapel again, and even resuming using the Parish Hall for lunch. And then, just in time for the holidays, the Omicron surge hit us, and we are once again masking and eating in classrooms, though we are trying not to make any other limitations on normal operations. There is little question that our families and our faculty are ready to see the end of pandemic protocols and limitations, and my hope is that next year's report will have little to say about Covid except that it is no longer significantly affecting life in school!

Last May we did have a traditional St. Mark's graduation in the Cathedral for our twenty-seven graduates. Parishioners Caroline Bartle and Ethan Varnadore were selected by the Faculty as Class Speakers. Our graduates are now enjoying success and bringing credit to St. Mark's at several high schools.

Last spring, we were sorry to say good-bye to Fr. Drew and Miss Rachael as they moved to Ascension Episcopal School in Lafayette. Rachael began her career while still in college at Centenary by working in the St. Mark's afterschool program, and Fr. Drew was well-regarded by the faculty and students of all ages. In May we also bid farewell to Kaye Swearingen, long-time preschool teacher at St. Mark's. For over thirty years our three-year-old Lions benefitted from Kaye's kindness and wisdom, and she continued to learn and improve on her craft of teaching every year. The pandemic prevented a proper good-bye to Kaye, but we hope to remedy that problem this spring and hope many of her former students and their parents might come help us honor her.

We opened the current school year with 310 students enrolled in grades PS 2-8th, and we currently have 314 students, of whom approximately 20% are parishioners. The Little School is filled, with all preschool and Kindergarten classes at or just barely below capacity. Our smallest grades remain those grades that began school in the years immediately prior to the construction of the Little School, and we now find ourselves often with more demand than space available in the preschool. We also have several new middle school students this year, a trend which appears likely to continue next year. The school has sixty-one full or part-time employees of whom 10 are parishioners.

St. Mark's students take the Educational Record Bureau standardized testing each year, and we are pleased that our students score well above national norms and often at or above the independent school norms. Our students also tend to do quite well on the High School Placement Exam, which is used by Loyola College Prep and administered to all St. Mark's students. Most St. Mark's graduates enter high school with two or even three high school credits, and they consistently report being very well-prepared for high school studies.

St. Mark's remains a member good standing of the Southwestern Association of Episcopal Schools (SAES) and has recently begun the Self-Study for Re-accreditation in that association. We are also members of the National Association of Episcopal Schools (NAES), and both organizations provide important professional development, consulting, and networking opportunities for our school. I continue to serve on the Board of Directors of SAES, and on the Standards Committee of the Board.

The school is governed by a Board of Directors (the School Board), which is appointed by the Vestry. The Dean and Wardens are ex-officio voting members of the School Board. Current parishioners serving on the Vestry in addition to the Wardens include Jimmy Campbell, Susan Snyder, Ellen Erwin, Sanders Hearne, Kevin Payne, Matthew Smitherman, and Mary Beth McVie. We are grateful to all members of the School Board for their time and dedication, noting that the pandemic has made School Board service, like all things, more difficult, but even more important.

I am thankful always to the clergy and staff of the Cathedral for all they do for our school. Mother Beth officiates Preschool, Kindergarten, and Lower School Chapels; Fr. Thomas officiates Middle School Chapel; and Dean Johnson, Fr. Thomas, and Mother Beth all preach in rotation at Family Chapel on Thursdays. Mother Beth is also currently teaching a confirmation class in the school. We are blessed by the talents of Derrick Meador on the Organ at Family Chapel and in working with our 5th and 6th grade choir. Bess Maxwell prints our bulletins, and all the clergy and office staff are tolerant and understanding of fire drills, noisy children, and all the disruptions that school activities can impose upon them. Ora McClinton is beloved by students because she delivers the lunches, and Mark Deverts is always on the standby for repairs and maintenance issues.

Finally, I must express my gratitude and congratulations to Facilities Director John Scheel. John has been a steadfast supporter of the school for decades and has helped keep us running smoothly throughout his tenure on the staff. We will miss him and wish him the best in retirement!

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Christ Carter – Head of School