

ST. MARK'S --- CATHEDRAL



ANNUAL REPORT 2023

Parish Statistics 2023

Sacraments and Services:

| | |
|----------------------------------|-----|
| Holy Eucharist | 178 |
| Sunday | 161 |
| Weekday | 148 |
| Private | |
| Daily Office | |
| Sunday | 7 |
| Weekday | 125 |
| Holy Baptism | |
| candidates 16 years and older | 0 |
| candidates under 16 years of age | 15 |
| Confirmation | |
| candidates 16 years and older | 5 |
| candidates under 16 years of age | 15 |
| Holy Matrimony | 1 |
| Burials | 22 |

2022

| | |
|--------------------------------|--------|
| Sunday attendance Year-to-date | 11,436 |
| Average Sunday attendance | 219.9 |

2023

| | |
|--------------------------------|--------|
| Sunday attendance Year-to-date | 14,896 |
| Average Sunday attendance | 286.46 |

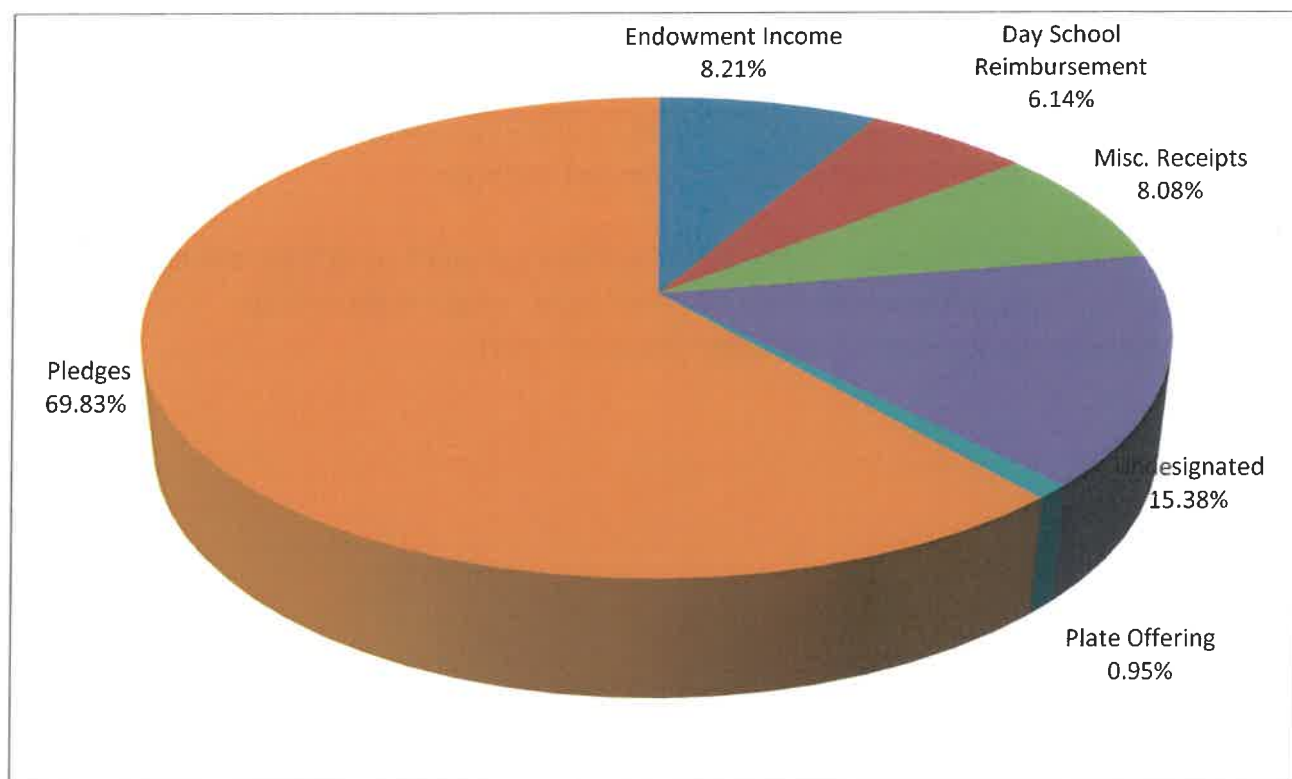
We remember in our prayers those who in the last year have entered into larger life:

Louis Lament Rabalais, Jr., Lois Wolf Montelepre, Susan Forrester Roberts, William (Randy) Fair, Philip Allen Harris, Richard Davis McDougall, Janis Jo Smith Moore, Marilyn Baker Davis, Jordan Rose McGimsey, Richard Desmond Liles, Frances Arthur Simpson, Betty Jean Fudikar Birmingham, David Marsden Wells, Peggy Maxwell Shirley, Victoria Grigsby Johnson, Nellygrace Christie Stoll, Henry Charles Coutret, Jr. and Ranita Peterson.

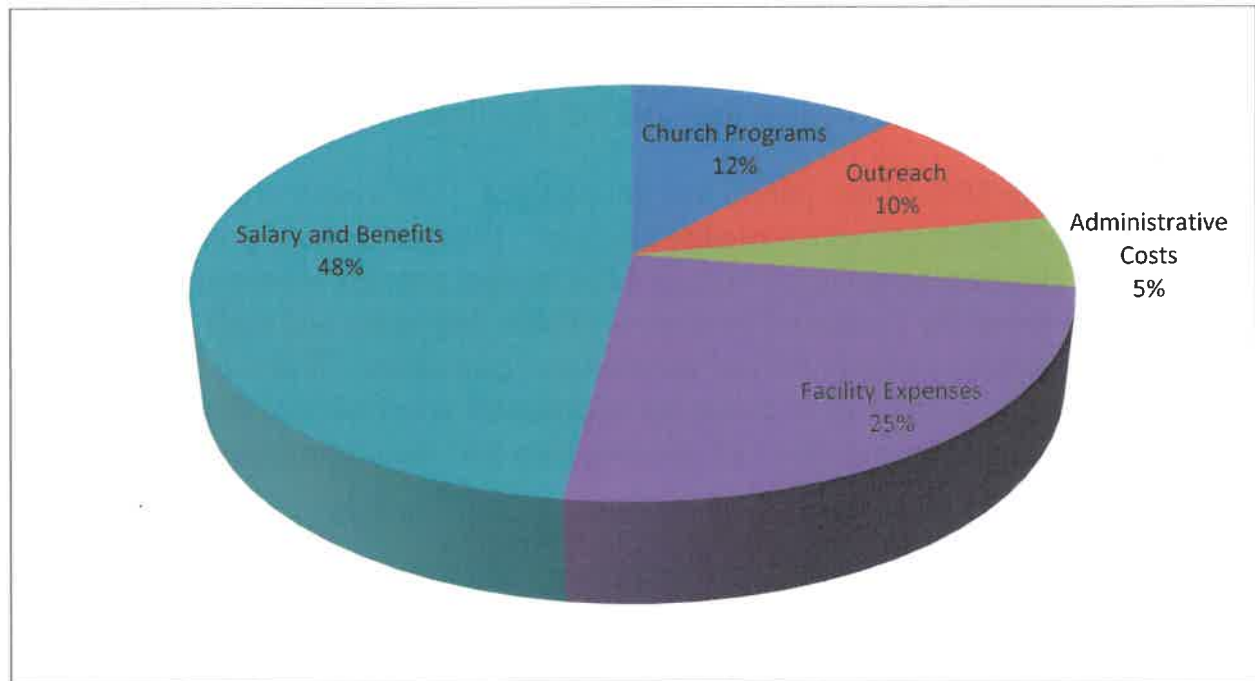
Our Cathedral has had a strong ingathering so far in 2024, but we are still shy of our 2023 pledges by a significant margin. To date, we have received pledges totaling \$967,527. In 2023, we received pledges of \$1,442,635 showing the 2024 pledge base is \$475,108 less than 2023 at this time.

Historically, over 50% of our parish has not pledged. The vestry urges everyone in the parish to make a pledge this year. Pledges make it possible for the Vestry to develop an accurate budget. The budget process is very important to the operations of the Cathedral because it allows the vestry and staff to determine the funds available for our mission and ministries. Without an accurate budget, it is difficult to make the operational and financial decisions that allow our church to enhance our congregation and the community in the many ways it does.

The following pie chart illustrates the breakdown of income from the 2023 year. From the chart, you will see that pledges account for almost 70% of our entire revenue. That is why it is so important that everyone pledge. If you fall into the 50% that does not pledge, please consider pledging today.



The breakdown of expenses for 2023 is illustrated in the following chart.



Overall, from a financial perspective, our church is very healthy. We have a significant endowment and restricted funds, but it is important to remember that most of this is not available for annual operating costs. We are able to use a small portion of the endowment (\$238,296 in 2023) for operations and the restricted funds must be used for their intended purpose.

In order to be good stewards of the gifts God has given to us all, we are asked to consider our time, talents and treasure. This year, when making that determination, please don't forget the "treasure" part.

Report of the Dean

Thank you for joining us for the Annual Parish Meeting 2024. For those areas of parish life not mentioned in my comments, please refer to the reports of our staff members.

This will mark my eleventh year to offer a report at this gathering of our Cathedral parish, and it has been a year filled with transition and opportunity.

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

Ellen Erwin, Joe Jayroe, Josh Knicely, Theresa Meldrum, and Joy Ratcliff. Theresa and Joy 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. Ellen served in a dual capacity on both the School Board and the Vestry, as well as during our headmaster transition, and I am grateful for the time and attention that she gave to both groups.

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. One of the most difficult areas of any historic church is the ongoing maintenance of its facilities. Lisa has served tirelessly in initiating and organizing the large scale cleaning and sealing project to maintain our Cathedral and its grounds, as well as the principle Vestry liaison for our current columbarium project.

I want to thank our Senior Warden, Bill Kalmbach, for his service to our Cathedral community. We regularly encounter financial, personnel, and legal questions that your Dean is moderately equipped to manage. Through his patient, consistent, and wise counsel, Bill has kept his hand steadily on the wheel of both our school and parish for what is now going on eleven years. Bill has selflessly made himself available to me and members of our staff during many, many, of those moments which arrive in parish life for which there is no calendar or schedule. The fact that you may not notice where some of the bumps have been in the road is a testament to hours of deliberation and inspired judgement on behalf of us all.

In a similar vein, I would like to thank our Chancellor, John Reeks, and our Treasurer, Patrick Caraway, 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.

Please thank our retiring Vestry, our Wardens, and our legal and financial support team when you have an opportunity.

We owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to Lindsay Atkins, who will be stepping down as Altar Guild chair in the coming months, as we welcome Lynn Yancey as our incoming Altar Guild chair. The members of our Wedding Guild. The individual members of our Funeral Guild. Our

Flower Guild. These individuals make life possible for all of us, as they accept the role of being Christian servant leaders.

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.

I would also like to thank our Stephen Ministry community for the care and concern that they give to our community. Please take time to familiarize yourselves with this group of individuals. Their time is given to creating an opportunity for friendship, fellowship, and personal care during times of grief, discernment, and searching for other members of the parish and community. It is a confidential ministry, and I give thanks to our Stephen Ministers that they have held fast to the trust that others have placed in their hands. Occasionally some of you have shared with me the renewed sense of hope and possibility that you have received from having a Stephen Minister; that the Gospel has become more transparent for you as a result of your Stephen relationship.

The Cooking Crew continues to provide meals and support for the Friendship Houses and other organizations within the city. With the support offered by Jennifer Beruvides this community continues to thrive and offer an opportunity for Christian outreach to many of our members.

Perhaps the greatest change we have experienced in our Cathedral staff has been the retirement of The Reverend Dr. Rowena White. A few months ago Rowena suffered a fall while at the Cathedral that left her with a very painful and difficult injury to her leg. She received surgery and is currently undergoing rehabilitation to recover from this injury. Currently this accident leaves her unable to drive or manage her domestic affairs without assistance. Rowena is rehabilitating in a local facility for the long-term work that lay before her. Given the nature of the injury and the incapacitation that has resulted, after conversation and discernment, Rowena decided to retire from her position at St. Mark's. Rowena will no longer be serving as a pastor within our clergy team. She will no longer be available to our parish as the pastor that she has been for so many years; and please know that I write this to you with sadness. In her absence Father Thomas, Father Paul, and I have been visiting and communicating with those who have been within Rowena's dossier of care. As I said to the Vestry recently, I am humbled and moved by the tremendous presence that Rowena has shared in the lives of so many. As a gifted example of our tradition of faith, Rowena has participated in the "cure of souls," which is the chief of calling of the ordained. She will be missed, and I am grateful to have been given the gift of being her colleague. On Tuesday, March 12th, we plan for Bishop Owensby to join us for a parish dinner celebrating her time at St. Mark's, as well as her life in the ministry. We will be establishing a "purse" for contributions in thanksgiving for her ministry among us. Any financial gifts that you would like to offer should be marked for that purpose. Any notes of thanks and good wishes may be mailed to the Cathedral Office marked for her, and we will be sure that she receives them.

We have made additions to our staff in 2023 – Amy Garsee as our Youth and Children's Minister, and Laura-Grayson Ameen as her assistant. I am also grateful to the Parent's Group at the School – Emily Smithwick, Katharine Knicely, etc., who provided for and executed the refurbishment of our Youth lounge that is used by both our Middle School and EYC groups.

We welcomed Lisa Bingham as a full time employee and bookkeeper. Lisa works closely with Becky Deverts, who remains on staff as part-time financial support.

We welcomed Daniel Bingham as a part-time facilities support person to work with Mark Deverts. Daniel assists with all of the physical plant and support services that are necessary on our large campus.

We welcomed Mr. Dylan Deal and his family to St. Mark's as Dylan began his duties as our Cathedral School Headmaster. Dylan has been well received in both the Cathedral and School communities, and we are looking forward to a long-standing relationship in the future.

During the past Annual Meetings I have mentioned the goals below:

Columbarium – This project has been on my desk for three years. Under the leadership of Lisa Love, our Junior Warden, and a columbarium working group formed within the Vestry, our current columbarium will be expanding in the near future. We currently have four niches remaining. With the expertise and planning of Clarence Babineaux, the Vestry has decided to move forward with the plans presented to the parish in January of 2024. I am very grateful for all of the time and attention that our columbarium working group and the Vestry has given to this project.

Social Media and Website Presence – Amy Garsee and Priscilla McLean are taking the reins of our social media and website management. Given that Amy works with our families and children, and Priscilla manages the Cathedral calendar, they each have a “hands on” interest in the smooth operation of our website and social media. I have asked them to both manage and review our current status, and make recommendations about how we might best function in cyberspace.

Member pastoral visitation - With the retirement of Rowena White, I have asked our Stephen Ministry team to consider being involved in our visitation to shut-ins with communion and fellowship. Fortunately we have some members who are grounded in their faith and the pastoral care training offered by Stephen Ministry to assist the clergy in our regular visitation schedule.

Pew Renovation Project – John Scheel, Mark Deverts, and Lisa Love have been hard at work honoring the wishes of donors in their generous support of our pew renovation project. The nave is mostly complete, and now we turn our eyes to the choir loft and balcony. We all owe John Scheel a note of thanks in his devotion to this important project.

MinisterioHispano Catedral San Marcos – The Reverends Jesus and Ellie Bulnes have begun a Sunday service for our Spanish speaking community in Shreveport-Bossier. They gather in a dedicated space in the Ministry Center on Sunday Mornings, and they worship together in the Chapel at 12:30. The service is open to all members of St Mark's and I encourage you to visit. There are also plans to begin offering English as a second language classes during the week under the guidance of Ellie and Jesus Bulnes in the coming months.

The Community of the Cross of Nails – Upcoming visit from The Very Reverend John Whitcombe, Dean of Coventry Cathedral, England. Dean Whitcombe will be visiting us in March to present St. Mark's with its Coventry “Cross of Nails” as we become members of this international community focused upon reconciliation within the Church of England.

2024 Additional Topics:

Highland Revitalization Effort. Many of you may remember the initial formation of our Cooking Crew ministry and the efforts of Skip Simonton. In her retirement from duties at St Mark's, Skip

has remained involved in community ministries throughout the city. She and Oliver Jenkins have taken a special interest in the Highland neighborhood, and I have asked Oliver to serve as a contact and coordinator for efforts made toward Highland revitalization. I imagine that we will be calling a meeting in the coming months to assess how St. Mark's might be helpful in the efforts that are being made in this effort.

Reinvigorating our Bell Ringing community. Cathedral Bell Ringing workshop in February 17th with Ross Venbow. We hope that this workshop will be an opportunity for our members to discover the joy and reverence of ringing the Cathedral bells in conjunction with regular worship, as well as at weddings and funerals.

St. Mark's visiting speakers/scholars/writers – I have asked Father Thomas Nsubuga to solicit and organize suggestions from our EFM community for invitations to visiting speakers/scholars/writers who might illuminate the Christian formation and practice of Cathedral members.

Liturgical Training – This year I would like to redouble our efforts toward recruitment and liturgical training of our worship participant base.

Safety and Security – Mr. Jim Himes, Verger, has agreed to chair our Safety and Security committee. Following a preliminary meeting in November we hope to re-establish our efforts in this area of parish life.

Name Tag – It is time to put our name tags back on for the sake of our newest members. Cynthia Anderson who assists with this project will be taking requests and filling orders.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to serve God as a priest of the Church and as Dean of this cathedral.

Thank you for your time and attention today.

Respectfully submitted,

Alston Johnson

Dean – St Mark's, Shreveport

Report of the Senior Warden

You are going to hear a number of reports today. The Dean will report on the religious life of the Cathedral in the year just passed and what we can expect this year. Others will discuss the facilities we maintain, the pastoral care available to us, the beautiful music we enjoy, our financial health, our ambitious youth program, our work in the community, the untiring labor of the Altar Guild, and the exciting developments happening at our school.

There is no point in your Senior Warden repeating this information. Instead, I would like to take the opportunity of this gathering to make some observations regarding the Church. I use the phrase "The Church" in the way I understand it appears in the New Testament, *i.e.*, not the place in which the people meet for worship but rather the people themselves.

The Clergy: I stand in awe of the work of our clergy. In addition to the very visible role they play in our public worship, the private service they render to us is amazing. One need only see the extensive list of home and facility visits to know that to be a priest at St. Mark's is a twenty-four hour, seven-days-a-week calling.

The Musicians: Our choirs and musicians are so very critical to St. Mark's. In addition to the beautiful service music we enjoy, Derrick and his team educate and serve our youth and the community at large. St. Mark's is a sacred music hub for the Ark-La-Tex, and we are a very lucky Congregation.

The Educators: It is an exciting time for St. Mark's Cathedral School. Dylan Deal, our new Head of School, has hit the ground running. Our current roster of teachers and administrators is as strong as it has ever been, and the support from parents and grandparents grows daily.

The Professional Staff: The maintenance of our campus and the smooth running of our day-to-day operations are the results of an incredibly hard-working team of financial, administrative, technical, and educational experts. Look around you: the bills are paid, the heat is on, lunch is served, the EYC Lock-in was a success. All these things, and a hundred others, happened because of our dedicated staff.

The Lay Leaders: You will hear today or read in your materials some of what the lay leaders of the Congregation do. These are only the highlights. Every day we have dedicated volunteers dispensing legal advice, planning budgets, caring for the grounds, preparing for and serving during the liturgy, teaching our youth, and reaching out to the community with services and support. Without this hard work, we simply could not function.

The Individuals. Finally, I must recognize all the individual members who cheerfully and without sufficient recognition assist me and others in our duties. We frequently consult parishioners who are experts in property insurance, banking, heating and air conditioning, security, architecture, real estate, and many other areas of expertise. Without exception, we find parishioners who are happy and eager to volunteer their expertise for the greater good. This unending resource makes St. Mark's the wonderful place it is.

The State of St. Mark's Cathedral is strong. Thank you to all who make it possible.

Respectfully Submitted,
Bill Kalmbach
Senior Warden

Report of the Junior Warden

In 2023 the St. Mark's Cathedral Vestry worked diligently to upgrade and maintain our campus for the ongoing work of our Parish. The larger projects undertaken by the Vestry include the following:

- *The cleaning, sealing and repointing project was completed in August 2023. We have budgeted going forward for the maintenance requirements of that project.

- *Concrete curbs, sidewalks and parking areas that were broken and cracked, including the stairs to the Cathedral from the south parking lot, the sidewalk on the south side of the Cathedral and the sidewalk, curb and a portion of the parking area behind the Parish Hall were removed and repaved.

- *Doors and windows that could not be repaired and repainted were replaced.

- *Our Rectory was upgraded in areas, including a new roof, remodeling the Master bathroom and replacing the wood fence.

- *Stained-glass windows in the Parish Hall doors were repaired.

- *Two air handlers in the Ministry Center were cleaned.

- *Some cracked and broken slate roof tiles were replaced on the Cathedral building and Ministry Center.

- *Landscaping maintenance this year included removal of some trees and a large-scale cutback after some weather-related damage.

- *Exterior windows on the building of the Cathedral and Cathedral offices are currently being repainted.

Throughout the year we have worked with our Cathedral School to identify and upgrade our shared spaces. Specifically, in communication and coordination with the Cathedral Wardens and Staff, the Parents Club of the School generously repainted the Parish Hall and completely renovated the two Youth Rooms in the Ministry Center for use by both the Cathedral and School youth. In addition, they repainted the School office area prior to the beginning of the school year.

We have also received some beautiful and significant donations this year, including a Mason and Hamlin Piano in memory of Thomas Kalford Ratcliff by the St. Mark's Cathedral Choir, a large antique mirror from France, dating circa 1810 – 1820 in memory of Mary Colvin Thigpen, Pattie Colvin Thigpen and Mary Colvin Hoffman by Sandra and John Hoffman, a Florida flame maple tree in memory of Mark Charles Florsheim, Jr., by friends of his parents and two willow oak trees and a bench in memory of Jordan Rose McGimsey. In addition, an anonymous donor provided funds for the renovation of the Choir Lounge.

Finally, in my Annual Report of the Junior Warden for 2022, I noted that we were working on a Columbarium Project to address an immediate need of our Parish for additional columbarium niches. This project required in-depth surveys, cost analyses, and the formulation and consideration of numerous drafts and ideas to meet our need in a cost-effective manner that

was also in keeping with the original architectural standards of our Cathedral. In that regard, we formed a Building Committee, including Alston Johnson, Bill Kalmbach, Lisa Love, Clarence Babineaux, Karen Hardtner, Brad Massad, Claire Rebouche and Lynn Yancey to review, discuss and make a recommendation to the Vestry for the construction and financing of this project. I am honored to report that the project is underway and renderings for this project are set up for viewing in the Narthex of the Cathedral. We look forward to your comments and support for this project which will include 360 additional columbarium niches. Please contact Cynthia Anderson at the Cathedral if you are interested in purchasing niches for you and your family. Each niche is \$1,500.

In addition to the Columbarium Project, the Building Committee recommended and the Vestry approved that architectural drawings be prepared for a proposed Colonnade (or covered walkway) in the Courtyard behind the flagpoles between the Cathedral and School. The Colonnade was part of the original architectural drawings of the Cathedral. Renderings of the Colonnade will be available for viewing in the near future. There seems to be a heart for this project among our congregation, but a determination will need to be made as to financial viability among the members of the congregation prior to any work on this project.

The Vestry has addressed and completed a number of smaller projects and repairs on our campus, 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 Sexton, Mark Deverts 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. 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.

STEPHEN MINISTRY PROGRAM: Our program continues to be strong. Each of our members has been a very active and committed Care-Giver 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.

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. All participants were invited to stay 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.

The Stephen Ministers participate in Supervision Groups every two weeks, along with a monthly Continuing Education program provided by the Leaders. In the Supervision Group, names of the Care-Receivers 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!

OTHER ACTIVITIES: On the Diocesan level, I attend all clergy functions including seminars and workshops provided by the Diocese. At the Bishop's request, I also 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.

Respectfully submitted,

Rowena White+

Report of Music Ministry

The music ministry at Saint Mark's is ever-evolving as we seek to enhance our worship experience and train the next generation of church leaders. The adult and children's choirs are essential to liturgical life at Saint Mark's and also serve as an example for music ministry in the Diocese of Western Louisiana. We are very blessed with hard-working and dedicated volunteers, who not only rehearse and sing each week, but also care for each other and those in our congregation and community. I consider it a great honor and blessing to lead this group of musicians and look forward to years of continued growth and spiritual development.

2023 highlights:

- Concert by Crystal Jiang (2021 Wideman Gold Medalist)
- Choral Evensong sung by all Saint Mark's choirs
- Anthems presented by our Catechesis of the Good Shepherd singers
- Choir Lounge refurbishment
- New choir vestments
- Increased enrollment in all ensembles
- "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat" presented by music camp participants
- Christmas Lessons and Carols
- East Texas Pipe Organ Festival
- Baroque Artists of Shreveport

In March, the Saint Mark's choir received a very special invitation to be a resident choir at Durham Cathedral. We will travel to Durham, England in July 2024 and sing for daily Choral Evensong and Choral Eucharist on Sunday morning. This is an exciting time to sing in the choir!

If you are looking for new ways to serve at Saint Mark's, please call or stop by the office and visit with me about opportunities in the music department.

Respectfully submitted,
Derrick Ian Meador
Choirmaster and Organist

Report of Youth and Parish Ministries

2023 was a season of new beginnings and renewal in our ministries. Many activities that had fallen away during the pandemic have returned and many new activities have begun. I made the move from the school side of the building to the church side of the building in June and we quickly hit the ground running.

Our first major activity was VBS. The Parish Hall and Ministry Center were full of Knights and Princesses as we learned how to be Keepers of the Kingdom. We are already starting to plan for VBS 2024. Special thanks to all of our Adult and Youth leaders. We could not have done it without you!

Christian Formation is so important in the lives of our children and our youth. We spent a lot of time this summer meeting with our Sunday school teachers for 4th grade – 12th grade to find out the best ways we can support their Ministry. Thank you to Melissa Flores, Blair Irion, Holly, Joni & Matt Woodard, Casey and Kevin Payne for teaching our 4th and 5th grade class. They continue to follow the Whirl Lectionary curriculum. Thank you to Patrick Caraway, Bob Ewing, Bob McVie, Gary Love, Jason Waltman, and Michael Ameen for continuing to teach Middle and High School Sunday School. Middle School completed the Reform: Ancestors curriculum and did and Advent Study on the Questions of Christmas. They have begun the Colaborate Bible Study curriculum for 2024. The High School group studied Looking for God in Messy Places by Jake Owensby in September and October. Their advent study was called Instachristmas. They have moved on to What if Jesus Was Serious by Skye Jethani.

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd is continuing to do their good work in the Level 1 and Level 2 Atrium. Thank you to Lisa Love, Laura Grayson Ameen, Leslie Caraway, Liza Johnson, Brandy Griffies, Marissa Hill, Lauren Thibodeaux, Jorie O'Brien, Ellen Erwin, Sonya Godfrey, Blair Irion, Sarah Drummond, and Lauren Ewing for your work in this very important ministry in the life of our parish.

In September we introduced a new Youth and Childrens' Ministry Newsletter for the church. We have named it The Foundation. We also welcomed Laura Grayson Ameen to our staff as a part time Childrens' Minister. Sarah and I love having her on our Ministry Team.

In October we hosted the 1st St. Mark's Cathedral Fall Fest. It was a huge success for parishioners of all ages with food, games and fun!!

Family Advent Wreath making was a lot of fun for all ages. We ate together and everyone went home with beautiful advent wreaths, advent calendars and full bellies.

We were excited to team up with the middle school and the Parent's Club to refresh the youth area of the ministry center. New paint and new furnishings have really inspired our youth and some of our activities.

Laura, Sarah and I have been working to make sure our ministries and programing are intentional and supportive to the families in our parish as they raise their children in the Faith. Be on the lookout for more information on this in 2024.

Respectfully submitted,
Amy Garsee

Report of Children's Ministry

In October, Amy and I started a kid's club, Club 345, for grades 3rd, 4th, and 5th to meet on a Wednesday evening once a month immediately following the family dinner in the Parish Hall. The children have LOVED it! We began with a game to help get to know each other better and get some of their wiggles out, followed by fellowship and discussion in the youth room, then wrapping up with a craft/creative activity. We used this as a soft start before beginning weekly kid's clubs in January 2024, which will include Club K-2 (for grades Kindergarten – 2nd), as well as Club 345. These clubs provide the opportunity for our youth that are too old for the nursery to have a time of fellowship while their parents are attending regular Wednesday night classes and activities. We hope this will also begin setting a foundation for future involvement in Youth and EYC.

The Nativity Pageant went well! Leslye and Theresa from the choir came in at the tail of Catechesis of the Good Shepherd in the Sundays leading up to the pageant to help the children practice the songs. Amy and I tried to be organized on the front end with sign ups by having a digital sign up form to help us sort the children by age groups and assign parts ahead of time. We also went through costumes to inventory what we had/need for the future. We had a great participation turn out, and the children seemed to have a great time!

Additionally, we brought back a children's service during the 5:30 pm service on Christmas Eve, like we have done in years past. Amy and I set up a cozy living room set in the Parish Hall with a fireplace, Christmas trees, and large rugs for the children to sit on. We invited children and any interested parents to attend the service immediately following the second lesson and led them out of the Sanctuary to the Parish Hall. This service was structured as a children's lessons and carols. Each child received a small gift box containing a Christmas prayer cube, a nativity ornament and a candy cane prayer before returning to their loved ones in the church.

We look forward to 2024 as we continue to grow and build our childrens' programs!

Respectfully submitted,
Laura Grayson Ameen

Report of Youth Ministry

2023 brought us wonderful growth with our EYC program here at St. Mark's. We started the year as always with faith, fellowship, fun, and food! EYC hosted the annual Shrove Tuesday Pancake Dinner where we cooked pancakes for the church community and played fun pancake games together! This was a great opportunity for our EYC kids to interact with all members of the church. We also participated in the Lenten and Advent meditation series again this year. The youth really enjoy these reflections and are always proud to see their thoughts published in the booklets for the entire church to read!

While I was preparing to take time away from EYC to welcome my Evelyn Kaye into the world, Dean Johnson searched for the perfect person to take EYC to new heights. We were very thankful and excited when Amy Garsee came on as our Youth Director in the spring. She has already brought so many ideas and dreams for the growth of our program focusing on both short and long-term goals.

We enjoyed EYC Summer Hangouts including movie night, open gym nights, and a "Bring Your Own Pool Float Party" while slip & sliding on the field! We kicked off the school year creating an EYC Design Team consisting of a few EYC members and adults to lead the planning of our EYC events to help guide and shape our EYC program. This has been a great opportunity for our kids to feel a sense of leadership in the growth of our program. We also welcomed Jason Waltman to our EYC crew who has been a great addition!

EYC helped host the Fall Fest that was a huge hit for all of the families of St. Mark's – there was truly something for everyone including bounce houses, fun games, and delicious food! We started our monthly joint EYC nights with the youth from St. Paul's alternating hosting. This really has been a great way to grow our relationship with our Episcopal neighbors. We've carved pumpkins, built gingerbread houses, and hosted a Family Feud Friendsgiving! We look forward to continuing this monthly tradition with our St. Paul's neighbors!

We continued our tradition of assembling our community care kits this year! These care kits included gloves, socks, wet wipes, toothbrushes, water, snacks, and other essential items for those in need throughout our community. We passed them out to St. Mark's members following Sunday services and encouraged all members to take one and keep it in their car for when they came across someone who was in need of a care kit! I think this is a great new tradition we have started at St. Mark's. I believe it helps us appreciate the many blessings we have and allows us to help those in need.

We are looking forward to 2024 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 Wilkes Thompon

Report of Community Ministries

³⁵For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, ³⁶I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me. ³⁷Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see thee hungry and feed thee, or thirsty and give thee drink? ³⁸And when did we see thee a stranger and welcome thee, or naked and clothe thee? ³⁹And when did we see thee sick or in prison and visit thee?' ⁴⁰And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me.' – Matthew 25:35-40

Community Ministries is a committee of the Vestry charged with considering requests for financial and volunteer support for worthwhile 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, the elderly, persons with disabilities and 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 also have direct contact with ministries supported with Cathedral funds.

In 2023, entities receiving CM funds included *Community Renewal International*, *The Bridge Alzheimer's & Dementia Resource Center*, *Community Support Programs*, providing housing and services to homeless individuals with mental illness, the Caddo Council on Aging Meals on Wheels program, the *Martin Luther King Health Center* - a clinic and community pharmacy originally founded by Sister Margaret McCaffrey, serving low and moderate income patients with chronic health conditions and the non-profit *Love Your Neighbor* revitalization initiative led by St. Mark's parishioners Skip Simonton and Oliver Jenkins.

Ministries serving children funded in 2023 include *Jewell House* - a shelter for homeless girls ages 13 – 20, *The Gingerbread House*, serving child victims of physical and sexual abuse, Caddo Parish Schools *Homeless Children's Educational Enhancement Program*, *Children and Arthritis*, providing services and an educational camp each summer for children with arthritis and their families, the Renzie Education and Arts Center, serving children in the Highland and Stoner Hill neighborhoods, and Community Support Program's *Portals Program*, providing case management for indigent foster children.

The Community Ministries Committee meets on the second Monday of each month at 5:30 p.m. in the parlor. The next meeting of the Community Ministries committee is scheduled for Monday, February 12th, 2024 at 5:30 p.m. in the parlor. St. Mark's parishioners are welcome to attend.

All parishioners are encouraged to participate in this outreach ministry. If you know of a nonprofit or critical community need you would like to see considered for support, want to see a copy of the CM funding application, or more information, please contact Candace Higginbotham, at 470-3001.

Respectfully submitted,

Candace Higginbotham

Report of the Altar Guild

Very humbly, each member of the St. Mark's Altar Guild dedicate themselves to serving our Lord by providing for all the needs of the clergy and the care and functioning of His altar. Our special group is also entrusted with organizing donations of flowers for the altar, caring for linens and vestments, replenishing supplies of bread, wine, candles, and participating in special ceremonies such as weddings, baptism and funerals. We dedicate ourselves to the care and functioning of the altar for the purposes of celebrating Eucharist, baptisms, weddings and funerals.

Directress: Lindsay Atkins – 1 term

Co-Directress: Lynn Yancey

Members: 38

Inactive: 15

Trainees: 3

Inducted in 2022: Margureitte Allen, Lanier Thibodeaux, Mary Alice Rountree

This year, our Guild undertook several exciting, new projects. They are as follows:

1) Creation of Altar Guild recruitment video: Our guild worked with Terri Flash Creative to produce an approximately six minute recruitment video. The video featured the basic duties and history the Altar Guild. In addition, members stated on camera the reason(s) they joined our beloved Guild. This video has been placed on the Cathedral's website, and it was also shown at Rally Day. In conjunction with the roll out of our recruitment video, a front page article about the Altar Guild was placed in the Evangelist.

3) Altar Guild Service Manual Update: During the Covid Pandemic in 2020, our entire service guild manual was revamped due to the health procedures and practices put in place during the Coronavirus. The binder was littered with special instruction Post-In notes geared towards dealing with Covid. The notes have been removed, and the entire binder has been retyped with updated instructions post-Covid. Updated pictures will soon be taken and placed in the binder.

3) Wipple & Co. Closure: The clothing and academic gown manufacturer announced its unfortunate closure in 2023 owing to financial difficulties stemming from the pandemic. For years, Wipple has fostered a personal relationship with St. Mark's – handmaking and repairing the Cathedral's vestments and frontals, etc. (Wippel also created St. Mark's stained glass windows). Bryan Marshall, our contact at the New Jersey office, was given the go ahead to complete several projects before their closure: an additional Christmas Rose stole, two Crown Stoles and the Christmas Rose Chapel frontal with a burse and veil. We have also sent Bryan

the Crown Chasuble for repair or replacement (whatever Wipple deems is best). Lynn Yancey is in talks with Bryan about regarding a new contract, but it has not been sent yet. The contract is expected soon.

4) For years, Altar Guild member, Betty Williams, has been in charge of the embroidering the list of those baptized on the Cathedral's Baptismal Banner. With the passing of Mrs. Williams in 2022, Altar Guild member, Pepper Lang has taken over this duty. In addition, a gift of \$14,042.96 from Betty C. Williams' Life Insurance was received and deposited into the Altar Guild funds.

5) Altar Guild member, Suzy Nelson, proposed the idea of updating our Sacristy (new paint, carpets, etc.). She is in the process of obtaining several bids. Once received, she will discuss the project further with Alston and the Vestry. The financial gift to the Altar Guild from the Betty Williams' Life Insurance could be used to pay for this upgrade.

6) The Altar Guild purchased two new unction sets, and two new pyxes in the year 2023.

7) In December of 2023, Altar Guild member, Ellen Alley, proposed the idea of hosting a reception to honor our beloved florist, Tom Craig. Tom is an invaluable "honorary member" of our Altar Guild, and works tirelessly to ensure his arrangements from Berry Patch are created perfectly to specifications and delivered to the Chapel altar and/or our High Altar nearly every week (note: while the Cathedral uses other florists, Tom Craig works with the Altar Guild 90% of the time). Ellen organized a reception in his honor in the St. Mark's Parlor on December 5, 2023. A vintage Waterford vase was given to Tom with a wooden base inscribed with a special plaque honoring Tom with his years of service this far. In addition, Altar Guild members provided nearly 20 dishes and cards for Tom, his friends and family. Approximately 20 Altar Guild members also donated money "in honor of Tom" to the Altar Guild fund, and cards were sent notifying him of these special gifts.

8) During our annual December Cathedral cleanup, Altar Guild members cleaned up the groomsmen's room. The room had been littered with old programs, crayons, coloring books and various odds and ends. Drawers were organized, and the room was tidied. Approximately 20 unused adult coloring books were donated to The Glenn. Residents at The Glenn were going to be given the coloring books as part of their Christmas gifts, etc.

9) For the 2023 Christmas season, the crèche lighting was updated with remote controlled lighting. This enabled members to avoid having to individually turn on and off each of the 24 lights prior to and after each service.

11) Altar Guild trainee Field Baber has been at the U.S. Naval Training Academy. The Altar Guild put together a "care package," filling it with various goods that Field may enjoy while he is training (i.e. – fun snacks, shower balm, games, etc.). Field is very involved in St. Mark's, and he is our only male Altar Guild trainee. Before his leave, Field was a very involved trainee, and

Altar Guild members wanted to let him know that were thinking of him during his away. He is anxious to make his return and complete his Altar Guild training process.

Included Committees:

There are three standing committees that are an integral part of the Altar Guild:

- 1) The Flower Committee is chaired by Debbie Hall. Each week, this committee disassembles flowers from both the High Altar and Chapel Altars before the new weekly arrangements are brought to the Cathedral. This committee then fashions new floral arrangements, taking them to infirmed parishioners in hospitals, nursing homes, or those confined to their homes. Memorial flowers are coordinated by Sherri Skrivanos
- 2) The Wedding Committee is chaired by Cynthia Anderson. This committee works with directly with couples educating them on the wedding customs held by the Cathedral. Members advise and assist both clergy and brides on all matters pertaining to the rehearsal and the wedding ceremony.
- 3) The Linen Committee is chaired by Jane West. This committee is responsible for the meticulous upkeep of all linens and vestments worn by clergy. Members, along with St. Mark's staff member, Ora McClinton, are responsible for weekly laundering, ironing and any needed repairs. Committee members are also responsible for selecting seasonal linens and those used for festival and/or special services.

2022 - 2023 Sacraments and Services:

Holy Eucharist

- Saturday and Sunday Evenings 774
- Sunday 178
- Weekday 161
- Private 148

Daily Office

- Sunday 7
- Weekday 125

Holy Baptism:

- Candidates 16 Years and Older 0
- Candidates under 16 Years of Age 15

Confirmation:

Candidates 16 Years and Older 5

-Candidates under 16 Years of Age 15

Holy Matrimony: 1

Burials: 1

It is our honor and pleasure to serve our Lord by caring for His Table.

Respectfully submitted,

Lindsay Atkins,

Altar Guild Directress

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 diapers and money for 5loaves/2fish ministry.
- Collected 'waiting room' snacks and items for Shriner's Children's Hospital.
- Raised money for paper supplies for Woody's Veterans Home.
- Collected fans for Caddo Council on Aging.
- Collected over \$2000 of school supplies and backpacks for Community Renewal.
- Collected school supplies for Shriner's Children's Hospital.
- Asked for volunteers for birthday and grade parties with Community Renewal.
- Collected turkeys for Cooking Crew.
- Collected toiletries and socks for North Louisiana Veteran's Home.

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

- Celebrated the Annual Meeting, Rally Day, and Welcome Back Fall Lunch.
- 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 cookies!
- The Cooking Crew serves the 12 Community Renewal Houses, Jewell House, LSUS Student Food Bank, Common Ground, and Woody's.

Keep your eyes open for new and continued outreach opportunities in 2024! 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 Cooking Crew 2023

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 'all in one' meals that can provide nutrition and happy tummies.

The monthly food we cook is utilized by the Shreveport-Bossier Community Renewal Friendship Houses (there are 6 neighborhoods, each of which have 2 houses), The Jewel House, LSUS Student Food Bank, Common Ground, Woody's Veteran Home and needs within our congregation.

In addition to our regular cooking, during the holidays, we prepare complete holiday meals (baked turkeys, dressing, sweet potato casserole, green bean casserole, gravy, rolls, cranberry sauce, and cookies). These holiday meals serve several parishioners in addition to: The Friendship Houses, The Jewel House, Woody's Veteran Home, LSUS Student Food Bank, and Common Ground. This year we provided a RECORD approximate 1,511 servings for both Thanksgiving and Christmas! This included 108 turkeys, dressing, green bean casserole, sweet potatoes, gravy, rolls, and over 3,000 cookies!

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

Don't forget - we always have meals in stock for those in need – within and outside the parish.

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 or 972-998-0369.

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 – they make me a better person. I look forward to welcoming all newcomers in 2024!

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Beruvides

Report of St. Mark's Cathedral School

I am honored to be able to offer my first annual report as St. Mark's Cathedral School's Head of School. I am still learning so much, but have gathered thus far that this is a school deeply committed to the Episcopal tradition and blessed by its sacred relationship with the Cathedral. Love, truth, hope win the day here. As an extension of our Episcopal identity, the school commits to shepherding young people toward lives of character and purpose. Working together with Dean Alston and his staff near or within this beautiful, transforming space continues to hearten my own spiritual formation. Further, observing our students and their leaders sharing similar experiences makes the journey even richer.

The school remains grateful for the Cathedral clergy and staff for their enduring support, love, and patience. Mark and Ms. Ora are indispensable in helping us run the school daily. Facilitating four chapels a week takes a village and continues to be a central expression of our Episcopal identity. We are lucky to have Rev. Ely Bulnes as our School Chaplain this year. Ely is ordained in the Disciples of Christ and long served as Associate Pastor of Kings Highway Christian Church. She teaches Christian Education and also serves as our middle school Spanish teacher. Preschool Chapel takes place in the Chapel of the Holy Family at the Little School on Wednesdays, Kindergarten Chapel takes place in the Cathedral Chapel on Thursdays, and Lower School, Middle School, and Family Chapel take place in the Cathedral itself on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays respectively. We have begun hosting All School Chapels (PS3-8th) quarterly, during which students from the Little School sing before the congregation and students from each of the elementary and middle school grades offer petitionary prayers. Chaplain Bulnes leads most Chapels, but Dean Alston, Fr. Thomas, and Amy Garsee preach regularly at Family chapel. We are blessed by the beauty of our worship spaces and by the efforts of the Altar Guild to enhance that beauty, as well as by the musical talents of Assistant Organist Danny Gamble and Organist/Choirmaster Derrick Meador.

St. Mark's students take the Educational Record Bureau standardized testing each year. Our ERB scores continue to be well above the national public school average, as well as either in line with or above national independent school averages. Eighth graders at the five private schools have taken a High School Placement Test (HSPT) for placement into Loyola since 2015. During those 9 years, St. Mark's has finished either 1st or 2nd eight times, in class average score, and 3rd the other. Furthermore, over the past 7 years, St. Mark's has finished 1st five times in class average score. Additionally, there have only been two class average scores over 60 all held by St. Mark's...setting the high mark twice with a 65 in 2023 and 2017. 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 in good standing of the Southwestern Association of Episcopal Schools (SAES) by whom we were accredited last spring. We are also members of the National Association of Episcopal Schools (NAES). Both organizations provide important professional development, consulting, and networking opportunities for our school. This year we have benefited greatly from SAES's professional development opportunities and wise counsel.

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 Board in addition to the Wardens include Jimmy Campbell, Woodhus Humphrey, Ben Beach, Joe Hernandez, Jennifer Varnadore, Chris Walls, and Mary Beth McVie. We are so fortunate to have such a committed Board of Trustees and are

particularly appreciative of Jimmy Campbell, President of the Board, whose tireless efforts have galvanized this august group of supporters.

We opened the school year with 299 students enrolled in grades PS 2-8th, and we currently have that same number, of whom approximately 20% are parishioners. Our smallest grades remain those grades that began school in the years immediately prior to the construction of the Little School. To date, demand for the Little School is high. We anticipate being full in the preschool classes next school year. We also continue to host middle school shadows this year in plans to grow that division. The school has sixty-six full or part-time employees of whom 10 are parishioners.

Respectfully submitted,
Dylan Deal
Headmaster