



# The Evangelist

St. Mark's Episcopal Church  
A Quarterly Parish Magazine + June 2021



# The Evangelist

## **St. Mark's Episcopal Church**

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A parish church in the Diocese of  
Western North Carolina

The Rt. Rev. José McLoughlin, Bishop

[www.diocesewnc.org](http://www.diocesewnc.org)

Our cover picture is a photograph taken on the front porch of the church of the current staff of St. Mark's with its widely diverse group of people - age, gender, ethnicity. Above is a picture of the congregation, whose leadership was all white and male, in April 1948. This picture hangs in the office hallway.

These pictures help to show how far St. Mark's has come from its beginnings on Long Avenue back in the 1903.



**St. Mark's Episcopal Church**

Called to be Christ Centered

Touching Lives + Transforming Hearts + Teaching God's Word

St. Mark's is a traditional parish in liturgy and architecture, but a progressive parish in organization and community involvement. Each month dozens of our members work tirelessly and creatively with others in our community to combat hunger, homelessness, racism, and other significant issues. By the power and grace of God, we are seeing the Kingdom of God unfold in our community.

We are excited about what the Holy Spirit is doing in our parish and in our community and we would love to share that excitement with you.

We invite you to come visit. Peace be with you!

### Send any Subscriptions/Change of Address

Polly Redd: [pgr@stmarksgastonia.org](mailto:pgr@stmarksgastonia.org)

### Submissions

All submissions and ideas are welcome and considered for publication. Email submission ideas to

Polly Redd: [pgr@stmarksgastonia.org](mailto:pgr@stmarksgastonia.org)



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(to the best of our knowledge)

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**The old St. Mark's Church on Long Avenue from a 1946 Diocesan magazine**

## What a Mustard Seed Can Do

Archdeacon Brenda Gilbert

Mark 4:26-34

*Jesus said, "The kingdom of God is as if someone would scatter seed on the ground, and would sleep and rise night and day, and the seed would sprout and grow, and he does not know how. The earth produces of itself, first the stalk, then the head, then the full grain in the head. But when the grain is ripe, at once he goes in with his sickle, because the harvest has come".*

*He also said, "With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable will we use for it? It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the ground, is the smallest of all the seed on earth; yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade".*

*With many such parables he spoke the word to them, as they were able to hear it; he did not speak to them except in parables, but he explained everything in private to his disciples.*

Put yourself on that hillside in Galilee. Can you imagine the faces of the people listening to Jesus as he told them these parables? What on earth was he talking about? Seeds and grain, birds and branches? I bet one or two may have been thinking, Jesus, could you just this once speak plainly to us?

Mark's account of this passage is alluding to small acts of faith producing big things. How scattering of seeds in the ground, not knowing the ins and outs of the growing process, but believing they will produce what the community needs, takes faith.



When we began our Blessing Bag ministry several years ago, we had no idea the impact it would have. It seemed such a small thing, a band aid on a huge wound, but we did it anyway. Thousands have been given out in the past several years and we get phone calls and emails from other churches asking for advice on

how to start the process in their communities. Who knew?

When the pandemic took a toll on feeding ministries, we felt led to provide homemade soup and sandwiches to people that were food insecure and deliver them at the bus station. We didn't know if people would want our lunch items or the other things we brought. They did and still do. Who knew?



When we took a chance on a young lady wanting to build a cupboard outside of the church that would hold food, water, and hygiene items for anyone in need, we had no idea if it would be used or vandalized. We felt it was something God would want us to do. It's touched so many lives in ways we could never have hoped for. Who knew?

These were all small acts of obedience, small leaps of faith. We didn't have a long term plan. We just saw a need and trusted God to work out the details and in doing so, the kingdom of God got a little closer.

When you bring your family to church, and I know how hard that can be sometimes, when you let your children see you pray and talk about God, when you live out your faith through your example you are planting seeds that will grow into something bigger than you know. The growing process may seem long and arduous and we may never see the fruits of our labor, **BUT** that is not the point. The point is that God knows, God sees, and God cares. No act of kindness or prayer is ever wasted.

In the weeks to come, ask yourselves how much in life is done for just ourselves? Our comfort, our profit, our satisfaction? Do we do anything to bless or to plant a seed for generations that are to come? Is there anything that you are currently involved in that will outlive you?

**An African Proverb says, "Many little people, in many small places, undertaking many modest actions, can transform the world."**

Amen Brenda +



## **Caring Cupboard** **Needs List**

Our Caring Cupboard is being used by many people during the day to get a meal, a snack, some water, or an item they might need. We are helping many people every day

with our Cupboard. Our grant that helped pay for items has been used up and we are still seeing great need. If you would like to help contribute items for the Cupboard, here is a listing of what is used regularly this summer.

- Protein Sources
  - Mac & Cheese cups
  - Beef Stew
  - Ramen Noodles
  - Vienna sausages
  - Beanie Weenies
  - Tuna or Chicken packets
- Fruit Cups
- Pudding Cups
- Small cookie or cracker packs
- Lance Crackers
- Small bags of chips
- Granola or other snack bars
- Small cereal boxes
- Water bottles or Gator Aid for summer
- Feminine hygiene products that will be bagged up
- Travel soaps, shampoos, etc (as you travel)
- Utensil packets you get in take-out food

Just bring any items to the parish hall and we will disperse them to the cupboard. Thanks.



## **Continue to Remember** **CAM & the Need for Food**

### **SHOPPING LIST for CAM**

**Dry Cereal**  
**Grits / Oatmeal**  
**Pancake Mix / Syrup**  
**Soup / Crackers**  
**Canned Beans (Kidney, Navy, etc.)**  
**Canned Vegetables (no green beans)**  
**Canned Fruit**  
**Canned Meat**  
**Macaroni & Cheese**  
**Spaghetti Sauce & Pasta**  
**Rice / Mashed Potatoes**  
**Peanut Butter / Jelly**  
**Powdered Milk**  
**Personal Care Items**



**If you do not feel you can be with us in person yet, please continue to watch our 8:00 and 10:30 Services online via either Live Streaming on the web page or on Facebook. The 9:30 Family Service is taped on Saturdays and available on Sunday mornings in both places. Communion kits are also available in the Parish Hall.**







## A JOURNEY TOGETHER

### The Rev. Shawn Griffith, Rector

On Pentecost Sunday I gave a sermon about going on a journey. This past year has brought about much change in our lives. The way we work, the way we shop, even the way we worship for most of us has been in isolation. There is a longing to return to the way it used to be, to return to the normal things that we know which give us comfort and security. But as the saying goes, “You can never go home.”

There are a lot of things that we want to forget about the Covid virus. Everyone has experienced a loss from losing a loved one to missing precious time with family that we will never have again. *And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.* Romans 8:28.

As the world adapts to functioning in a new way, God is calling us, the church, to do the same. For fifty years the mainline churches have seen a decline in membership. Church attendance has moved from a traditional expectation in the 60’s, to a family camp where parents had the minister

instill values in their child through the 90’s, to the present where denominations now are just part of a buffet line serving their product to whoever will buy.

For many churches, the vision is gone, passion within the people is gone, and the presence of the Holy Spirit is lost because clergy are not trained to lead congregations in ministry. Many young priests are leaving ministry today because the optimistic bright light of ordination quickly becomes overwhelmed by the darkness and division of evil in the world.

Our vestry is studying a book together entitled *Canoeing the Mountains: Christian Leadership in Uncharted Territory* by Tod Bolsinger. This



book is not a program guide to being a better church. The author Tod Bolsinger challenges the people of God to adventure into the unknown. Wil-

*Our journey begins with the question: Are we willing to go off the map, meaning move from the known to the unknown?*

lian Faulkner once wrote, “You cannot swim for new horizons until you have the courage to lose sight of the shore.”

Our journey begins with the questions:

- Are we willing to go off the map, meaning move from the known to the unknown?
- Are we willing to adapt or die as the author states?
- If we are not willing to commit ourselves to these challenges, why are we here?

The vision for the Church, Church with a capital “C” is the Great Commission from Matthew 28:19-20:

*“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”*

Paul writes in Romans 10:14-15

*“How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?”<sup>15</sup> And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!”*

I invite you to join the spiritual journey, the adventure, that the Holy Spirit is placing before us. This journey is not to build the membership of St. Mark’s but to share the Kingdom of God here on earth with all those we encounter.

We will begin by focusing on a more shared ministry of clergy and lay, meaning a call for all people to participate in the mission of the church.

At the same time, we will find ways to create stronger relationships within the parish and by doing so decrease the resistance and divi-

*“There comes a point where we need to stop just pulling people out of the river. We need to go upstream and find out why they’re falling in.”*

— Desmond Tutu



sion sabotaging the work of God in this place.

We will explore transforming our ministries beyond simple acts of kindness into actions that change the world, helping people find Christ in their lives. *“There comes a point where we need to stop just pulling people out of the river. We need to go upstream and find out why they’re falling in.”*  
— Desmond Tutu

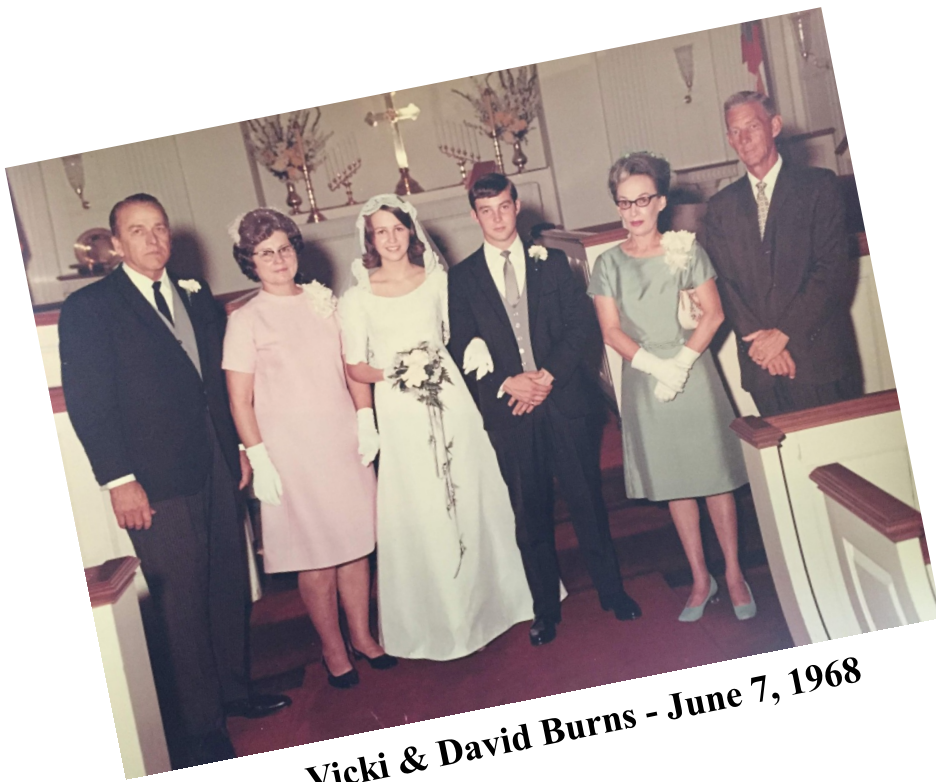
By transforming our ministries, we will open ourselves to the transforming power of the Holy Spirit and become Christ to the world.

I invite you to read this book along with the vestry and staff. This will be something we continue to discuss in the years ahead of us. Tod’s main point is “Adapt or die.” Those words are harsh and frightening, but at the same time challenging and hopeful. We can find hope if we are willing to trust and adventure out where the Holy Spirit leads us.

Are *You* ready for a journey together?







**Vicki & David Burns - June 7, 1968**



**Elizabeth Ward & David  
Rougeau - April 13, 2012**



**Megan Carothers & Stuart  
Euliss - July 23, 2017**



**Erin Brewbaker & Rawlings Tidwell  
February 4, 2012**

**Rebecca Marshall  
& Raymond  
Haygood - Febru-  
ary 18, 1956**





# Weddings - A Photo Gallery



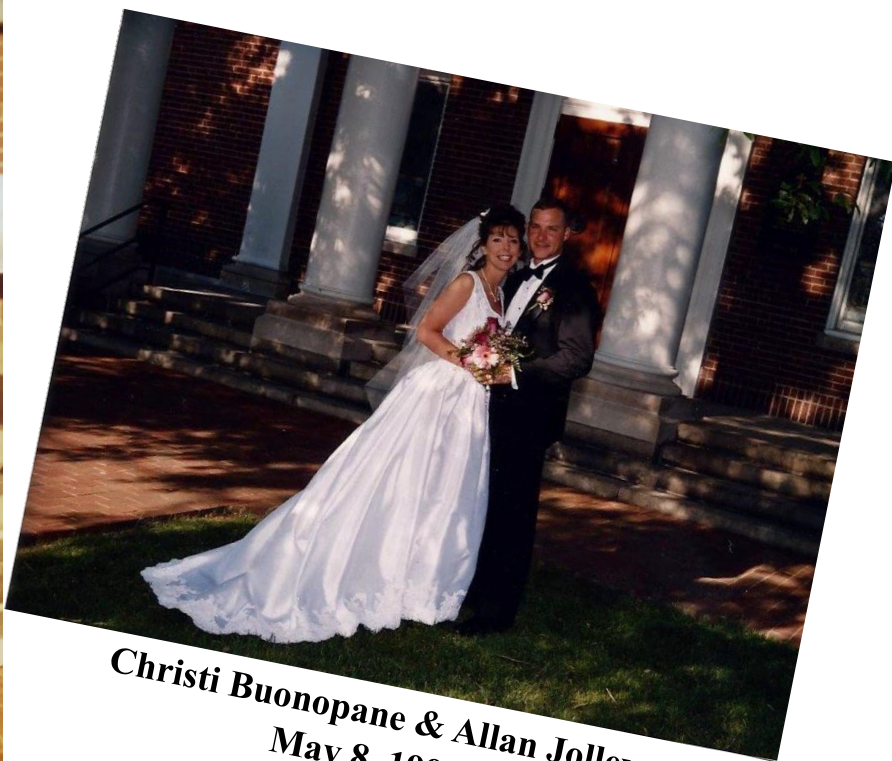
**Pam McElveen & Greg  
Dills - March 14, 1998**



**Billie May New & Walter  
"Lefty" Carroll - August 31,  
1946 at Long Avenue church**



**Ann Carroll & Dale Ward -  
October 23, 1976**



**Christi Buonopane & Allan Jolley  
May 8, 1999**

## ST. MARK'S VESTRY RETREAT PHOTO AND HOW IT WOULD END UP AT THE DIOCESAN OFFICE

by Edward F. Hoerning, Church Historian

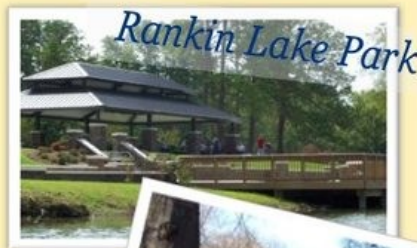
In January 2007, the St. Mark's vestry held a retreat at the Lake Logan Episcopal Center near Canton, NC. On the Sunday morning that we were there, we gathered in our meeting room in the main building for worship together. I took this photo prior to the service with the Eucharist elements, Bible, cross, Book of Common Prayer all while looking through the window at the partially fog shrouded view of Lake Logan, the center piece of the Conference Center grounds.

When we returned to Gastonia, I provided our senior warden Tim Grooms with a copy of this photo. Tim was impressed and had a copy blown up to display for many years in the second floor room where the vestry met. He also sent a copy to the Diocese office in Asheville. Bishop Porter Taylor's office assistant called me soon after and asked permission to use this photo on the Diocese of Western North Carolina webpage. I granted them permission and so this photo was the cover page for the Diocese for one year. It was certainly an honor for me and for St. Mark's. The photo was also used on a magnetic business card containing the contact information and mission statement for the Diocese of Western North Carolina which was given out the next year. That Diocesan magnet remains on my refrigerator door to this day. The photo is still at the church.



### SUMMER YOUTH GATHER- INGS

June July  
August

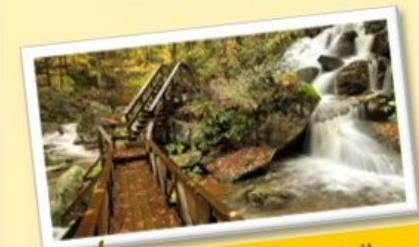


Saturday June 19th  
Rankin Lake Park  
Shelter #1 from 5-7pm.

Come join us! Grades 6-12, including our  
grads. Games, boating, RELAXING, then  
dinner and evening prayer. RSVP to  
Father John at [jcs@stmarksgastonia.org](mailto:jcs@stmarksgastonia.org)

St. Mark's Youth 2021 Summer Outdoors

And mark your calendars for  
our upcoming outings!



July 24  
Hike to High Shoals Falls



August 21  
US National Whitewater Center  
(hint: there's more than  
just whitewater!)





## The Importance of Music

**David Wilcox**  
**Organist & Choirmaster**

It has been good to finally return to in-person worship, in addition to our online presence. Having permission to gather, to actually sing together, rehearse, and prepare the choir has been liberating! It is as if a muzzle has been removed freeing us to raise our voices in praise to our Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer, Comforter, Friend – the Almighty God.

There are numerous references to singing in our hymnal. Here are a few off the top of my head with their Hymnal numbers!

- All creature of our God and King, lift up your voices, let us sing Alleluia! (421)
- All people that on earth do dwell, sing to the Lord with cheerful voice (377)
- O for a thousand tongues to sing my great Redeemer's praise (493)
- Come, thou fount of every blessing, tune my heart to sing thy grace (686)
- I sing the almighty power of God that made the mountains rise (398)
- Stars and angels sing around thee, center of unbroken praise. (376)
- We've no less days to sing God's praise than when we'd first begun (671)

Do these sing in your heart as well?

The Bible never says, let those who can sing, sing, as if it were a spiritual gift. ... The Bible just says "Sing!" Over and over, dozens of times, we are commanded to sing: sing to the Lord, sing praises, sing joyfully, sing a new song, sing of God's love, sing of what God has done, sing for joy, sing in times of trouble, sing with gratitude, sing with understanding, sing from the heart!

Singing rises out of the essence of our souls. We don't have to be trained singers or gifted in singing to raise our voices and hearts to Him in praise. Consider these words of Paul (Ephesians 5:18b-20)

... be filled with the Spirit, as you sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, singing and making melody to the Lord in your hearts, giving thanks to God the Father at all times and for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I especially love knowing that our God sings over us (Zephaniah 3:17) and his song is not a whimper!

The Lord your God is in your midst,  
a mighty one who will save;  
he will rejoice over you with gladness;  
he will quiet you by his love;  
he will exult over you with loud singing.

We may need to ask God to sing (pray) through us to "take my moments and my days, let them flow in ceaseless praise." (Hymn 707).



Here is a final thought to ponder: the very breath we sing with is the same breath we stay alive with.

**Let everything that breathes praise the Lord! - Psalm 150:6**

# “Hearts Up!”

The Rev. John Simpson  
Associate Rector



“Hearts up!”

Where did this little imperative come from, you ask? An early hit single from Ariana Grande? The catch-phrase-made-title of a Disney made-for-TV feature? No! Far more exciting than that.

In one of the earliest records of Christian worship – The Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus – “Hearts up!” is the literal translation from Greek to the Latin “Sursum corda”, what we pronounce each week as, “Lift up your hearts!” in the opening words of the Eucharist.

You may have to indulge me here, but I was enthralled when I read this! Granted that a lot can be lost (or mistakenly added) in translation, but how energizing to hear the words of our Eucharistic liturgy - which can over time and habit lose some of their revolutionary meaning – in the form of a rallying cry.

“Hearts up!” evokes that now is a needed time, to make our offering of prayers and resources to God and take the blessing of Christ’s presence into each of us and out into the world.

Your next question, after “Where did this come from?” might be “Why were you looking in the ‘Apostolic Tradition?’” Glad you asked. We had a conversation at the Vestry retreat last month about how the church will need to adapt to thrive in a changing world. It used to be, so they say, that everybody and their grandma was a Christian, or at least knew the story, and all we had to do was open the doors, put the coffee on, “do church” right, and people would come. If that was ever true, it’s certainly further from the truth today as it’s ever been. One no longer

needs to be “Christian” in order to belong to polite society nor to advance in one’s career. People no longer belong for the sake of belonging. Instead, they seek belonging in communities whose values they share or aspire to. In that sense, this shift away from “Christendom” is a great wake-up call and opportunity for our little slice of the Jesus movement. Only when we put our mission – to reconcile all people to God and to one another in Christ (Book of Common Prayer, 855) – first, will we be welcoming in the way our websites and brochures say we want to be. Which brings me to the Apostolic Tradition...

“Hearts up!” is just one example of the rich and layered meanings one encounters in the liturgy. Layer upon layer of color, scripture, creeds, prayers, music, customs, rubrics, smells, and so on – over 2,000 years of religious practice, artifacts of ways people have honored God under evolving theologies and polities; under persecution, schism, compromise, and perseverance; they all show up in our prayers. And for that I am deeply grateful! It’s a rich experience, in which a phrase, a tune, a gesture, can convey monumental meaning. But how is it experienced by those we wish to welcome, who may not, even if they are life-long Christians, know what all these layers mean? What I was looking for in the Apostolic Tradition, and in other accounts of the early church, was another entry point, another way in.

Acts 2 describes the very first Christians shared things in common, and “devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.” Later accounts after the New Testa-



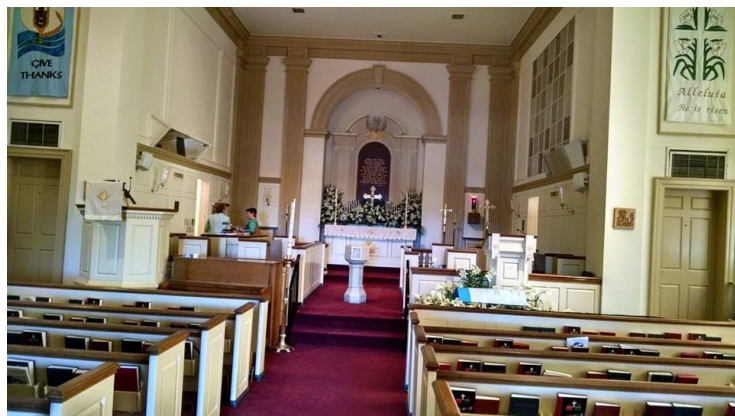


ment was written described “house-churches”, with a courtyard on the first floor where people gathered, clothed and fed the poor, and learned about Jesus. Only upstairs, for those who were baptized or wanted to be, would the Eucharist be held, not to exclude the unworthy, but as a matter of courtesy, to avoid subjecting to the liturgy those who wouldn’t understand it.

St. Mark’s is experiencing mission as an entry point already. We’ve met several people through the Caring Cupboard, Wednesday soup and sandwiches, and distributing food at Mt. Zion, and some of the newest members of St. Mark’s are finding their place first in these ministries! As we reopen, I wonder what other places in our “courtyard” may be a point of welcome for those we haven’t met yet: Bible studies, parenting classes, a bread-makers

guild, a grief-support group. I really don’t know. But like seeing the words “Hearts up!” for the first time, I think it’s pretty exciting.

Let us remember that those around us may not be fully aware of all that the Episcopal Church and St. Mark’s can offer. Be open and welcoming and help them to understand.

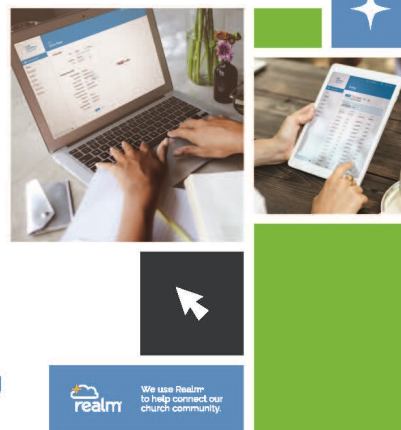


## Our On-line Giving Program

### Giving made easy!

- Give online
- Quick one time gifts
- Recurring gifts
- 24/7/365
- Manage your giving
- Pledges
- View giving history
- Print giving statements

Sign up or sign in at [onrealm.org](https://onrealm.org)



Text **givestmarks** to **73256** to give using your mobile device. The **Funds** line is a drop-down menu showing multiple funds available to contribute to online, including; Budget, Flowers, Rector’s and Deacon’s Discretionary, Outreach, and more.

This number will never send unsolicited texts to you. To cancel further messages, text STOP. If you need assistance with text giving, text HELP. Standard text message and data rates may apply.

or

Go to <https://onrealm.org/stmarksgastonia/give/now> to go directly to St. Mark’s giving page on Realm.

## Parish Transitions

**Graduations:** **Toni Belhu** from The Seminary of the Southwest in Austin, Texas, May 19

**High School - Tori Jenkins,** Gaston Day, UNCCH

**Sophi Jolley,** Ashbrook, USC

**David John Major,** Cramer, UNCCH

**Michael Murray,** Ashbrook, Blum Internship

**Victoria Murray,** Ashbrook, Army

**Blaine Rudisill,** Gaston Christian NC State

**Savannah Smith,** Cramer, UNCCH

**Katie Smith** (Anna Smith)

**Ethan Thrower,** Gaston Christian USC

**Sarah Loftin Shirey,** (Hobbs), Providence Day, Texas Christian

**College - John C. Watts IV,** from Medical College of SC, to pediatric residency

**Coralee Watts** to Wake Forest P.A. School

### Transferred Out:

**Bill Seabrook** to Lutheran Chapel, Gastonia, 4/16

### Deaths:

**Cathy & Jimmy Cox,** friends of Polly Redd, Birmingham, AL, 1/27 & 2/17

**Gary and Karen Queen,** Tina's in laws, Gastonia, 3/7 & 3/10

**Harriet Matthews Jackson,** Mary Vaughn's sister, 3/9

**Margaret Gurley,** Polly's sister, Charlotte, 4/27

**Lynn Sheriffs,** Lynne Orsini's sister-in-law & Keith's godmother, 6/5



Six of our nine graduating seniors as they are recognized on Youth Sunday, May 9, 2021. Shown are David John Major, Victoria Murray, Michael Murray, Sophi Jolley, Ethan Thrower, and Blaine Rudisill with Fr. John Simpson.



# Calendar 2021

**As we regather in our space and watch the repairs continue on our walls and roof and kitchen, we are also hoping to catch up on activities which were halted for the pandemic. We are looking toward a true celebration with food and lots of fellowship to reunite us when we are back together, whenever that happens.**

**Until that time we continue with the work to be done in and around our city and to worship virtually and physically as we are able. with Live Stream, Facebook, and other gatherings as allowed.**

## **June**

- 17 - Hope Vibes Mobile Showers/Laundry
- 19 - Youth to Rankin Lake
- 20 - Father's Day
- 27 - Vestry (moved meeting date)

## **July**

- 4 - Independence Day
- 15 - Hope Vibes Mobile Showers/Laundry
- 18 - Vestry
- 24 - Youth to High Shoals Falls (hike)

## **August**

- 15 - Vestry
- 20 - Hope Vibes Mobile Showers/Laundry
- 21 - Youth to Whitewater Center
- 22 - Bookbag Blessing & Teacher recognition  
as school starts

## **September (EfM, Sunday School, Youth, & other activities to begin)**

- 5 - Labor Day
- 12 - Homecoming Picnic (Details to come)
- 16 - Hope Vibes Mobile Showers/Laundry
- 19 - Vestry



St. Mark's Episcopal Church  
258 Franklin Blvd  
Gastonia, NC 28053  
704.864.4531



# **St. Mark's Episcopal Church**

**is called to be Christ centered**

**Touching Lives, Transforming Hearts, Teaching God's Word**

*I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as  
I have loved you.      John 13:34*