

**God's Loving Work
as Seen Through
the Hands of
St. Mark's**



**St. Mark's Episcopal Church
Venice, Florida**

St. Mark's Episcopal Church has been recognized as a leader in our area for meeting the needs of the community in which we live. This distinction was manifest in a study funded by The Lily Foundation, the results of which were published in 2001 under the title *Excellent Protestant Congregations: The Guide to Best Places and Practices*. The study identified 300 Protestant churches and 300 Catholic churches (published in a separate volume). Project leader and author, Paul Wilkes, served as Project Director for the Parish/Congregation Study at the University of North Carolina at Wilmington. (Both volumes detailing the results of the study are housed in the church office.)

It has been more than 15 years since the results of the study were published and St. Mark's has more than doubled its outreach in our community in that time. It is still a feather in our cap that we can boast of the recognition bestowed by The Lily Foundation. However, it is most significant that we have continued to expand our outreach to meet the needs in our community. Our ministries, in the loving hands of volunteers, have helped establish a network to embrace the disenfranchised, the sick, the hungry, the needy, the grieving, the lonely, the sore in spirit, the lost.

This booklet intends to introduce you to some of those ministries. It is our hope to keep them vital and accessible. If you have any questions or suggestions, feel free to contact the ministry leader or the church office.

We are always open to capable volunteers* who can give of their time, talent or financial support. Check with the ministry leader to see how you can help.

Please keep these ministries, their leaders and beneficiaries, as well as St. Mark's in your prayers.

*Note: Some ministries require that you take the course, *Safeguarding God's Children*. Contact the church office for more information.

MINISTRIES AND OUTREACH

A view from the trenches.

*“Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food,
or thirsty and gave you something to drink?
And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you,
or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick
or in prison and visited you?”
And the king will answer them,
“Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who
are members of my family, you did it to me.”*

—Matthew 25:37b-40

We refer to this as a ‘view from the trenches’ because these ministries go where the real fight is. Fighting hunger, fighting poverty, fighting injustice. Working together to help the ailing and otherwise disenfranchised, these ministries touch the lives of people in need in a direct way. *To wit:*

BackPack Program: *Feeding hungry children.* The BackPack program is the community-level response to our children who may have to live from Friday to Monday without proper sustenance. Nutritious meals are assembled and delivered to children at Garden Elementary so they can take them home for the weekend. (Other schools are ministered to by different churches.)

Sack Lunch Program: *Putting food in the hands of the hungry.* The Sack Lunch program provides a nutritious brown-bag consisting of:

- 1 meat and cheese sandwich
- 1 snack item
- 1 protein bar
- Fruit

Lunches are assembled right here at St. Mark’s then taken to Center of Hope where they are distributed to area homeless.

Both ministries:
Contact Lunetta Knowlton
941.484.9952

Community Dinners: *A sit-down dinner and fellowship for the community.* Truly a success story. From its inception in 2009 this ministry has grown to the point where we can provide a sit-down dinner once a week for the homeless and indigent in our community. Four churches and a Temple take turns serving the meals. 200 volunteers on 7 teams aided by 4 chefs make this happen. Approximately 60 people are fed a nutritious and delicious meal each week thanks to St. Mark's Episcopal Church, Grace United Methodist Church, Emmanuel Lutheran Church, United Church of Christ and the Jewish Congregation of Venice.

Contact Rev. Maggie Sullivan
941.488.7714

Family Promise: *Providing shelter and helping homeless **families** put their lives back together.* Family Promise is a national program designed to help homeless families get back on their feet. The local Family Promise is supported by area churches that provide shelter and more for families in crisis. A permanent office has been secured which also doubles as a safe day-care center. It is a place where families can meet and plan their activities with the help of various advisors. Child care is provided for those needing it while adults attend job interviews, etc. Families undergo extensive qualifying and a willingness to actively participate must be demonstrated.



Contact Laurie Colombo
941.460.6328

S.U.R.E.: *Saved from a life of crime or prison.* Sarasota **U**nited for **R**esponsibility and **E**quity is designed to help juveniles with minor offenses receive justice and incur a punishment commensurate with their offense. Keeping these, sometimes very young, children out of the hardcore criminal track is a first step in turning lives around.

Contact Keith Backhaus
941.445.1664

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

Divine Consign: Our resale shop is an icon dating back to old Venice. It has been in existence almost as long as St. Mark's Church! Begun in someone's garage many years ago, "the shop" thrives today on Miami Avenue in downtown. It's a haven for bargain hunters and volunteers as well. With only paid part-time managers, proceeds from "the shop" are turned back into the community in the form of scholarships and civic contributions. "The shop" has been expanded to include a furniture resale shop as well.

Contact Shop Manager
941.488.3219

Some projects are just too big for one little church to handle so we gladly surrender leadership to those who know best how to get a big job done. Two of these efforts are well received by our church community and volunteers and generous contributors continue to help in their success. These are:

Salvation Army Kettle Campaign: We have a cadre of bell ringers to make any town proud! Many of our folks volunteer every year and look forward to their stint at the Venice Avenue Publix. And we look forward to seeing them there. Not to boast, but we receive accolades every year for filling the kettle. Good work, smiling, cheery, bell-ringing volunteers!

Contact Bill Flack
315.527.1984

CROPWalk: This is fun for everyone: walkers, volunteers and contributors alike. Sign up to walk, get your friends to sponsor you for ¢¢ or \$\$ per mile walked. CROP Hunger Walks are community-wide events sponsored by Church World Service and locally organized by religious groups, businesses, schools and others to raise funds to end hunger in the U.S. and around the world.

Contact Dennis & JoJo Keck
609.969.0033



LAY SERVICE

Assisting at the altar.

There is no underestimating the work performed by the laity who assist clergy in service to the church. Critical are: preparing the Altar; decorating the church; lighting the candles; greeting and seating parishioners and handing out bulletins; processing with cross and torch; collecting the offering; presenting the elements; bearing the Chalice; reading scriptures. Lay Eucharistic Visitors are available to take communion to the homebound. It's a long list of specialized volunteers who get the job done. You may find your niche in one of the ministries listed below. Contact the leader or church office to find out how to proceed.

Altar Guild: Prepare the church for services; set the altar; check flowers/greenery; keep linens in good repair; stock communion wine and other supplies.

Contact Joanne Beinner
610.428.1800

Ushers: The first face a stranger may meet when coming in the door. A friendly presence with an invitation to coffee hour. Handing out bulletins, seeing that everyone can find a seat, all while exuding an aura of warm welcome. Usher also present the elements at the Altar and collect the offering.

Contact Doug Richards
610.212.7242

Lay Readers: A group of individuals who have undergone training for reading God's word at our worship services. Scriptures underpin the sermon topic and elocution is critical.

Contact Doug Richards
610.212.7242

Chalice Bearers: When serving a large congregation, Chalice Bearers are needed to assist with the administration of Holy Communion. Training is imperative but the learning curve is a small one.

Contact Doug Richards
610.212.7242

Acolytes: Acolytes assist the clergy in the service. At St. Mark's this position is filled by our youth, when possible. Acolytes light the candles prior to the service, process with torch and crucifer and are part of the Gospel procession.

Contact Jackie Overton
941.488.7714

Lay Eucharistic Visitors: *Embracing those who cannot attend worship services.* Formerly known as Lay Eucharistic Ministers, these volunteers take Holy Communion (bread and wine) to homebound and hospitalized individuals. Some have regular appointed visits while others are on call. Whatever the duty, it is carrying the Body and Blood of Christ to share in the communion of the church. Individual kits are prepared for pickup at one of the weekend services. Kits are returned to the church office as quickly as possible for turnaround.

Contact Rev. Maggie Sullivan
941.488.7714

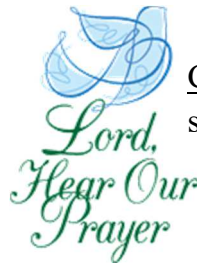


PRAYER GATHERINGS

'Again, truly I tell you, if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.'

—Matthew 18:19-20

We have many witnesses in our community who will attest to the power of prayer. You are invited to all our worship services as well as to join in the following:



Crisis Prayer Chain: An email contact list that invites prayers for a specific need (event) at a specific time, such as a surgery.

Contact Bal Ballantyne
941.716.0578

Evening Prayer: Offered fairly regularly at 5 p.m. in the church on Wednesdays when a dinner is served. May be offered at other times such as Advent and Lent. Watch for Sunday bulletin announcements.

Contact Church Office
941.488.7714

Healing Prayers: Offered on Wednesday morning at 9:30 in conjunction with Holy Communion service. Individuals may speak to clergy with their specific concerns.

Contact Clergy
941.488.7714

Contemplative Prayer: Meets on Wednesday in the church office at 4 p.m. during high season. A quiet, centering time for reflection and thanksgiving.

Contact Bob Elder
616.422.6325

MEN'S GROUPS

St. Mark's is blessed to have two very different ministries specifically for our male members.



Tuesday Morning Men's Group: This loyal and dedicated group meets year round for coffee and conversation. Each week one of the attendees presents a topic for discussion. Lots of camaraderie, a smattering of education, a tad of caffeine. Newcomers are encouraged to keep the diversity of the group growing. Just show up Tuesday at 8 a.m. in the church office building. Watch Sunday bulletin for announcements.

Contact Dave Sayer
941.445-5071

Mark's Men: Mark's Men has been in existence for a number of years. The group meets from October to May on the third Tuesday of the month. Meetings begin at 6 p.m. sharp with fellowship and dinner provided by one of our talented chefs, followed with a presentation by an informed community, political or corporate leader. Meetings are well attended. This year a Man-of-the-Month recognition was introduced, awarded to an attendee who has demonstrated civic and church work above and beyond exceptional. Names are placed on a permanent plaque in Gray Hall.

Contacts
Fred Pardee 303.906.1532
Steve Plichta 941.480.1611
Paul Skulitz 941.302-5451

EPISCOPAL CHURCH WOMEN [ECW]

All women of the church are considered eligible for membership in this group. There are no fees; no initiation; you do not have to have your membership at St. Mark's to qualify; nothing to do but attend the monthly meetings and lend a volunteer hand if so inclined. Meetings include a business meeting, a formal program and lunch.

Contact Barbara Willis, President 941.497.3949
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The ECW comprises several individual ministries, each with its own leader. These are, including, but not limited to:

The Episcopal Church Women supports St. Mark's outreach programs and we also encourage members to:

Promote **EVANGELISM**
Seek **JUSTICE**
Encourage **STEWARDSHIP**
Pray for **PEACE**

The specific outreach programs to which we contribute are:

All Faiths Food Bank
SPARCC
Agape Flights
Salvation Army
Habitat for Humanity
Loveland Center
Scholarship Grants
Companion Diocese (Dominican Republic)
Santo Tomas Project
Episcopal Relief and Development



National-level ECW programs* we sponsor with congregational support:

United Thank Offering (UTO): Sharing our many blessings with others in the community and around the world.

Church Periodical Club (CPC): Taking donations for book scholarships to seminarians and other students.

Church Women United: Monthly luncheon meetings with women from area churches. Sharing and contributing to the local food bank.

Pontifax: Roman Catholic and Episcopal churches in Southwest Florida building a bridge of commonality.

ST. MARK'S GIFT SHOP

Managed and staffed by ECW volunteers, St. Mark's Gift Shop provides a variety of quality merchandise with seasonal specials. A non-profit shop, proceeds are designated weekly to various groups such as St. Mark's Youth, BackPack, food pantry, etc. The Gift Shop stocks a variety of faith-based gifts, cards, quality craft items and more. No sales tax!

Contact Clover Webster
941.375.8127

*** Pick up a copy of the 2016-17 ECW Handbook
for a complete list of contacts,
programs and meeting dates.**

MUSIC ♦ MUSIC ♦ MUSIC

St. Mark's Choir under the direction of Mr. Madpak has a following of its own. Raising their beautiful, blended voices to God on Sunday mornings is just the beginning. The Choir offers concerts throughout the year in conjunction with the Wednesday Night Dinners and the Concert Series. Your voice is welcome!

Thanks to Peter Madpak, our music director and choirmaster, St. Mark's music program has fallen under the public eye, but in the most favorable way! Through the generosity of *Friends of Music* donations, St. Mark's has been able to book musicians providing us with a variety of genre and superior talent. The programs appeal not only to our parish family, but to the public at large. Response to the concert series is overwhelming. Concerts are free, thanks to the *Friends of Music* donors, and they are open to the public. Become a *Friends of Music* donor today!

There are also a Men's Choir and a Youth Choir.

MUSIC Contact Peter Madpak
941.488.7714



YOUTH

Under the leadership of Jackie Overton, St. Mark's Youth Director, the program has expanded exponentially. Youth are actively involved in mission trips (usually twice a year). They actively participate in worship services as acolytes or as lay speakers. Youth volunteers help with large events in various ways. They are well integrated and have endeared themselves to the parish family.

Contact Jackie Overton
941.488.7714



ST. MARK'S PRESCHOOL

Our preschool consistently ranks as *The Best in Venice*. There is typically a wait list for enrollment, as our children are “graduated” ready to move into Sarasota Country school system classes. Teachers undertake training and education throughout the year, learning new processes and techniques. The school facility is maintained to a standard necessary to meet requirements for accreditation and securing a superior Florida STARS assessment rating. Summer Camp and Afterschool care are available as well.

Contact Barbara Levesque
941.484.8707

HOSPITALITY

Loaves and Fishes: Providing a meal or two to someone discharged from the hospital or perhaps during a period of grief. Sustenance for the body as well as the soul.

Contact Marcia Riesz
941.484.2154

Comfort Quilts: Imagine a child found homeless, without a single possession. Or a child suffering in sickness or with an incarcerated parent. Now imagine such a child getting a beautifully hand-crafted quilt to call their own, no matter where they are taken. A beautiful quilt of their own. This is only one avenue our Comfort Quilts travel. Many are sent to the Shriners' Burn Hospital or other care facilities. The quilts produced by our stitchers are not only works of art, they provide a bit of personal comfort. If you quilt, please share your talent here. The group also makes lap quilts for shut-ins and others needing a bit of attention. Quilters works out of their house on their own time.

Contact Barbara Willis
941.497.3949

Prayer Shawls: This group knits beautiful shawls which are distributed to shut-ins and hospitalized parishioners as well as their friends. They meet twice a month during season (roughly October to May) on a Thursday afternoon, though many continue to knit at home. The shawls carry a beautiful sentiment offering comfort with them. Shawls, which have been blessed by clergy, are available in the narthex. We keep a record of those receiving a shawl so that gifts are not duplicated. The record book can be found in the basket with the shawls. Thanks for participating in knitting or gifting!

Contact Emily Smith
941.497.2770

Nothing says hospitality like food! And St. Mark's is very hospitable! New kitchen volunteers are always welcomed to help serve, bus and do general kitchen duty for the following:

Wednesday Night Dinners: During season we offer dinner most every Wednesday in conjunction with our Christian Education series. (Once a month after season.) First-class meals prepared by Chefs Jim and Paul are served at 5:30 and an impressive syllabus of classes and/or presenters is scheduled for 6:30. Sign-ups are encouraged for food ordering purposes. \$8 asked for meal; classes are free and offered on a walk-in basis.

Contact Sandy Albanese
941.488.7714

Parish Breakfasts: On the first Sunday of the month during season our chefs once again regale us with a fine feast. Served between services; no sign-up; donations accepted.

Contact Sandy Albanese
941.488.7714

Saturday Morning Bakers: Not the usual frozen or day-old pastry, our Sunday coffee hours are resplendent with home-baked goods, fresh from our own kitchen. Volunteers meet with Chef Paul on Saturday morning to turn out some of the best looking (and tasting!) pastries you can imagine. No experience necessary—just a desire to bake.

Contact Chef Paul
941.302.5451

SUNDAY GREETERS

The volunteers in this ministry greet folks as they enter Gray Hall being on the look out especially for newcomers and visitors.

Providing a welcoming smile, volunteers help those unfamiliar with the facilities find their way.

Contact Degen Sayer
941.445.5071

PARISH-WIDE ASSISTANCE

St. Mark's is blessed to have ministries that feed the body as well as the soul. Here are three ministries that may provide the little nudge you may need to get over that bump in the road and make your journey lighter.

Parish Health: Under the watchful eye of Dr. Lorna Stuart, M.D. and other volunteers, parishioners can get free blood pressure checks at monthly parish breakfasts and follow their readings over the course of the year. Dr. Stuart is available to provide guidance if you have questions about your medications or any health-related issues. Dr. Stuart also teaches the occasional class on health and medical issues. Watch for class offering listing.

Contact Marlene Vogt, RN, BSN
941.918.2594

Helping Hands:

This revamped ministry provides four volunteer services for our parishioners:

- 1) Transportation for essential short errands/appointments in the Venice area
- 2) Visitation with those who are house bound
- 3) "Handyman" repair/installation assistance with light projects
- 4) Guidance on basics of financial Matters and tax issues

Watch for a formal unveiling with more details.

Contact Bill Flack
315.527.1984

Grief Support: Ginger Pavloff has recently revived the Grief Support series. Watch for announcements or make your interest known and you can be signed up for this bereavement support.



Contact Church Office
941.488.7714

ST. MARK'S—THE COMMUNITY AND BEYOND

We are blessed with a wonderful physical facility which we are pleased to share with community organizations. We offer our community meeting room free of charge to the groups below. Phone numbers provided for your convenience.

Alcoholic Anonymous

585.704.9220

Al-Anon & Al-Alateen

941.426.7655

Narcotics Anonymous

941.493.5747

Nar-Anon

941.493.5747

Manasota Lighthouse for the Vision Impaired

Day-to-day Living

Computer Instruction

941.359.1404

Jewish Family Services Respite Care

941.366.2224

Great Books Library Reading Group

941.375.8161

It's for notes,
phone
numbers and
autographs.



