

St. Mark's Episcopal Church  
**2023 Annual Parish Report**

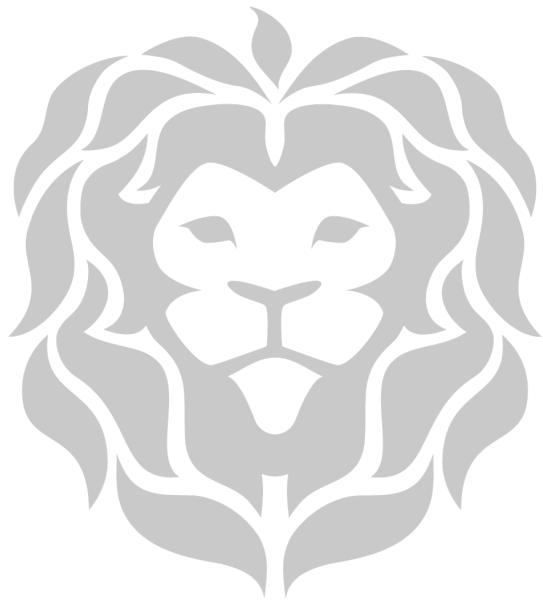
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**Annual Parish Meeting**  
**January 21, 2024**

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# AGENDA

1. Sr. Warden Report
2. Treasurer Report
3. Thank You to Outgoing Vestry Members
4. Election of New Vestry Members
5. Rector's Report



# Minutes from the 2023 Annual Parish Meeting

## January 22, 2023

On Sunday, January 22, 2023, at 10:00 am the Annual Parish Meeting was held in the church. The Rev. Zac Koons presided. Fr. Zac opened the meeting with prayer. The 2022 Annual Report was distributed prior to the meeting.

### 1. Approval of Minutes from the 2022 Annual Parish Meeting

Attendees unanimously approved the Minutes from the 2022 Annual Parish Meeting. 2. Report

from the Senior Warden–Susan Bonnen

Susan thanked the congregation and expressed that she was honored to serve as Senior Warden. She thanked everyone for their pledges. She discussed major projects of the Vestry such as the facility master planning with Heimsath Architects.

### 3. Report from the Treasurer–Jennifer Gallardo-Payne

Jennifer reviewed the Financial Report, which had been distributed prior to the meeting. To close out the finances for 2022, she highlighted solid revenue, transfers to designated funds, and a major contribution to the Community First! Village. Presenting the budget for 2023, she highlighted the increased number of pledges, increased staffing, and providing staff raises.

### 4. Thank You to Outgoing Vestry Members

Fr. Zac thanked outgoing Vestry Members Susan Bonnen, Jay Brown, Michael Quinones, Chris Blanding, and Amber Featherstone-Uwague.

### 5. Election of Incoming Vestry Members

Fr. Zac explained the process for electing new Vestry Members. The nominees are Diana Stangl, Iona Olive, Jim Nolan, and Jewellyn Forest. The attendees voted unanimously to approve the nominees.

### 6. Election of Lay Delegates to Council

Fr. Zac presented the nominees for lay delegate to Council: Clarence Bonnen, Susan Bonnen, Reed Shaw, and Heather Zdancewicz. The attendees voted unanimously to approve the nominees.

### 7. Rector's Report

Fr. Zac expressed his gratitude to the congregation and referred everyone to the written Rector's Report in the Annual Parish Report. He discussed the facility master planning process, which occurred in 2022 and will continue in 2023. He mentioned that the new Senior Warden and Junior Warden would be announced later. He noted that he will be on sabbatical from May 5 through August 31.

# RECTOR'S REPORT

I'm finding that I feel the same tension every year when I sit down to write this Annual Report. On the one hand, I feel pressure to record what was different about the year past when compared to others—those programmatic one-offs, those unexpected tragedies, unique weather events. And I feel pressure to record these both for the sake of the St. Mark's history books (When I first arrived as Rector one of the first things I did was read all the old Annual Reports I could find); but also because I hope the unique events represent our community's ongoing efforts to be alive to what the Spirit is doing in our midst.

On the other hand, when I try to sit before God and meditate on those moments that burn brightest for me in the year gone by, they inevitably are those moments that are not that unique at all—they are another Easter Vigil, they are another Lessons & Carols, they are that one sermon preached by Mary or Nathan that blew me away, they are another funeral, another baptism, they are a thousand private moments in ministry that I have shared with many of you behind the scenes that no one but us will ever know about. The miracle of a church is that, at the core, we do pretty much the same stuff every single week, and yet the well never runs dry; in fact, it is a wellspring that nourishes our souls unto everlasting joy. We can't get enough. And we keep coming back for more. What is often the most important and the most interesting is not what is happening that is new, but what is happening that has always been happening.

Perhaps a better way to think about this tension is that the week-in, week-out, going-to-church-together rhythm of our life is the tilling of the soil, and the one-off events and happenings that sprout up every year are the fruit that emerge from that regular work: The fruit gets a lot more attention in things like the Annual Report, but there wouldn't be any fruit at all if it weren't for the tending to the soil. But alas, allow me to highlight some fruit, incompletely, and in no particular order.

## *Master Plan*

We did a lot of behind-the-scenes planning this year. The Vestry made the difficult but brave decision pursue a new partner for our Master Planning Process, after we were unanimously underwhelmed by the recommendations and imagination offered to us by Heimsath Architects. We formed a new Vestry subcommittee, opened wide the doors of possibility, reached out to 7 or 8 different architecture firms, and restarted the interview and research process. After careful consideration, we decided to partner

with a firm out of San Antonio called Overland Partners. Overland spent the summer doing a lot of behind-the-scenes homework like site surveys, tree surveys, environmental impact studies, wildlife studies, civil engineering, and lots more that I don't fully understand. And this fall, we went through master planning workshops, and then subsequent bi-weekly meetings and we are currently rounding the final bend of the process, with a few final meetings with City of Austin officials and a cost-estimation process before we will have some exciting materials to share with the wider parish. Much more to come on this soon!

### *New Head of School*

We also spent a lot of time behind-the-scenes this year running a search for a new Head of School for our Preschool. Becky Simpson started in May and has already made a positive impact in our school community, even as she is getting her feet under her in what is always a whirlwind of a first year.

### *The Arts*

- We commissioned local visual artist Jim Jangnekt to create a new set of **Stations of the Cross** for St. Mark's. We unveiled two or three new paintings each Wednesday through Lent, holding space for reflection and conversation about the pieces inside of a Stations of the Cross liturgy each evening, culminating in their display all together for the first time on Good Friday. They will be on the walls for Lent this year!
- We hosted music group **Liturgical Folk** for a successful Lenten concert in the Church Nave.
- We hosted musical artist **Jon Guerra** for a three-week artist residency in the Easter season for three wonderful nights of music, poetry, and reflection.
- We hosted another art exhibit, the work of Alfred Manessier, borrowed again from Sandra Bowden's collections.

### *Adult Forum*

As usual, we covered an impressive amount of ground in our Adult Forum. To review, here's what we did in 2023.

- *The Art of Dying* with Mtr. Mary
- *"So What Am I Supposed To Do": How to Approach Mission & Outreach in a Bewildering World* w/ Mtr. Mary and Fr. Zac
- *Tech-Wise Life* with Fr. Zac
- *Stump the Priest* with Fr. Nathan

- *The Future of the Church* with Fr. Zac and Fr. Nathan
- *Israel and Palestine* with Fr. Nathan and Ambassador Edmund Fitton-Brown
- *What is a Covenant in the Bible?* With Fr. Nathan
- *The Great Divorce by C.S. Lewis Book Study* with Fr. Zac
- *Communion with Children* with Fr. Zac

### *Mission & Outreach*

We were busier in mission and outreach than ever before, living into our vision to be a church for people that don't go to church here, not only through continued work with our five nonprofit partner organizations, El Buen Samaritano, Community First! Village, Welcome Table, Trinity Center, and African-American Youth Harvest Foundation, but also we're doing more and more to integrate mission into our life here on campus.

- We threw another successful **Block Party**, welcoming hundreds of people on our campus that are not regular Sunday attenders. Laurie saw his first kangaroo ☺
- We continue to host three different **12-step groups** in the evenings on our campus each week.
- We are hosting **other groups on our campus too**, including a Speech Therapy group in partnership with the Day School on weekday afternoons, a Yoga class on Friday mornings, an early Tuesday morning work-out group, a Barton Hills youth choir on occasional Saturdays, and other one-off events.
- We put up a **Little Free Library!**

### *Being With*

We led another two cohorts through our Being With Course last year. This class continues to slowly transform the DNA of our parish into one characterized by more spiritual depth and brightness. Each time we teach the class, it is made up more and more of people who are outside, or at least more on the margins of, life at St. Mark's. We have people sign up through the neighborhood listserv, through the day school, through word-of-mouth from others who have taken the course. St. Mark's was one of the first congregations in America to start teaching this course, and it's now spreading throughout the Episcopal Church. Fr. Zac has been invited to serve on the Being With US Council and has traveled to run trainings for other church leaders across the Diocese of Texas and beyond.

*Miscellaneous*

- We had a horrible ice storm that devastated the trees on our campus. Of course, our community responded immediately with a heavenly host of volunteers and chainsaws to care for our little corner of God's good greenbelt.
- The bell broke! But it was fixed by Eagle Scout of all Eagle Scouts, parishioner Michael Baird, so now the whole neighborhood can again hear that God is here.
- We had 3 Parish Cookouts over the summer!

But remember the soil. The soil are the prayers of our Daughters of the King who sustain us in ways only God knows. They are the Contemplative Prayer Group that meets on Saturday mornings in the Chapel or the faithful intercessors who gather on Zoom every weekday morning to say Morning Prayer from the Prayer Book together. It's the meals you bring and the letters you send to those who are suffering. It's the small group meals through which strangers become friends. It's the moment you realize you're not a newcomer anymore; that you're part of the family. It's showing up two hours early to cook gumbo for the Men's Group.

It is this and a thousand other small and big things that you never think of all at once, but occasionally, when you realize the Annual Report is due to the printer in the morning you take a step back and look at it all together and you think, "Wow. What a gift."

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Zac+", with a stylized flourish and a plus sign.

Fr. Zac+

# ASSOCIATE RECTOR'S REPORT

When I look back over 2023, I see a patchwork quilt made up of a wide range of people and events. Looked at individually, these can all seem very different and unrelated - but like a quilt, they are held together by a thread. In the case of St. Mark's and our diverse life together, that thread is our faith in Jesus.

At the center of our life together are quilt patches that are deeply personal and spiritual: Bible Study and pastoral care. This year, our Tuesday Bible Study read and discussed Revelation, Paul's Pastoral letter - 1st and 2nd Timothy and Titus, and the Genesis. I also started a Circle of Support for Grief in which participants shared their experiences of losing a loved one and going forward with support and faith. Parts of our patchwork quilt involves the whole community! We partner with five community partners in the Austin area to live our faith in connection with others. Each of our partners provides services to the poor in our community and in collaboration with them we find ways to connect our faith to actions that benefit the more vulnerable among us - we are sewn together with the thread of our faith in Jesus. (You can read more about our mission work and our Mission Advisory Board in this Annual Report.)

Our Annual Block party is one of the most colorful patches in our quilt. It is a joyful and social gift that St. Mark's gives to our neighborhood - a way to let them know they are always welcome here. An amazing team of volunteers makes this event happen, and it takes them months to make the arrangements and pull it all together. We know from experience that some of the neighbors who discover us at the Block Party come back on Sundays to worship with us. On the edges of the quilt are the ways we engage with the large issues of our city, state, nation, and the world. For me, that included being present several days at the Texas legislature to support expansion of Medicaid for new mothers and young children, to be in solidarity with trans youth and their families, and to advocate for gun safety. It meant a trip to San Antonio and the Border to learn more about our broken immigration system. It meant traveling to a juvenile justice facility to learn about the changes needed in that system to promote justice and healing.

I've also been honored to serve as Chair of the Pauli Murray Scholarship Committee, which raises awareness and funds to help seminarians of color attend seminary and prepare for ordained ministry.

This work benefits students from several dioceses across the country who attend Seminary of the Southwest here in Austin.

Of course, these people and events that make up our St. Mark's quilt are not all there is. My days are blessed by meeting newcomers for coffee, preparing families for baptism, visiting the bedsides of those who are ill, and praying with many who are discerning their way through life's challenges. It is an honor to walk with all of you as we stitch together the patchwork of our lives together - here at St. Mark's, in our neighborhood, and across our community.

Blessings

Mother Mary+



# SENIOR WARDEN'S REPORT

When Fr. Zac asked me to be the Senior Warden in January of 2023, I told him I would say yes IF he promised me he would not be leaving. His answer was he was not going anywhere. I had been through one search for a new rector and was not looking forward to going through a second. So, I said yes. That night it dawned on me that he was about to leave on a four-month sabbatical. Well, he was not leaving, just taking a break!

During that time, we kept busy. With the support of Mtr. Mary and our amazing staff, we continued our spiritual journey through worship and fellowship. There were broken pews to repair, as well as other “housekeeping” problems that would arise. Our very capable Junior Warden resolved each with meticulous care. St. Mark’s has continued to thrive under the leadership of Fr. Zac, Mtr. Mary and our staff. What a gift this parish has been blessed with through them. In 2023 we have continued our donations to our mission partners, as well as special projects such as the Angel Tree. We hosted our neighborhood Block Party. Our volunteers worked tirelessly to create a warm, inviting welcome.

The Vestry continued its focus on the Master Plan for St. Mark’s. After careful discussions we voted to establish a new relationship with a different architecture firm – Overland Architects out of San Antonio. The summer was spent getting surveys done and working with the City of Austin to discern what can and cannot be done on our property. The Master Plan will be presented to the congregation in the upcoming months.

It has been an honor and privilege to serve as your Senior Warden. I have been challenged beyond my comfort zone. I hope I have met each one.

St. Mark’s has a bright future. I ask you to open your minds and hearts to the possibilities that lie before us, not only to its members but also to our neighbors. I encourage you to step out of your comfort zone. Do not just focus on what St. Mark’s is at the present time, but imagine what the future possibilities of St. Mark’s can look like years from now.

Brenda White  
Senior Warden

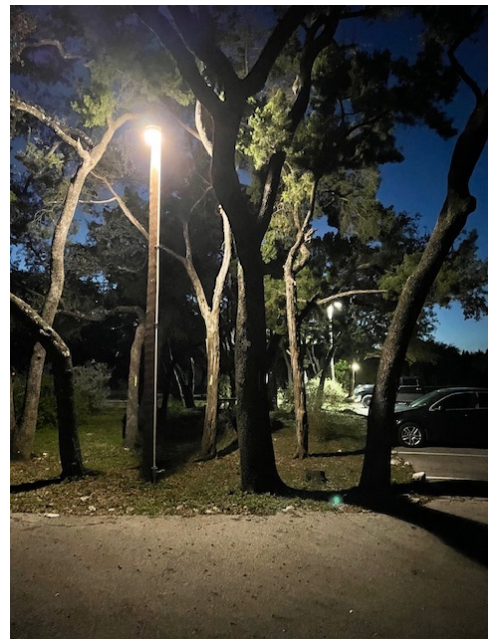


# JUNIOR WARDEN'S REPORT



The major repairs in the church were the pews in the main sanctuary. During Sunday service one of the pews collapsed and it had to be repaired. All the pews were checked for possible fractures. Some of the pews were fixed as needed.

The other ongoing problem is lighting for the church parking lot. We were able to improve the lighting to roughly  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the parking area, but more improvements are needed. Fr. Zac and the vestry are investigating further options.



Daniel Murrietta  
Junior Warden

# VESTRY NOMINEES

*The following have been nominated by the Vestry and will serve a three-year term.*



***Pam Johns***

My husband David and I have been members of St. Mark's for 26 years after transferring our membership from Church of the Resurrection. Over the years I've been involved with the Young Families group, Youth Group, been a Christian Formation teacher, served in the Daughters of the King, been an usher and helped implement the Godly Play program for our young children. I am honored to be nominated to serve on the vestry and excited to be involved during this exciting time of planning for the future of our parish.

Thank you,  
Pam Johns

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***Ross Ponder***

During the pandemic, the picnic services on the front lawn called Ross Ponder and his family of five to St. Mark's, which the kids affectionately call "playground church." Lucy, Hank, and Ruth attend local Montessori schools. Ross's day job is in residential real estate (Oikos Real Estate Group at Compass); whereas, his wife, Sarah, is a fee-only financial planner at her business (Real Wealth Planning). In an earlier life, Ross completed a Master of Divinity degree at Boston University and was a doctoral candidate in ancient Mediterranean religions at UT-Austin. The Ponder Pack resides in Sunset Valley with their German Shepherd rescue dogs, Bear and Molly.

Thank you,  
Ross Ponder



### ***Heather Zdancewicz***

A lifelong Episcopalian, I have been worshipping at St. Mark's since the fall of 2019. Before moving to Austin, I served on the faculty at Virginia Theological Seminary. I have volunteered for various Episcopal organizations including Kanuga Conference Center, Episcopal Evangelism Society, St. Francis Ministries, and as a church treasurer for 9 years.

Thank you,  
Heather Zdancewicz

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### ***Ginger Helen***

I first encountered St. Mark's under the trees in a Covid service and the first eucharist and blessing I've had since I was a child is seared into my brain. I did not know how much I needed this--a liturgy to mark the time and a community to live it with. I'm a Texas native, a 30-year Austinite and an avid reader of story. I am always looking for how to be a good human being in a real world, and it appears that will be in a story with you lot! I love St. Mark's and what you have to teach me.

Thank you,  
Ginger Helen

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**Thank you to St. Mark's outgoing Vestry members  
Jennifer Gallardo-Payne, Mary-Alis Kelly, and Russ Farris**

# FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

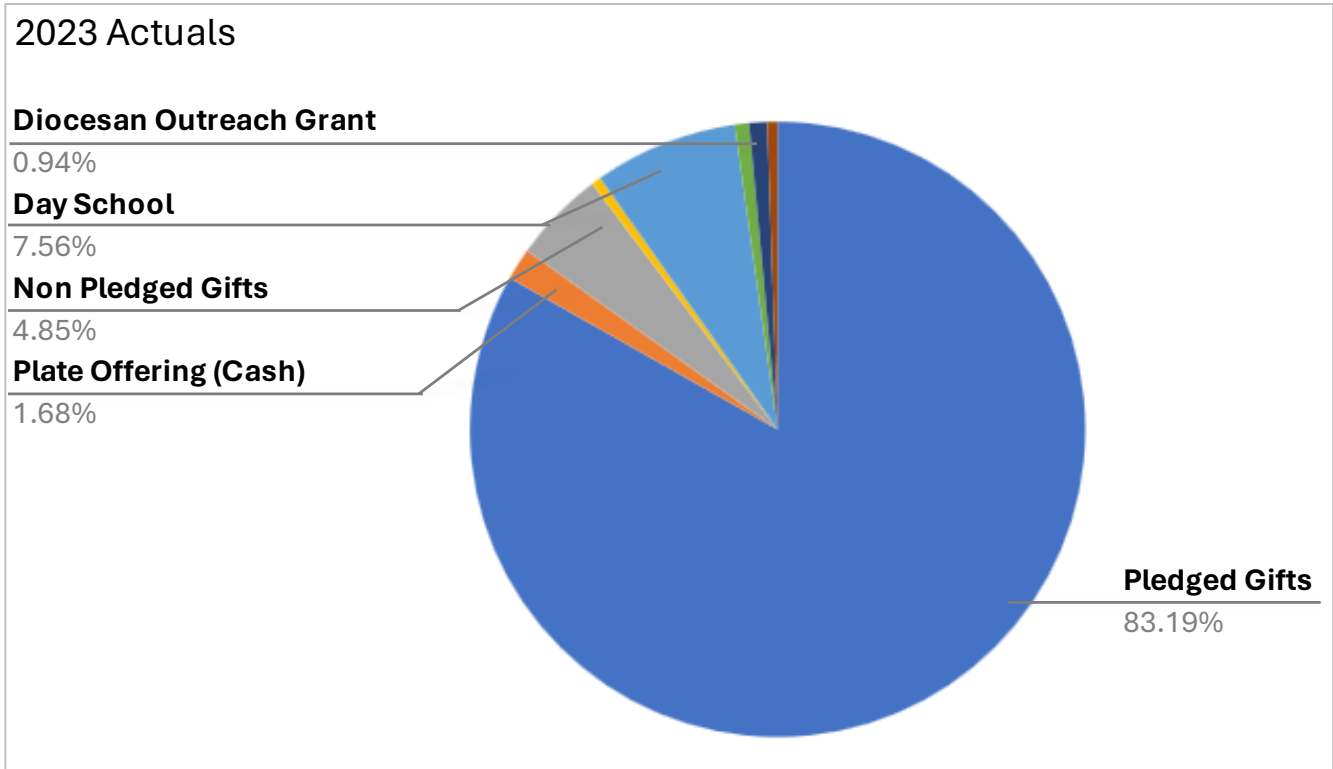
St. Mark's successfully navigated 2023 but we did begin to see more signs of stress in the financial landscape as prices continued to increase and wage uncertainty affected many in our congregation.

Important facts about 2023 finances include:

- We reached 99% of our Operating Budget revenue goal.
- We used approximately \$19,500 from our Designated Funds for repairs and building improvements and approximately \$13,000 on our worship facilities, including a new speaker system for the nave and narthex
- We spent approximately \$189,365 from our Designated Funds on architectural, engineering services, and capital campaign advisors to continue the master planning process for our church campus.
- The Designated Funds are primarily invested in CDs and Treasuries and earned over \$32,000 in investment income for the year.
- Our Endowment Fund, managed by the diocese, is invested primarily in the stock market. It did much better in 2023, gaining approximately \$11,000 in net value over the year. (Note that we do not rely on our Endowment for any operating expenses.)

The charts below reflect our operating budget income and expenses for 2023. You will see that for the first time in several years, we had an operating loss of **(\$4,967.08)**.

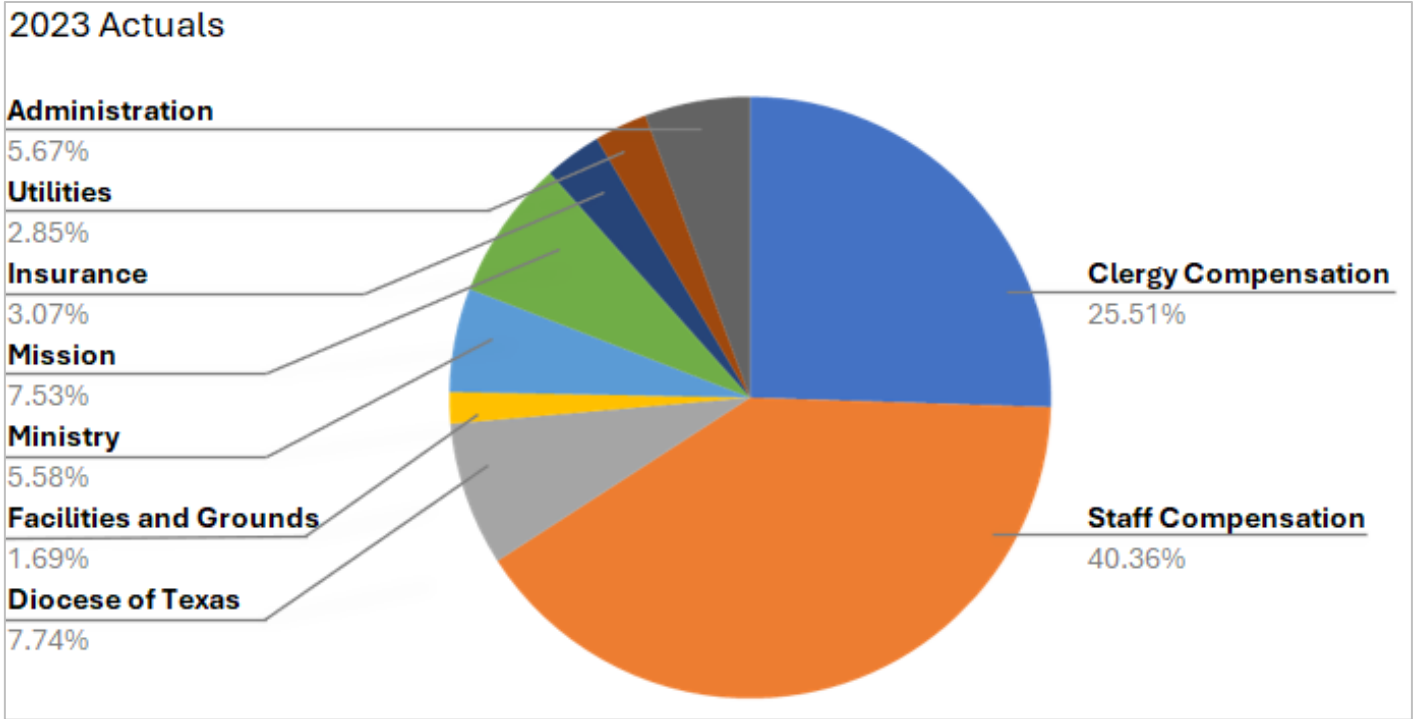
## 2023 Actual Income



<b>2023 Actual Income</b>	
<b>Income Accounts</b>	<b>2023 Actuals</b>
Pledged Gifts	\$660,565.59
Plate Offering (Cash)	\$13,332.03
Non Pledged Gifts	\$38,520.58
Prior Year Pledge Payment	\$2,815.96
Plate Offering for Bishop Disc Fund	\$1,076.00
Day School	\$60,000.00
Building Use	\$5,980.00
Diocesan Outreach Grant	\$7,500.00
Fall Families Camping Trip	\$463.82
Alter Flower Donations	\$2,004.79
Block Party	\$1,652.65
Checking Account Interest	\$133.03
<b>Total 2023 Income</b>	<b>\$794,044.45</b>



## 2023 Actual Expense



### 2023 Actual Expense

#### Expense Accounts

#### 2023 Actuals

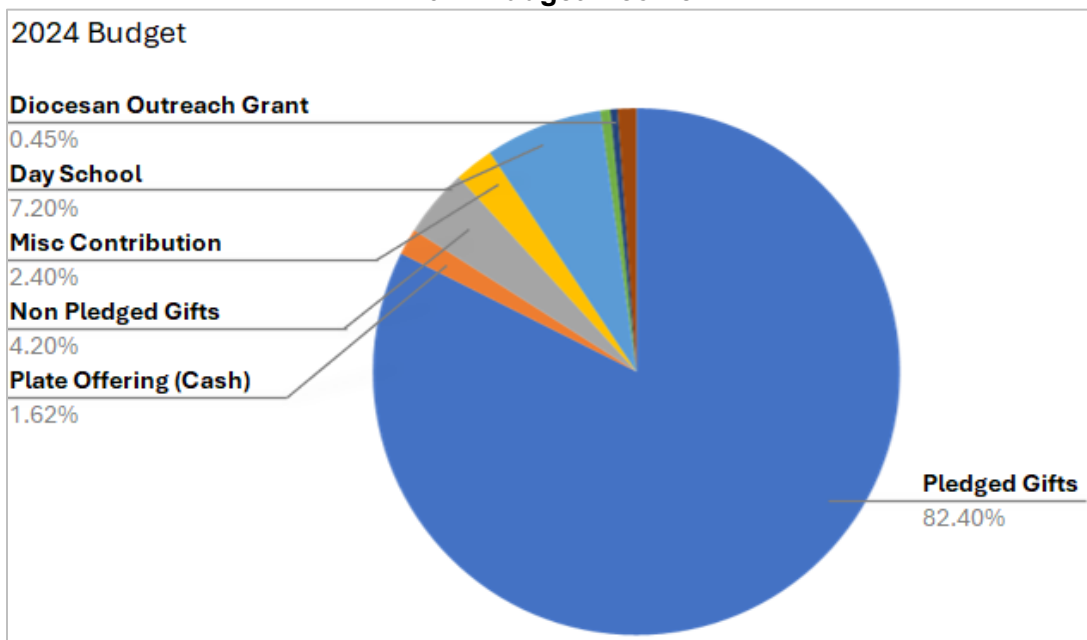
Clergy Compensation	\$203,790.88
Staff Compensation & Benefits & Payroll Tax	\$322,493.12
Diocese of Texas	\$61,875.22
Facilities and Grounds	\$13,479.02
Ministry (Worship, Family, Education, etc.)	\$44,586.79
Mission (Outreach, Almsgiving, Block Party, etc.)	\$60,200.88
Insurance	\$24,550.00
Utilities (Electric, Water, Gas)	\$22,742.66
Administration (Office, Equipment, Telephone)	\$45,293.06
<b>Total 2023 Expense</b>	<b>\$799,011.63</b>

## Important facts about the 2024 budget include:

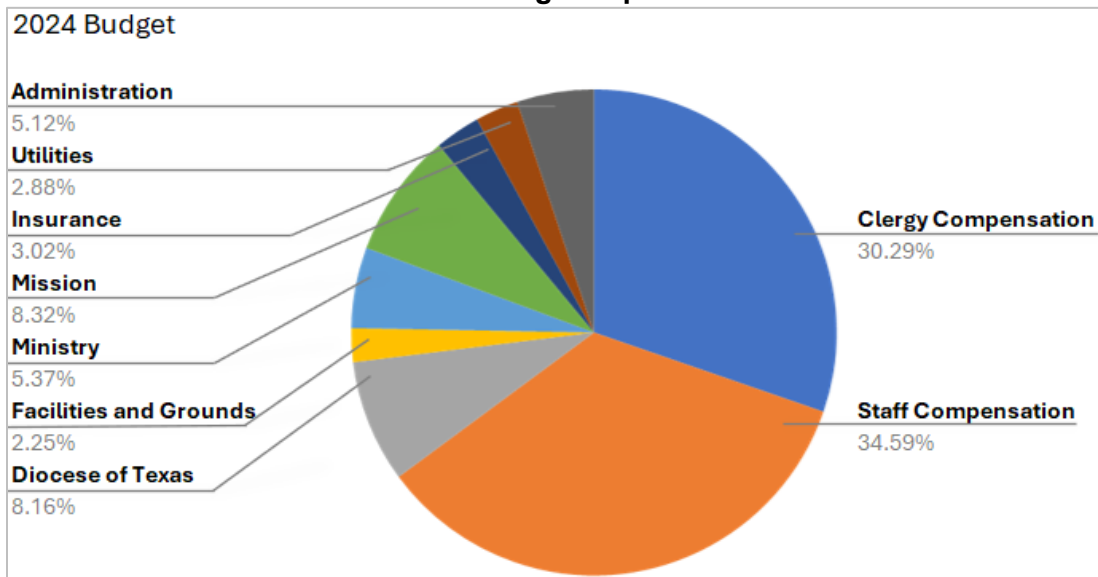
- We fell short of our pledge goal by \$38,000
- Clergy compensation is higher than 2023 because of the addition of our new Assistant Rector for Children’s Ministry
- Staff compensation is lower than 2023 because of the staffing changes announced at the end of 2023
- Because of the shortfall in pledge income, the budget does not include raises for clergy or staff
- Despite the shortfall in pledge income, we did not reduce our commitments to Mission or Ministry

The charts below reflect our Operating Fund income and expense expectations for 2024. Following the charts are some more detailed information about the makeup of our Facilities, Ministry, Mission, and Administration expense categories.

### 2024 Budget Income



### 2024 Budget Expense



<b>2024 Budgeted Expense</b>		<b>Mission (Outreach, Almsgiving, Block Party, etc.)</b>	<b>\$69,084.88</b>
<b>Expense Accounts</b>	<b>2024 Budget</b>	Clergy Discretionary Funds	\$4,200.00
Clergy Compensation	\$251,592.50	Mission Stipend for Associate Rector	\$29,671.00
Staff Compensation & Benefits & Payroll Taxes	\$287,270.07	Seminary of the Southwest	\$1,000.00
Diocese of Texas	\$67,806.00	Almsgiving/Direct Aid	\$10,000.00
Facilities and Grounds	\$18,650.00	Block Party Expenses	\$10,000.00
Grounds Maintenance	\$4,000.00	UT Episcopal Scholarship	\$1,500.00
Repairs and Maintenance	\$14,000.00	Rector Hospitality	\$2,100.00
Security System	\$650.00	Newcomers Committee	\$2,150.00
Ministry (Worship, Family, Education, etc.)	\$44,635.00	Art Exhibits	\$2,000.00
Altar Guild	\$3,400.00	Religious Coalition to Assist the Homeless	\$1,463.88
Altar Flowers	\$3,350.00	Neighborhood Common Good	\$5,000.00
Community Arts	\$500.00	<b>Insurance</b>	<b>\$25,100.00</b>
Music Program	\$2,485.00	<b>Utilities (Electric, Water, Gas)</b>	<b>\$23,900.00</b>
Youth Program	\$5,000.00	<b>Administration (Office, Equip, Telephone, Internet, etc.)</b>	<b>\$42,568.00</b>
Adult Education	\$500.00	Office Furniture & Equipment	\$1,500.00
Clergy Continuing Education	\$3,000.00	Office Supplies	\$5,500.00
Family Ministry	\$5,000.00	Postage	\$1,500.00
Gifts	\$2,000.00	Business Travel & Expense	\$1,500.00
Sunday Hospitality	\$9,000.00	Subscriptions	\$1,500.00
Kitchen Supplies	\$2,200.00	Telephone and Internet	\$5,300.00
Parish Life Committee	\$2,500.00	Clergy Cell Phone Reimbursement	\$1,800.00
Stewardship Committee	\$1,000.00	Payment Processing Fees	\$5,100.00
Garden Guild Expenses	\$500.00	ADP (Payroll) Service Fees	\$1,950.00
Lenten Programming	\$2,000.00	Bank Charges	\$60.00
Liturgy & Worship	\$2,200.00	Hiring Administration (Ads, background checks, etc)	\$500.00
		Copier Lease	\$6,600.00
		Church Management Software	\$2,758.00
		Annual Audit	\$7,000.00
		<b>Total 2024 Budgeted Expense</b>	<b>\$830,606.45</b>
		<b>Income Less Expense</b>	<b>\$3,141.55</b>

Respectfully submitted,

Diana Stangl, Treasurer



# MINISTRY REPORTS

## **Christian Formation** by Casey Bushman, Youth and Family Minister

In 2023, we witnessed another year of steady growth in our children, youth, and family ministries. Thanks be to God!

The spring semester began with a very successful Parents' Night Out fundraiser for our high school confirmands, raising around \$2,000 for their Scotland pilgrimage. This was followed by a successful breakfast fundraiser on Palm Sunday to support both the youth pilgrims and Camp Allen families. The church and school communities rallied around our kids and youth in a strong show of support! Youth events took place regularly throughout the spring, highlighted by a very competitive broomball showdown with the youth of St. Alban's Episcopal Church and our second annual Easter Vigil glow-in-the-dark Capture the Flag game. To top it all off, our Easter morning lawn games for children and families drew eyeballs along Barton Hills Drive and even made a splash in the local media! Several youths volunteered to make it all happen. Overall, we saw strong participation across all programs in the spring and observed encouraging signs of families investing more deeply in our St. Mark's community.

Summer brought even more opportunities for connection and deepening relationships. Our monthly Parish Cookouts were popular with families, who were able to spend valuable time getting to know other parishioners they don't typically rub shoulders with. Big thanks to the men's group for handling the barbecue and children's ministry staff/volunteers for providing some fun and messy outdoor games for kids! In late June, a team from St. Mark's went to Camp Allen to lead a week of summer camp for 3rd and 4th graders for the second straight year. Following the theme "Space Mission Adventure," over 40 kids were equipped with biblical knowledge about how they can be a part of God's mission in the world every day. Several St. Mark's families sent their kids to Camp Allen for the first time in the summer of 2023, and there is continued interest in participating again next summer.

Then, in July, our four high school pilgrims and two adults set off for a week-long pilgrimage to England and Scotland. It was an amazing and deeply formative experience for all. We learned about the roots of Celtic Christianity, walked in the footsteps of fellow pilgrims across the centuries, and

formed life-giving friendships with one another. Vital to the success of our trip was our partnership with Wonder Voyage and with Trinity Episcopal Church in Excelsior, MN, who accompanied us on the trip. The response from parishioners, parents, and youth has reinforced my feeling that pilgrimage should become a regular part of the rhythm of St. Mark's youth ministry.

As school started back in August, we prepared for additional growth in our children's formation programming, expanding to three Sunday formation classes and recruiting additional volunteers to make it all sustainable. Attendance throughout the fall was high, regularly topping 30 kids across all classes! Godly Play and Wayfinders continued to thrive, and our new class "The Bridge" brought together older elementary students with younger youth to explore Bible topics and texts through videos from The Bible Project. High participation created a few logistical challenges, but overall, the response from parents and kids was very encouraging.

Our youth group set out to complete the Seven Acts of Mercy alongside youth from Resurrection South Austin, a church that is in process of joining our Episcopal diocese. We checked off "feeding the hungry" with a Sunday night dinner served at Community First! Village and "burying the dead" with an afternoon of landscaping in our very own columbarium courtyard. A new "Communion with Children" class debuted in October and helped parents navigate the difficult questions surrounding the sacrament. And in November, over 40 parents, kids and youth joined us at John Knox Ranch in Wimberley for our first-ever Fall Families Camping Trip, planned and led by Michael and Annessa Baird. Canoeing, archery, and a campsite Eucharist highlighted the weekend, which (despite the awful weather!) many families reported was an extremely helpful way to get to know others in the church.

By year end, we were putting on yet another successful Christmas pageant, full of anticipation of the Rev. Kelly Jennings joining the staff, an addition that will surely help our families and children continue to grow in faith.

We wouldn't be able to do what we do for youth and children without incredibly dedicated volunteers and an extremely supportive parish community. Thank you all so much, and here's to seeking out new horizons in 2024!







## Mission Report by Rev. Mary Keenan, Associate Rector

### Community Engagement

St. Mark's is a generous community that loves to share the love of God far beyond our walls. To help harness this energy, we have a Mission Advisory Board, who coordinate with five community partner organizations. They help us know about volunteer and giving opportunities that support projects that benefit individuals and families across our community.

Members of the Mission Advisory Board for 2023 were: Ron Bolek, Pat Bullock, Russ Farris, Mary-Alis Kelly, Nora Kelly, Mairin Bachschmid, Jeremy Payne, and Marjie Lawrence.

The gifts that we gave during the year come from the church budget - from all of you.

- This summer we supported Youth summer programs at **African American Youth Harvest** and this organization also recognized St. Mark's for our work with them.
- For the second year in a row, we went out to **Community First! Village** for a pet blessing on St. Francis day and our youth group served a meal to the neighbors.
- **El Buen Samaritano** helps feed many families in Austin and this year we helped them do it better! St. Mark's helped them install an irrigation system for their community garden, sent volunteers to tend the garden, and sent a team of volunteers to pass out more than 500 Thanksgiving meal kits for Hands for Hope.
- You helped donate and deliver a huge number of diapers for **El Buen Samaritano** and **Welcome Table**.
- In addition to sending volunteers clothing, and toiletries for the women and men who rely on **Trinity Center**, we also donated funds to make sure their Holiday Party was festive.
- The **Women's Shower Program** at **Trinity Center** was founded by members of St Mark's and is operated in connection with a clothing closet. It has been so successful that Trinity Center is now launching a men's shower ministry.





- To make sure that **Welcome Table** could meet increased demand for food and diapers through their Neighbor-to-Neighbor program, we donated funds and some of our parishioners helped fill bags for distribution.
- This Christmas, our Angel Tree program collected gifts for low-income children and their families at **Barton Hills Elementary** and **Welcome Table**.
- St. Mark's made additional gifts this year to reduce medical debt through **RIP Medical Debt** and to support the **Pauli Murray Scholarship** at Seminary of the Southwest.

## Block Party

St. Mark's annual Block Party helps us get to know our neighbors and them get to know us. In November, more than 80 volunteers welcomed more than 300 guests for games, barbecue, music, and much more.



## **Music Ministry Annual Report by Mr. Mark Reed, Director of Music**

Here are some of the highlights from the St. Mark's Music Ministry in 2023:

- The Adult Choir sang fifty-six anthems in worship services. These anthems included pieces from the Renaissance, Classic, and Baroque eras; traditional English anthems, Spirituals, folk songs, 20th-century sacred anthems, choral works by living composers, and two pieces written by St. Mark's choir members.
- The Choristers Children's Choir sang ten anthems in worship.
- Musical highlights of the year included Maundy Thursday, the Easter Vigil, Pentecost, Lessons and Carols, and Christmas Eve.
- Lessons and Carols was a particular highlight of the year for both choirs, including ten choral anthems, soloists, percussion, cello, violin, piano, and organ.
- We began incorporating an additional cantor at the 9:00 service each week.
- Many talented singers provided special music during the summer months. We enjoyed fourteen weeks of outstanding solos, duets, trios, and ensembles.
- The annual Poinsettia & Wreath Sale was a success, raising over \$1,000 for the Eric Panter Memorial Fund.
- We used money from the Eric Panter Fund to purchase new children's handbells, a set of conga drums, replacement choir vestments, new choral anthems and supplies, to fund additional cantors for 9:00 service, and to hire guest musicians.
- The Adult Choir enjoyed parties hosted at the homes of Heather Azarmehr and Christa Tumlinson, and a reception at the church organized by Andrea Michael.
- The Choristers Children's Choir enjoyed two pizza parties with prizes and games.

Thanks to Marjie Lawrence for serving as music librarian and for providing much-appreciated organizational help and advice throughout the year.

Thanks to Julia Sterner-Holden, Christa Tumlinson, and Iona Olive for their assistance with the Choristers Children's Choir. Casey Bushman continued to provide invaluable support for our children's music program.

Thanks to Andrea Duroy, Christa Tumlinson, Iona Olive, Sam Shipps, and Julia Sterner-Holden for leading the music while I was on vacation.

Thanks to Andrea Duroy and Christa Tumlinson for accompanying the choirs on piano. Thanks also to Mason Asberry (tambourine), Hudson Baird (cello), Andrea Duroy (cello), Anderson McCurdy (oboe), Summer McCurdy (oboe), Matt McCurdy (trumpet), Iona Olive (viola and violin), and Reed Shaw (percussion) for playing instruments in worship.

Thanks to Mason Asberry, Evan Blaché, Cathy Chadwick, Kassie Kelly, Ben Mera, Joseph Nguyen, Iona Olive, Ivan Rodriguez, David Roitberg, Meredith Shaw, Sam Shipps, Julia Sterner-Holden, Christa Tumlinson, Erin Yousef, and Richard Yu for singing solos in 2023. Mason Asberry, Evan Blaché, Ben Mera, David Roitberg, Sam Shipps, Christa Tumlinson, and Erin Yousef served as choral Section Leaders and Cantors in 2023. Kassie Kelly, Iona Olive, and Julia Sterner-Holden served as cantors. Marjorie and John Panter provided meaningful financial support for the St. Mark's Music Ministry throughout the year in memory of their son, beloved St. Mark's choral Section Leader and Youth Group Leader Eric Panter (1986-2022). I am grateful beyond words for their contributions and for Eric's legacy of outstanding musicianship and service. I am also especially grateful for the support of everyone who contributed to the Eric Panter Memorial Fund for Music over the past year.

Thanks to Amanda Trafton for her service as Parish Administrator in 2023, she prepared outstanding bulletins for our weekly services and special programs, and she provided ongoing administrative support for the Music Ministry. Thanks to the Altar Guild (Judy Elkins, president); and to Katie Yu, Richard Yu, Jay Brown, and the others who helped make our Sanctuary a beautiful place in which to worship and sing. Thanks also to our Sexton Irma Glover and her husband Tim for taking care of the spaces in which we perform and rehearse.

Finally, I would like to thank all the volunteers who sing in the Adult Choir, the children who sing with the Choristers, the parents and helpers who keep everything running smoothly, and the incredible parishioners of St. Mark's Church. It is a true joy and a humbling privilege to make music with you each week. We are always eager to welcome new singers to our choirs and we invite instrumentalists to add their talents to our worship services. Let me know if you would like to participate, the St. Mark's Music Ministry is a family that is always open to newcomers. Come join us!

Gratefully submitted,

Mark Reed



## Adult Choir Members during 2023

### Sopranos

Susan Bonnen  
Cathy Chadwick  
Sylvia Fitz  
Grace Fultz  
Joanna Holden  
Helen Randle  
Susan Randle  
Julia Sterner-Holden  
Christa Tumlinson  
Erin Yousef

### Altos

Heather Azarmehr  
Andrea Duroy  
Jeanne Erichson  
Kassie Kelly  
Marjie Lawrence  
Iona Olive  
Amy Papalexandrou

### Tenors

Edmund Fitton-  
Brown  
Leslie Hart  
Benjamin Mera  
Andrea Michael  
David Roitberg  
Ross Smith

### Basses

Mason Asberry  
Evan Blaché  
Clarence Bonnen  
Lucas Breen  
Samuel Shipps  
Richard Yu

## Choristers Members during 2023

Oliver Bondy  
Theo Bondy  
Charlotte  
Bushman  
Grace Bushman  
Hattie Bushman

Frankie Cain  
Victoria Carroll  
Cannon Cluley  
Arthur Helen  
Fiona Helen  
Eliza Jackson

Evan Jackson  
Olivia Jackson  
June Mishkin  
Martine Mishkin  
Lucy Ponder  
Wesley Trafton

Harlem James  
Uwague  
Mia Well

# STEWARDSHIP

The Stewardship committee would like to thank the parishioners, clergy, vestry, finance committee, staff, and seminarians for the continued support throughout the 2023 Stewardship Campaign. If you are interested in serving on the Stewardship Committee for 2024, please let us know.

	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020
<b>PLEDGE TOTAL</b>	687,291	683,231.00	618,587.00	584,310	567,815
<b>TOTAL 2023 PLEDGES RECEIVED</b>	185	173	167	160	160
<b>NEW PLEDGING UNITS</b>	34	32	26	17	27
<b>INCREASED PLEDGE</b>	56	71	65	64	n/a
<b>DECREASED PLEDGE</b>	29	17	23	30	n/a
<b>PLEDGED THE SAME AS IN 2022</b>	66	53	53	49	n/a
<b>LOST PLEDGE</b>	15	26	19	18	18

# DAY SCHOOL REPORT

St. Mark's Day School, a non-profit organization owned and operated by the parish, was founded in 1963 and serves children two years through five years of age. The school is deservedly recognized as one of the premier preschool programs in the city and is accredited by the Southwestern Association of Episcopal Schools (SAES). St. Mark's Episcopal Day School provides a safe, nurturing, and joyous community for children to experience and develop compassion, empathy, and creativity, learn about, and engage with the natural world, and build a foundation for a lifelong love of learning. We again want to thank Fr. Zac and the church leadership for the support provided to the school. In addition, we are grateful for the constant support and encouragement from the Day School Board of Directors.

## **Facts:**

During the prior fiscal year, we hosted the Accreditation team from the Southwestern Association of Episcopal Schools. Having submitted a 56-page document as required, the team visited classrooms, met with all stakeholders, and reviewed all documents. We were informed that we had successfully met all the standards to be fully accredited. This accreditation lasts for ten years. They did, however, require that our Mission Statement and Strategic Plan be reviewed and amended as necessary. We began this process with assistance from Chris Carter, a facilitator with SAES, and a former Head of School with a larger private school. Input was gathered from stakeholder groups including present and past school parents, staff, and teachers, and members of the Vestry and St. Mark's parish at large. This process is ongoing, with a final Strategic Plan due in May.

On 03/21/2023, We had an unannounced inspection by Texas Department of Family and Protective Services – Childcare Licensing Division. For the first time in recent history, the inspectors gave us a perfect score.

- Following the disruptions of the Covid pandemic, we continue to work hard to keep the school healthy, by maintaining our high levels of cleaning and sanitation.
- We provided our Pre-K children and families with a lovely graduation on the front lawn in May. We hosted our summer camp from June 12 – July 28, 2023. We again had two-three-week sessions with a one-week break in the middle.

- Our enrollment was good for the 2021-2022 school year, with 83 children. Currently, for 2023-2024, we have 91 children enrolled out of a possible 93.
  
- For the 2023-2024 school year, our classroom structure is as follows:
  - One - Two-year-old – Multi-day MWF or T/TH
  - One - Two-year-old - M-F
  - Three – Three-year-old classes – M-F
  - Two – Pre-K classes – M-F
  
- Our afternoon extended care program continues to be very popular. We have three classrooms, one for each age group. M-F, we offer a special enrichment program for the children. Those include Science, Art, Music, Movement, Spanish and Yoga.
  
- For the 2023-2024 year, the school employed seven lead teachers, seven assistant teachers, one floating teacher, one special area teacher and three administrative staff.
  
- Chapel: We continue to be blessed and fortunate to have Casey Bushman lead chapel for the Pre-K and Three-Year-Old classes. The classes attend on Wednesday in the Sanctuary. Becky Simpson, HOS, leads chapel for our Two-Year-Old classes on Thursday and Friday.
  
- The Day School has two fundraisers, the Annual Fund and Lion’s Pride. We were excited to hold the Lion’s Pride event for 2022-2023 on March 4, 2023, at Bouldin Acres, which turned out to be an excellent venue. The event was well attended, fun for everyone, and very successful. The 2024 annual fund commenced on 11/21/2023, and is ongoing, with a goal of 100% of school families participating. The 2024 edition of Lion’s Pride will be held on Saturday, March 2, 2024, again, at Bouldin Acres.
  
- The 2023-2024 school year commenced with our new Head of School, Becky Simpson, who took the reins from former Head of School Karon Hammond who relocated at the end of the 2022-2023 school year, to be closer to family. Becky Simpson hit the ground running and has overseen the renovation/modernization of the playground, the installation of new and enhanced fencing around the school and playground, as well as some important upgrades to the classrooms and work areas in the classroom buildings.

What and how children learn in the first five years provides the foundation for a lifetime of learning. At St. Mark's Episcopal Day School, our goal is to be that positive first step and inspire a love for School and learning in each child. We focus on the whole child: school readiness and cognitive development, and emotional, social, and spiritual growth. Our child-focused curriculum is presented in a stimulating environment that encourages creativity and curiosity while fostering self-esteem. Teachers scaffold student learning and provide additional challenges/opportunities in all areas. Students learn about rhythm, patterns, color, and texture and expand their motor skills through music, creative movement, dance, and art. Most importantly, the curriculum at St. Mark's is process-oriented, not product-defined, and considers the developmental readiness of each child. The Board of Directors establishes school policies which are then approved by the Vestry and thereafter carried out by the Day School Head of School.

**Head of School:** Ms. Becky Simpson

**2022-2023 Board of Directors:** The Rev. Zac Koons, Rector (Ex-Officio Director), Anne Allensworth (President), Mark Monti (Secretary), Dan Carroll (Treasurer) Members: Christine Kempff, Laurin Samuelson, and Amy Winslow.

**2023-2024 Board of Directors:** The Rev. Zac Koons, Rector (Ex-Officio Director), Anne Allensworth (President), Amy Winslow (Vice-President), Mark Monti (Secretary), Dan Carroll (Treasurer) Jim Nolan (Vestry Liaison), Members: Christine Kempff, Sarah Langdon, Elizabeth Borak, Laurel Kelly, and Andrea Michaels

**Current Staff Members:**

Lead Teachers: Mayra Alvarez, Melissa Browning, Aileen Cox, Kiki Grimes, Valerie Hartle, Victoria Houtman, Veronica Wade.

Assistant Teachers: Kimbree Gordon, Kiki Grimes, Beth Hodgson, Joni Rosetta, Laura Richard, Lucia Zamarron, Fern Rodriguez

Floating Teacher: Jessica Crawford

Special Area Teacher: Sybi Ward–Music

**Administration:**

Andrea Sevey– Office Manager

Kelly Vande Streek – Finance Manager,

Becky Simpson – Head of School







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