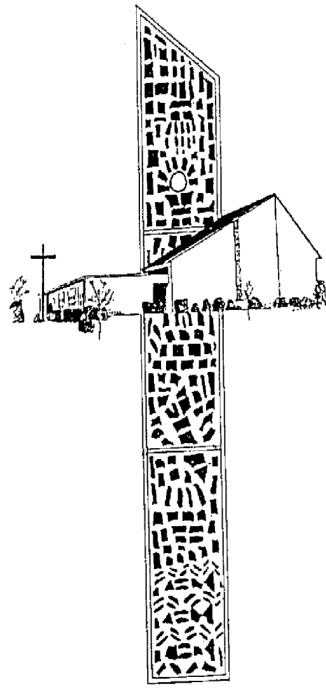


# *St. Mark's Lutheran Church* *2015* *Annual Report*



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Pastor Peter S. Bredlau

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**CONGREGATIONAL ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES**  
**October 11, 2015**

The annual congregational meeting was held in the Church following the 10:30 am worship service on October 11, 2015.

Following a prayer by Pastor Peter, the meeting was called to order at 11:38 am by Peter Christian.

**Council Nominations and Vote: Peter Christian**

Regina Sand-Corl was nominated to be a member of council. No nominations were taken from the floor. Peter Christian made a motion to accept Regina, Seconded by Amy Cygan. The motion passed unanimously.

Jennifer Sletvold made a motion to leave nominations open for another 60 days to allow others to consider joining council. Seconded by Jim Ebersole. Motion passed unanimously.

**Recognition: Sharon Christian**

Sharon Christian recognized Pat Peters for her hard work as Financial Secretary. Sandy Bruder was recognized for her hard work in the church.

**Financial Review: Peter Christian**

Last year's budget numbers (2014) showed the following.

- \$112,000 in income
- \$130,000 in expenses
- \$21,000 deficit

Currently, this year's budget (2015) is showing:

- \$108,000 in income
- \$121,000 in expenses
- Deficit is the same. Projected deficit for 2015 is \$28,000.

**Budget Presentation: Sharon Christian**

The following were asked to leave the church for the budget conversation: Pastor Peter, Joanne Fekete, Rich Evans and Beth Faulstick. Summaries of the 2016 budget were passed out to present congregation. Sharon reviewed the budget with the congregation.

After reviewing the budget, there was a discussion open on the floor regarding 2016 salaries. Sharon Christian made a motion to approve the budget without the raises. This motion was seconded by Barry Mizack. Motion did not pass due to number of votes. Discussion followed. Pat Peters made a motion to approve half of the proposed salary increase. No second. Proposal did not go for vote. Sandy Bruder made a motion to approve the full budget as written for 2016. This was seconded by John Szabo. The budget was approved by a majority of the congregation.

**2016 Council Changes: Peter Christian**

The following are leaving council at the end of 2015: Peter Christian, Jennifer Sletvold

(already resigned), Tom Cox. John Towle and Dawn Seyfried will be leaving when their terms are up in March.

**Capital Accounts: Peter Christian**

Investments are decreasing due to the capital improvements to the church. Please consider giving to the Capital Campaign.

**Closing:**

Motion to Adjourn at approximately 12:14 pm by Jennifer Sletvold and seconded by John Szabo.

Respectfully submitted,  
*Michelle Schlack, Council Secretary*

**CONGREGATIONAL MEETING  
November 22, 2015**

A Congregational Meeting was called by Council President, Peter Christian, on November 22, 2015 at 11:25am for the purpose of nominating members to council for 3 year terms.

Peter Christian nominated Cheyenne Bennett and Greg Keyock to 3 year Council Terms. The motion was seconded by John Szabo. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,  
*Michelle Schlack, Council Secretary*

**ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PASTOR**

The people of St. Mark's grew in 2015, in a number of ways. Ten new members were welcomed to our fellowship. We were delighted to have three baptisms, and welcome a new staff person, Worship Accompanist Beth Faulstick. Average worship attendance was steady at 98, the same as 2014.

St. Mark's has continued to be generous to outside ministries, giving significant gifts to the North-eastern PA Synod, Lutheran Congregational Services, Mission and Specials. The Tree of Hope and periodic food drives are other signs of generosity.

Our youth had a strong year, attending Bear Creek Camp, the annual Mission Trip (this year to West Virginia), Vacation Bible School, collecting clothing for homeless men and women, and hosting many fundraising events.

Renovations happened to the building and grounds. New windows were installed, new carpet and tile in the sanctuary and hallway rooms, paint brightened the rooms, hallways, narthex, and sanctuary, new curtains were added around the building, and a new duct was installed in the sanctuary (which involved sealing the previous in-floor duct system. Outside, a number of trees were cut to create space for the remaining trees. Thanks to the *many people* who made these projects possible, especially Peter & Sharon Christian, Amy Cygan, Jim Ebersole, Ron Ritchie, and Gene Heft.

We have reduced the deficit through lowering costs and increased giving, including the Capital Campaign for the renovations, but our giving is not keeping pace with our projected future needs. Since we have taken money from the endowments to pay for much of the recent building work and the market struggled in 2015, our return on the investments has been proportionally lower. This means we are losing momentum despite our increased membership and overall giving. A Development program begins in 2016, but that will take some months to gain the necessary momentum to offset funding gaps.

Our priority for 2016 is to decide how our congregation will address the needs of our neighborhood and members in the 21st century - what mission we want to undertake, who and what we want to support, and what is sustainable at the level of engagement that we have. We must give the Church Council a clear picture of our shared priorities so that our resources can be focused on those things. We cannot do everything, not even everything that we might like to do. However, with prayerful and thoughtful consideration, we can put Jesus' ministry at St. Mark's on solid ground for years to come.

*Pastor Peter Bredlau*

## **CONGREGATIONAL STATISTICAL REPORT FOR 2015**

### **BAPTISMS (3)**

Graeme Shilanskas, August 16  
Gabriella Cox, August 23  
Aubree Lynn, August 30

### **WEDDINGS (1)**

Non-members Matthew Walter & Jessie Buddock

### **FUNERALS (3)**

Members: Donna Stauffer, Lea A. DeWalt, Charles H. "Bud" Berge  
Non-members: Krystyn Ortwein

### **CONFIRMANDS (8):**

Mitchell Bast, Peter Bast, Shane Deacon, Jami Ebersole, Joseph Fekete, Nicholas George, Austin Gutekunst, Robert "Bobby" Schlack

### **FIRST COMMUNION (5):**

Tyler Schlack, Gavin Monahan, Emma Porter, Caden Porter, Sarah Gill

### **MEMBERS RECEIVED: (10)**

Sherry Higgins, Rev. Charles Miller, Cynthia Cavanaugh, Kimberly Shearer, Joan Shearer-Miller, Sue Gafford, Neal Gafford, Michael Flynn, Tushanna Flynn, and Peyton Flynn

### **MEMBERS REMOVED: (27)**

DEATH: 3 (Donna Stauffer, Bud Berge, Lea DeWalt)

REQUEST: 0

TRANSFER: 6 (Ella May Shaffer, David Knotts, Rev. Sandy Birchmeier, Ted Birchmeier, Rocco Iachini, Nancy Iachini)

COUNCIL ACTION: 18 (Lauren Buck, Laura Camus, Jason Camus, Michael Swinger, Paula San-

chez, Catherine Rabenold, Caden Rabenold, Douglas Haines, Jill Haines, Hailey Hanes, Larry Korpics, Denise Korpics, Elizabeth Korpics, Gene Mease, Pat Mease, Chuck Satterlee, Chris Satterlee, Luke Satterlee)

## **CONGREGATIONAL RECORD AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2015**

**Baptized Members: 274**

**Confirmed Members: 220**

**Average Worship Attendance: 98**

## **ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CHURCH COUNCIL**

2015 continued to be an extremely busy and productive year for Church Council. For the year we accomplished the following:

### **Committees**

The Property committee was divided into 2 committees; Facilities and Maintenance. Amy Cygan and Peter Christian are heading the Facilities Committee which is responsible for all capital improvements and maintenance inside the building. Jim Ebersole and Gene Heft are heading the Maintenance Committee which deals with all property related issues and activities throughout the outside property.

Stewardship has been revamped and is moving towards a 3 pronged development model:

1. Development of Relationships. We will deepen and broaden relationships so we are more comfortable talking about money.
2. Planned Giving. This is an untapped opportunity at St. Mark's.
3. Events. We need to do a better job at building relationships. Pastor is looking to segment specific events to work on development.

### **Personnel**

Tammy Van Fleet assumed the role of Treasurer starting in January.

Maureen Reph assumed the role of Financial Secretary in February.

New job descriptions were completed and instituted for both the Treasurer and Financial Secretary. Replacement of our organist took some twists and turns. Initially, Stephanie Shelton was hired, but after a month she resigned. Beth Faulstick was then hired and began in August. She has been a welcome addition to our church.

The organist position has now been re-titled as Worship Accompanist.

Richard Evans passed his probationary period and became our permanent sexton.

Both Jennifer Sletvold and Michelle Schlack resigned from Personnel Committee after a very productive, but difficult year. We thank them for their service and ask that anyone interested in serving on Personnel, please see Pr. Peter.

### **Congregational Meetings**

Three congregational meetings were held in 2015. The first was held in April. At this meeting, com-

mittee reports were issued. We also announced our Capital Campaign that will span 4 years and will require \$300,000 in expenses to cover items such as new HVAC ducting, renovations to the floors in the church, offices and meeting rooms, new windows, revamped bathrooms, a revamped kitchen and a resurfaced parking lot. The congregation was asked to support \$150,000 through special contributions and the remainder is to come from our investment account.

The second congregational meeting was held in July to update the congregation on our General Expenses budget and spending. At that time we were slightly below our giving from 2014 but our expenses were also less. So, our deficit was in line with that of 2014 for the first half of the year.

The third meeting was held in October. At this meeting, the budget was presented and approved. We also elected Regina Sands Corl to a 3 year term as a Council member. Her term begins in January 2106. With 6 members leaving Council, 5 spots remained to be filled. It was agreed to leave nominations open for another 60 days to see if other members would step forward to serve.

A special meeting was held in November to elect 2 additional members, Cheyenne Bennett and Greg Keyock to Council. They were elected to 3 year terms and will start service in January 2016.

### **Financial**

As mentioned previously, a 4 year capital campaign was started to do necessary work on the facility. Commitments to the campaign are at \$83,000, some \$67,000 short of our goal. Council will decide if all work gets completed utilizing investment funds to make up the difference or if certain projects are delayed or canceled.

The 5 year plan to eliminate the General Fund deficit has leveled off. Results throughout 2015 indicate that we are at the same point as we were in 2014 and will run approximately a \$30,000 deficit for the year.

Certification of the Financial Audit of Congregation Records were updated for the synod and signed by Peter Christian and Pastor Peter.

The Gift Receipt & Disbursement Policy has been updated. It now defines gifts and what we will accept.

### **Safe Church Policy**

The Safe Church Policy has been updated. Christian Ed has added wording encouraging parents to immunize their children. The state has also written a procedure for mandatory reporting. The link will be in the policy.

Sharon Christian led Red Cross training and certified a dozen congregation members in Adult and Child First Aid/CPR/AED and we purchased a Philips OnSite AED through the Red Cross in in Feb. / Mach.

### **Use of Church**

Due a few issues with some requests for use of the building, a new Building Usage Agreement was developed and approved and includes the following stipulations for building usage:

- \$75 Usage Fee
- \$150 Refundable Deposit

## \$100,000 Liability Policy

The church will only be available for rental to members.

### **Capital Improvements**

A number of improvements were made to the facility in 2015 under the new capital campaign. These included:

- Replacement of all windows throughout the parish building, including the foyers, parish hall, offices, choir room and nursery. The new windows are energy efficient and have proper safety guards in the foyer areas.
- Replacement of the ducting in the church which was deteriorating and had some asbestos issues.
- Replacement of flooring in the church, rear foyer, offices, choir room and nursery.
- Painting of the front and rear foyers, the hallway by the offices and meeting rooms, the offices, nursery and choir room. Also painted all of the trim in the parish hall.
- Replaced all of the lighting in the church with LED bulbs. All lighting is now functional in the church.
- Replaced all of the toilets in the bathrooms.
- Replaced all of the window treatments in the parish hall, offices, nursery and choir room.
- Removed extraneous furniture from the rooms and hallways.
- Put crash bars on 3 doors in the parish hall and boiler room.

### **2015 Council members:**

*Peter Christian\*, Jennifer Sletvold\*\*, Michelle Schlack, Amy Cygan\*, Tom Cox\*, Barry Mizack\*, Dawn Seyfried, Jim Ebersole, John Towle and Pastor Peter*

\*Left Council in December 2015

\*\*Left Council in August 2015

## **ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MUSIC DIRECTOR**

**Worship Music:** David Knotts retired at the end of 2014, so we started the year without an organist on staff. Patrick Sandt was hired to record hymns and Dave's liturgy recordings were used (thank you, organ "button pushers!). Live music was provided during distribution of communion at the 10:30 AM service. Volunteer musicians from the congregation also provided music during distribution of Communion, and other parts of the service. Preludes and postludes as well as the hymn of the day were omitted during the initial interim period.

With the Personnel Committee I was included the interview process for finding a musician to play piano and organ. We decided on the new title of Worship Accompanist to better reflect the spirit of the job function. Stephanie Shelton was hired and began on March 15, but resigned on April 8, so we were again in need of a musician.

I made arrangements of our liturgical setting to make them playable on guitar to move away from using pre-recorded music. I played the hymns for the 8:15 AM services and many of the 10:30 AM services after Easter. Thank you to Lynne Berger, Joe Trovato, and Jay Trovato who played all or a part of our worship services in the periods when we did not have a staff musician and to Carla



Snook, Martina Cox, and Joe Fekete for the times they played along with me.

Beth Faulstick was hired as Worship Accompanist in May, but could not begin playing for weekly worship until July. She has brought a lot of enthusiasm to the music ministry, and introduced us to the Marimba for a worship service. She began playing piano accompaniment for St. Mark's Singers and is a great help in teaching parts. She also played duets with me on her violin and provided percussion. I filled in on a few Sundays when she had previous commitments.

I purchased an arrangement of Setting 8 with memorial money from Jane Larzelere (mother of Jane Wachinski; this fund was set aside for the music ministry). This setting was taught and used for the 9:30 AM summer services and allowed me to play soprano recorder with the accompaniment. I also purchased a book of instrumental accompaniment for hymns from the same memorial; this music allowed for a brass ensemble and trumpet duet for our Christmas Eve services, which included a total of six musicians.

I could not have imagined when I began leading the music ministry over ten years ago that I could possibly play an entire traditional worship service on guitar. Thank you all for your support and kind comments throughout the transition. It has been a blessing to have this opportunity to lead worship music at St. Mark's.

**Children:** The children had four opportunities to sing in worship in 2015. They sang "Bigger Fish" for worship in January; sang at beginning of Palm Sunday (a recording of this made its way to our web page); we tried a song for Pentecost along with St. Mark's Singers; and for the December 20<sup>th</sup> service, in lieu of a formal Advent/Christmas program. The children seem generally unwilling to sing out when placed in front of the congregation, even though they were provided with recordings of the songs to give them extra time to practice at home (thank you to Geof Fekete for engineering).

Since many of the children have been learning to play instruments at school, I arranged hymns for our band students to play during our Sunday school music time in the spring; they played for special music in August, and more also participated with their instruments for Christmas Eve.

We were overflowing with musicians for VBS this year! Thanks to Beth Faulstick, Danielle DuBois, Geof Fekete, and Stephen McElroy for playing in the band, as well as Tori Bast, Sara Ebersole and Camille Gutekunst for leading motions, and Martina Cox for her help. I had a great time playing the songs for the kids and hope that the music was memorable for them.

**St. Mark's Singers:** We began year with no accompanist, so I continued with songs to which I could accompany on guitar, and helped teach with parts with my limited ability to play piano, and also received help from Joe Trovato. Thank you to all the singers who hung in there during this transition. Beth Faulstick stepped in as accompanist in the fall, providing recordings for evenings she could not attend rehearsals. The rehearsal time was moved to 7:15 PM to accommodate her schedule.

**Sound System:** The amplifier of our sound system (the box that sits near the organ) that had been failing was replaced during our renovation project. The floor monitor speaker also had a horn replaced. Thank you to Rich Evans for working to diagnose and correct problems until the work was done by Dave Phillips Music and Sound. Thank you also to Tom Walters who coordinated weekly attendants, and to everyone who attended the sound board.

**Other:** I offered guitar classes again over the Summer with average response; all proceeds went to St. Mark's. I provided some music for the Advent Event in November, and accompanied the Youth Group's caroling at Kirkland Village in December.

Thank you to all the adult and youth musicians and singers who participated in the music ministry over the past year!

Respectfully submitted,  
*Joanne Fekete*, Music Director

### **WORSHIP & MUSIC COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT**

Worship and Music is an active committee with the following members in 2015: Kari Ebersole, Beth Faulstick, Joanne Fekete, Sharon Frankenfield, John Szabo, Tom Walters, and Pastor Peter. We are currently without a Council representative, and will miss the input from Tom Cox. Our main objective is reviewing all aspects of worship that fall under the responsibility the committee, and we invite anyone with questions about the way things are done, or with ideas on how things might be improved or enhanced, to speak with anyone on the committee. Better yet, we encourage anyone to come to a committee meeting, and/or join the committee.

Some of the highlights of the past year are:

- Worship Planning was reabsorbed into Worship & Music after the April meeting.
- Beth Faulstick was hired as our new worship accompanist starting in July and agreed to play piano for St. Mark's Singers, so we again have a piano accompanist. Joanne continues to find the best anthems for our small (but mighty) group of singers, and her patience with us is commendable! New singers are always welcomed—consider joining us!
- We continue to be blessed with so many talented members who share their talents thru special music.
- Joanne introduced some parts of Setting 8, a liturgy that we had not used previously and we used this setting for the entire summer. Responsive reading of Psalms was also returned to the service.

We encourage members of the congregation to get involved in worship by signing up to be a Servant of God (see the list of possibilities in the Newsletter) including sponsoring a variety of things used to enhance both worship and the worship life at St. Mark's.

In God's name,  
*Sharon Frankenfield*, Committee Chair

### **FINANCE COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT**

The General operating expenses for 2015 were \$175,325.87 and the income was \$149,814.82 with deficit spending of \$25,511.05. This was an improvement over the 2014 by decreasing the deficit by \$2752.

<u>Year to Date Income</u>	<u>Year to Date Expenses</u>	<u>General Fund Balance</u>
2015        \$149,815	\$175,326	\$25,511
2014        \$146,021	\$174,284	\$28,263
Increase income \$3794	Increase expenses \$1042	Decrease in deficit \$2752

A four year pledge drive was launched to raise \$300,000 for building improvements. The goal was to raise \$37,500 each year from the congregation with matching funds to come from our Capital account. The fund began with a balance of \$24,287 carried over from the 2014 campaign and use of \$19,000 from the Memorial account. The congregation kindly contributed \$22,641. A total of \$97,837 was spent on new windows, carpeting, flooring, painting, ducting and many other improvements. Investment funds were used to cover the \$50,909 balance. Some projects were moved up due to pressing health concerns so we've spent more than we've taken in. Improvements continue with the material behind the altar to be replaced and the bathrooms needing to be remodeled to make them more welcoming and useful for all people, according to ADA standards.

St. Mark's transferred the checking account to Lafayette Ambassador bank from Bank of America. There had been increases in fees and Lafayette offered better location and services. The committee also redesigned the offering envelopes to make it easier to designate their contributions, streamline recording process, decrease cost of envelopes and cut down on the number of envelopes each member receives.

The congregation was very generous in 2015, giving donations to food banks, social service groups, local fire companies, rescue missions, youth activities, Special Olympics to name a few:

Special Benevolences	\$1344
Mission Benevolences	\$1658
Synod Benevolence	\$8250
Lutheran Congregation	
Services	\$1100
Miscellaneous Outreach*	\$2200
<u>    Total</u>	\$14,552

\*(ELCA Missionary Sponsorship, Bear Creek Camp Scholarships)

Senior and Junior Youth funds, Memorial and Building funds are being properly recorded and accounted for better tracking purposes. Thank you to the committee members: John Towle, Maureen Reph, Pastor Peter, Tammy Van Fleet and help from Peter Christian for their dedication and time in overseeing the finances of St. Mark's in 2015.

Respectfully submitted,  
*Sharon Christian*, Finance Committee Chairperson

### **STEWARDSHIP/DEVELOPMENT ANNUAL REPORT**

2015 saw a re-start of Stewardship/Development efforts. A three-fold approach is being implemented: Personal Visits, Planned Giving, and Events focused on Development of time, talent, treasure, temple, and testimony. To date, two church members have agreed to be trained for educational home visits; more members are needed to make this process a success.

Stewardship is taking on the name Development because St. Mark's seeks to develop stewards in a variety of ways, rather than just ask for financial gifts once or twice a year. Envelopes for 2016 have been re-designed and online giving has been regularly promoted. Part of

this process will be making outside professionals available to do financial planning and long-term gift planning.

An addition to the efforts this year is the beginning of a Capital Campaign to fund current and future building projects. Gifts are being made, but there is still room for additional donors.

It is important for St. Mark's to receive gifts of many kinds, and hopefully our members will remain motivated to share generously.

*Pr. Peter Bredlau*

## **CHRISTIAN EDUCATION COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT**

### **January to September:**

The Christian Education Committee is involved in and supports the following:

- Children's Sunday School
- Confirmation Class
- Adult Sunday school
- Adult Bible Study
- Support and assist with the Advent Program
- We whole-heartedly support Vacation Bible School but it is primarily run by a talented group of dedicated volunteers.

Our Children's Sunday school meets from 9:15 to 10:15 Sundays from September through May. The 2014-15 session used purchased curriculum by Lois Keiffer. The students are signed in and out in the Sanctuary where we begin and end our classes. Joanne provides the music ministry to the students each week. We have tried to incorporate some technology into the program in the form of videos to reinforce the stories.

Discussion began in January regarding new unified Sunday school curriculum. It was the desire of the committee that curriculum follow the Revised Common Lectionary. Committee members were given websites to research to determine the curriculum that would work best for St. Mark's. We accepted a trial offer from "Right Now Media" (similar to NetFlix but drawing from over 6000 religious sources). It was determined that it would not fit our needs as a replacement for Sunday school curriculum. In April we began seriously discussing "Seasons of the Spirit" all age-group curriculum.

Four teachers stated they would not be returning in September so we also began a drive to find replacements plus more to have true team teaching. This had been our plan all along but due to lack of commitment the program fell to 5 teachers. It was only possible due to the assistance of some of our youth. By June, with only four volunteers, with much sadness and disappointment this committee began looking into Christian Education alternatives to a 9:15 in church Sunday school. The decision was made to have "take home envelopes" with a month's worth of materials and activity ideas for the students to work on with their parents; these would follow the Revised Common Lectionary and could be used for different ages. In September Pastor decided that 9:15 in church SS for K-6 grade would take place using "All-In-One" SS curriculum.

Eight students were confirmed on Pentecost, May 24. Confirmation class began again in September with 2 returning and 2 new students.

Adult Sunday school is led/coordinated by Donna Berge using the Bible Readings printed in the bulletin for discussion, average attendance is 12.

An 8 week Bible Study, "Making Sense of Scripture" by David Lose began in the fall during the Sunday school hour and was led by Jennifer Sletvold

There is an 11:00AM Thursday Bible study led by Pastor and a Monday evening Bible study, "Exploring Passages of the Bible," led by Greg Keyock

In January a Bible Study for women began facilitated by Eileen Hein, Beth Moore's study *David: Seeking A Heart Like His*.

VBS (Vacation Bible School) 2015 was held August 3-7, from 6:00 PM to 8:30 PM. The program for 2015 was Gospel Light's "Son Spark Labs."

We, in conjunction with Council, have completed the needed updates/revisions of our Safe Church protocols for 2015 and will hold training for our volunteers in the new aspects of the Policy.

The Christian Ed committee is without a Chairperson since September and is also in need of a Sunday school Coordinator. Please consider being a part of this very important ministry

*Lea Hanchick*

### **October through December:**

In the fall Sunday school began again along with two adult educational opportunities, confirmation, and a Senior High class. In addition we continued the Monday evening and Thursday morning Bible studies.

The Committee's work is presently in transition and is seeking a Sunday School Coordinator.

### **Vacation Bible School 2015**

Thank you to all who participated in any way with Son Sparks Lab VBS. Total enrollment (ages 3-6<sup>th</sup> grade plus adults) was 37. Volunteers totaled 32 plus those additional persons who donated food, etc.

The five sessions were:

God's Plan: 2 Make Us!

God's Plan: 2 Be with Us!

God's Plan: 4 Us 2 Know Him!

God's Plan: 2 Save Us!

God's Plan 2 Love Us 4-ever!

A full week of learning, music, food, experiments, and fun was had by all.

VBS Coordinators,

*Donna Berge, Stacie Ickes, & Cassandra Spence*

## **SOCIAL MINISTRY ANNUAL REPORT**

The Social Ministry Committee has been led by Sue Willever and Lea Hanchick but is made up of the entire congregation of St. Mark's. Its main duties have been maintaining stock in the food pantry, holiday food baskets, organizing and delivering the items collected for the Ingathering, and the Tree of Hope projects for the year.

We are grateful to our congregation members, the Cub/Boy Scouts, and the Bethlehem Township Lions Club for keeping our pantry well stocked.

There have been some changes to our Food Pantry usage. We are still requesting shelf stable items. We will still be a drop off point for the Scouting for Food project. We will not have any person that comes for food leave hungry but most will be directed to St. Matthew's for their future needs. We will share our abundance with St. Matthew's to be sure to do the most good. We are still providing a few Holiday Food Baskets. If there is a need please contact Pastor.

We are still active in the Bethlehem Area Backpack Pals Program. This program combats hunger in our own community. We collect non-perishable food items for backpacks that are distributed to children in need in the Bethlehem Area School District over long holiday weekends. There is a green container in the Narthex with a list of items to be collected.

Easter Food Baskets were provided for 4 families.

St. Mark's Ingathering items for 2015 were 100 cans of shaving cream and 100 disposable razors. We once again missed our quota.

The Tree of Hope Craft Night was held in November. 72 ornaments were made by our talented craft persons to be tagged with gift requests from The Sixth St. Shelter and Northampton County Children and Youth.

We donated a van full of food to St. Matthew's for their pantry in order to make room for the Scouts to replenish our stock.

Thanksgiving baskets were provided to 4 families.

We provided Christmas food baskets for five families and the Sixth St Shelter.

As of January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016 Sue and Lea "retired." This is a wonderful ministry and we hope someone will take it over. Until that time, there will still be a food pantry and back pack pal collection.

*Sue Willever & Lea Hanchick*

## **EVANGELISM COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT**

Ephesians 4:2-3 "Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace."

Committee members were Donna Berge, Cheryl Coulter, Pat Peters, and Pastor Peter. Contributors throughout 2015 were members of St. Mark's family of believers who gave of their time, talent, and

treasures that the following outreach, services, and events could take place:

- Sunday morning greeters
- Monthly prayer meetings in members' homes
- Monthly worship services at Manor Care
- Annual worship service at Gracedale
- Participation in Bethlehem Area Crop Walk
- Serving at homeless shelters
- Maintaining the church sign
- New members' orientation meetings
- New members' reception
- Fastnacht social & talent show
- Community Yard Sale on the church grounds
- Community Safe Trick-or-Treat
- Ministering to one another and spreading the good news in various ways throughout their daily lives
- Supporting those organizations and worshipers who share space in our building
- Assisting in keeping our building and grounds clean, updated, and welcoming

May we seize every opportunity to share the Good News whenever and wherever possible.

In Christian unity,  
*Donna Berge*

### **FACILITIES COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT**

A number of improvements were made to the facility in 2015 under the new capital campaign. These included:

- Replacement of all windows throughout the parish building, including the foyers, parish hall, offices, choir room and nursery. The new windows are energy efficient and have proper safety guards in the foyer areas.
- Replacement of the ducting in the church which was deteriorating and had some asbestos issues.
- Replacement of flooring in the church, rear foyer, offices, choir room and nursery.
- Painting of the front and rear foyers, the hallway by the offices and meeting rooms, the offices, nursery and choir room. Also painted all of the trim in the parish hall.
- Replaced all of the lighting in the church with LED bulbs. All lighting is now functional in the church.
- Replaced all of the toilets in the bathrooms.
- Replaced all of the window treatments in the parish hall, offices, nursery and choir room.
- Removed extraneous furniture from the rooms and hallways.
- All red entrance doors and the trim around them were repainted.
- Put crash bars on 3 doors in the parish hall and boiler room.

Plans for 2016 include:

- Putting the church lights on a dimmer switch.
- Replacing the curtain behind the altar.

- Redoing the men's and ladies bathrooms to modernize them and make them handicap accessible.

**Committee members:** *Peter Christian, Amy Cygan and Pastor Peter*

## **YOUTH MINISTRY ANNUAL REPORT**

January through April, the youth held 3 pancake breakfasts and a wonderful Italian Night dinner (thank you Diana & Paul Docteroff for providing the meal!). In between all the meals, the youth met regularly for some fun and fellowship, and held a 30 hour hunger fast, and a mini winter retreat at Bear Creek. In addition the youth fed the homeless women at Christ UCC Church.

During May, we had a Sundae Sunday as our last fundraiser for the Mission trip, and combined youth group/Confirmation picnic at the George's house in celebration of 7 of our youth getting confirmed! In June we headed to West Virginia for the annual Mission Trip. There was a total of 14 youth on the trip this year, and the first time for 2 of the youth! It was a wonderful week of growing emotionally, bonding with Jesus, helping out a wonderful community and meeting new people.

Normally the youth takes a break over the July and August months, but we met a couple times during the summer, and started bonding with the incoming 7<sup>th</sup> graders. We had a swim party at the George's in July, and began our pancake breakfasts in August.

September started the new group, we had 2 new people joined and 3 left, so we remain at 14 St Mark's youth and a couple of friends that come throughout the year. October the youth hosted another kid's night in addition to the chili sale. We brought in close to \$700 for the month to put towards the mission trip – thanks to those who made the chili for us! The George's housed a cookout once again when the church was unavailable during floor replacement. Some of the youth also assisted with the Safe Trick or Treat event. November we held another pancake breakfast and another kid's night. December we had a Bake Sale right before the holidays and went caroling at Kirkland Village – thanks to Joanne for leading us and playing the guitar! We also assisted a service at Luther Crest in Allentown, and had our Christmas Party at the Gutekunst residence (thank you Angie & Mark!).

Throughout the year the youth met at least twice a month for some food, fun, and fellowship in addition to performing some good service work within our community and in West Virginia. We have a great group of youth who want to continue to grow their relationship with God and with each other. This group really enjoys hanging out together and spends a lot of time together even when there aren't scheduled meetings. It is refreshing to see the strong Christ-like bonds form between them. I want to thank all the parents for being so accommodating to the youth and being flexible with the meetings, and housing the gang when there aren't meetings scheduled at church. As a parent it is very reassuring knowing and feeling safe about where and who our kids are hanging out with.

*Kari Ebersole*

## **JUNIOR YOUTH GROUP ANNUAL REPORT**

Anyone in grades 4-6 is welcome to join the Junior Youth Group. Donna Berge, Rhonda George, and Jennifer Rubery served as advisors. Meetings are held on the last Sunday of the month from



5:30 – 7:00 PM. They begin with devotions and a meal, followed by discussion, planning, and fun.

Attendance is not limited to St. Mark's members. We're delighted that many friends within this age group have been invited and joined our meetings and functions.

Selling Bon-Ton coupon booklets semi-annually as a fund-raiser allows the group to partake in all their outreach and activities. Some of the 2015 activities included:

- Serving as Sunday morning greeters and ushers
- Sponsoring children's bulletins
- Spearheading the Buck-a-Chick project, raising funds to purchase chicks through ELCA World Hunger, thus providing families in need with eggs to eat and sell at market
- Sponsoring a book exchange at St. Mark's
- Hosting a covered dish/board game night
- Holding a Basket of Promise Campaign to collect and assemble personal care kits to provide basic sanitary and hygiene items for families coping with some of life's most difficult situations
- Handing out Mother's Day & Father's Day gifts
- Going miniature golfing
- Having a swim party and doggie roast
- Attending Sight and Sound to see "Joseph"
- Setting up and manning an Alex's Lemonade Stand to aid in the fight against childhood cancer
- Viewing and discussing the DVD movie "A Smile as Big as the Moon"
- Collecting hats, scarves and gloves for the homeless and delivering them and a meal during their visit to a homeless shelter
- Going Christmas shopping for items selected from the Tree of Hope for those in need
- Caroling, playing instruments and delivering gifts to our shut-ins

We attempt to have an active group dedicated to providing a balance of Christian learning, service, outreach, fun, and fellowship.

With thanks to all the parents and members of St. Mark's in appreciation of your support as we all grow together in Christ.

*Donna Berge*

## **PERSONNEL COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT**

### **Personnel**

Tammy Van Fleet assumed the role of Treasurer starting in January.

Maureen Reph assumed the role of Financial Secretary in February.

New job descriptions were completed and instituted for both the Treasurer and Financial Secretary. Replacement of our organist took some twists and turns. Initially, Stephanie Shelton was hired, but after a month she resigned. Beth Faulstick was then hired and began in July. She has been a welcome addition to our church.

The organist position has now been re-titled as Worship Accompanist.

Richard Evans passed his probationary period and became our permanent sexton.

Both Jennifer Sletvold and Michelle Schlack resigned from Personnel Committee after a very productive, but difficult year. We thank them for their service and ask that anyone interested in serving on Personnel, please see Pr. Peter.

*Michelle Schlack, Personnel Committee*

### **HOSPITALITY COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT**

The Hospitality Committee had a successful year.

We worked with Christian Ed, Worship & Music, Evangelism, and Youth Group to purchase any supplies needed for different events.

The St. Mark's Family came together to celebrate Donna Stauffer and Charles "Bud" Berge hosting luncheons following the funeral services.

Supply kits for bodily fluid cleanup were purchased and are located as follows: 1) nursery and 2) kitchen. For 2016, we will purchase a first aid kit and will look to have it mounted in the kitchen area.

We were under budget for 2015 and lowered our budget for 2016 based on the results of the current year for supplies needed. Several events normally on the church calendar were also not held this year and this was taken into consideration when budgeting for the new year.

We look forward to 2016 and working with all the committees once again.

Respectfully submitted,

*Regina Sands-Corl*

### **INVESTMENT COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT**

2015 was a mixed affair for our investments. A guest on CNBC called this year a "meat grinder." The S&P had wide swings but closed just about flat on the year. The Dow was down 2.2%. A handful of stocks called FANG (FANG is Facebook, Amazon, Netflix and Google) helped the S&P to only be down .7%. Even in this rough environment 77% of mutual fund managers failed to meet their benchmark. Pipelines are down 40%. Berkshire Hathaway down 11%. A comparison of where we started versus where we wound up is as follows:

#### **Capital Account**

Start of year: \$409,565.75                      End of year: \$292,933

Estimated Annual Income: \$30,000

We started the year with \$409,565. We withdrew a net amount of \$93,915 mostly in the second half to cover capital improvements. To be flat for the year we should have \$315,650. Since we ended with \$292,933 we had a modest increase of \$484 so we are down 5% for the year.

**AT&T Stock holding - \$791.43**

**Memorial Account**

Start of year: \$10,916.00

End of year: \$69.03

\$10,847.00 was taken and used for capital improvements. The remainder is kept in the Memorial account to keep the account open

**Tithing Account**

Start of year: \$11,450.42

End of year: \$9,330.42

\$1,200 was used for camp scholarships and another \$1,000 to support the missionaries in Tanzania leaving the current balance.

**Committee members:**

*Peter Christian, Ron Ritchie, Mario Bordonaro, Bob Schlack, John Towle and Pastor Peter*

**MISSION STATEMENT**

**We**, the members of St. Mark's Evangelical Lutheran Church, are members of the Body of Christ and the priesthood of all believers.

**As** children of the Triune God, we seek to live out our baptismal vows and minister to one another in love.

**Through** Word and Sacrament, we are strengthened and enabled to witness and proclaim the Gospel to all in words and deeds.

**TREASURER'S REPORT**

*(Financial reports follow on next page)*