

Annual Report for 2024

St. Mark's Episcopal Church
Port Royal, South Carolina



January 26, 2025

Our Mission:

St. Mark's is an inclusive fellowship called by God,
through Christ, to love and serve the world.

www.stmarksc.org

St. Mark's Episcopal Church, Port Royal
PO Box 761, Port Royal, SC 29935
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AGENDA
of the
Annual Parish Meeting
St. Mark's Episcopal Church
January 26, 2025

Opening Prayer
Review and Approval of the Minutes of the 2024 Annual Meeting
Senior Warden's Remarks
Introduction of Interim Rector
Introduction of the Candidates for Vestry
Vote for Vestry Members
Treasurer's Report and 2024 Budget
Vote to Accept Budget
Report from the Search Committee
Introduction of Proposed Convention Delegates
Vote to Approve Convention Delegates
Facilities Update
Questions and Comments
Benediction & Adjournment

Cover: This beautiful oyster shell creche was made by St. Mark's member and artist Chris Nietert, who donated it to St. Mark's this year in thanksgiving for Anne Errington and for the 58th anniversary of the Rev. Jack Nietert's ordination. Chris has exhibited her work in the annual Mepkin Abbey Creche Festival for 12 years and has won "best in show" for four of those years. Her creations can be seen in various art galleries in the lowcountry.

Rector

The Very Reverend Roy Tripp

Deacon

The Reverend Ken Kraft

Current Vestry

Cheri Thayer, Senior Warden

Jim Phelps, Junior Warden

Meg Catizone

Jane Frederick

Kathlyn Gray

Nicole Passeggio

James Tetler

Tom Tull

Jim Turk

Lewis Tabb, Treasurer

Cheryl Gaillard, Vestry Clerk

Staff

Julie Petroff, Parish Administrator

Carter Hoyt, Programs Associate

Karen Harmon, Music Director

Glenda Lee Nutting, Director of Christian Formation

Cheryl Gaillard, Bookkeeper

St. Mark's is a parish of the historic Diocese of South Carolina
(The Episcopal Church in South Carolina)
established in 1789. Our Bishop is
the Right Reverend Ruth Woodliff-Stanley.



Minutes

St. Mark's Episcopal Church Annual Meeting

January 21, 2024

A program with meeting agenda and reports was provided to attendees and is attached.

Welcome: The meeting was called to order at 11:18 am.

Opening Prayer: St. Mark's Rector, the Rev. Roy Tripp opened the meeting with a prayer.

Review and Approval of the Minutes of the 2023 Annual Meeting: Roy called for a motion to approve the minutes of the 2023 Annual Meeting. The Minutes were approved with no amendments.

Rector's Remarks: Roy reported that there has been real growth at St. Mark's. There are visitors at most services, and he estimates that about 40% end up joining us. He thanked all those who participate in the life of St Mark's. We are a faith community who needs to be nourished to move forward. Roy thanked Debbie Phelps and Cheryl Gaillard for providing the new Alleluia Easter Banner last year. He encouraged participation as volunteers in assisting those who prepare for services such as acolytes, torchbearers and sacristans.

Senior Warden's Remarks: Cheri Thayer thanked the amazing community who gives of their time and talent to St. Marks and the leadership that came before her as Senior Warden. She also encouraged the congregation to volunteer – ushers are always needed. Cheri introduced Cheryl Gaillard who began her tenure as the Clerk of the Vestry in April 2023. Cheri reported that the Facilities Committee has identified space needs after interviewing ministries. Don Altman is working with a group to take the plans to the next phase. There is a lot going into planning for the future of St. Mark's. Stewardship moved to November this year and has been done a little differently. She would like to see the focus shift to year-round stewardship program including time and talent as well as financial giving. This would include introducing a Skills and Interest Inventory so that people can easily be connected with needs. She is looking forward to a full year ahead and reminded the parish that the best way to honor Roy in his last year with us is to honor the process that has been laid out and to continue to support his ministry with us.

Parish Governance Resolutions: Cheri explained that Barney Forsythe, before he left his position of Senior Warden, challenged the Vestry to be sure that St. Mark's governance documents were in compliance with all Diocesan requirements and appropriate for the parish we are now. Cheri and Nicole Passeggio worked through a long process going from 2 pages to 11, but still true to the original Articles of Association. The proposed bylaws were posted for parish review for a total of 60 days and have been approved by the Chancellor of the Diocese. Cheri thanked all who came forth with suggestions. There were some clarifications made to the documents, as well as some additions, such as an added review of finances, and an added requirement of Directors and Officers insurance. The documents also laid out how committees are formed and work with the Vestry and a slight change to the Vestry election process was made. The Nominating Committee still has a function, but the nominations were opened up to the parish in the fall. Cheri explained the voting qualifications and with no objections made, the parish voted on the three resolutions as one block.

1. Shall the proposed BYLAWS OF ST. MARK'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH, INC. (as approved by the Chancellor of the Diocese on 11/21/23) be adopted to replace the Articles of Association (as approved January 20, 2019)?
2. Shall the Articles of Association (as approved January 11, 2015) be removed from the Articles of Incorporation on file with the Secretary of the State of South Carolina?
3. Shall the Articles of Incorporation on file with the Secretary of State of South Carolina be amended to include the proposed Additional Provisions as required by The Episcopal Church in South Carolina?

Tom Miller made a motion to accept the Parish Governance Resolutions as presented above. The motion was seconded by Jane Frederick. The parish vote was 95 ayes and 0 nays.

Introduction of Candidates for the Vestry : According to the new Bylaws of St. Mark's, Cheri introduced the following candidates, submitted by the Nominating Committee, to each fill a three-year term: Jane Frederick, Tom Tull and Jim Turk.

Vote for Vestry Members : Bob Hydorn made a motion to accept the three candidates presented. Katy Siebels seconded the motion. The nominees were approved unanimously.

Treasurer's Report and 2024 Budget: Treasurer Lewis Tabb reported that we had sufficient funds to cover all expenses including additional staff and programs. Expenses have been well controlled. Lewis noted that a legal expense that occurred in 2023 was not paid until 2024 but that he expects the 2024 budget to break even with additional pledges and giving over the rest of the year. Lewis echoes Cheri's comments about time and talent. St. Mark's could not afford to pay for all the work that the congregation provides. Lewis also reported that the Endowment has now reached \$250,000 and he thanked those who helped make it possible.

Vote to Accept 2024 Budget: Bob Hydorn presented a motion to accept the 2024 Budget as presented. The motion was seconded by Leigh Stone. The 2024 Budget was approved unanimously by the congregation.

Introduction of Proposed Convention Delegates: Roy announced that the 2024 Annual Diocesan Convention will be held on Hilton Head Island on 11/21-23. It will be hosted by All Saint's Church with the Southern Deanery as the general host. Volunteers will be needed to assist during the convention. Cheri proposed nominees and alternates for the convention. Proposed Delegates are Read Clarke, Ramona Fantini, Rick Kroncke and Mary Smith. Proposed alternates are Alice Hydorn, Nicole Passeggio, Lisa Westbrook and Mark Whitehouse.

Vote to Approve Convention Delegates: The nominees were approved unanimously by the congregation.

Questions and Comments

Julie Petroff said that she would like to see a St. Mark's sign out on Ribaut Road and asked if the Vestry could appoint a group to attend a Port Royal Council meeting to ask for a variance for the sign.

Alison Davidow, on behalf of the Diocesan Racial Justice and Reconciliation Commission, promoted Absalom Jones Day at Vorhees College on 2/13 and suggested a carpool to the event.

Rob Cahill thanked Carter Hoyt and Julie Petroff for all they do for St. Mark's.

Patricia Turk reminded us that two important things in life are how we say hello and how we say goodbye. She encouraged us to be mindful of that as we enter Roy's last year with us. She said that through his work, he would leave behind a strong faithful Christian community. The congregation responded with a standing ovation for Roy.

Jim Phelps noted that the Building and Grounds group is always looking for help and to see George Utter, Dave Strange or Jim Phelps to sign up.

James Tetler thanked all who volunteered for the nursery or Sunday School. Contact Glenda Lee Nutting if you would like to volunteer.

Beth Campbell thanked Karen Harmon for her commitment to the music program at St. Mark's.

Bob Hydorn thanked Cheri Thayer for her work as Senior Warden.

Sally Dombay noted that the Congregational Care committee were excited be starting a new Transportation ministry to assist members who need rides to church or doctor appointments.

Tom Miller reminded those receiving Required Minimum Distributions to not forget the church.

Roy thanked Celeste Nalwasky for her dedication to Coffee Hour and T'ZiPi Radonsky and Preston Tripp for their livestream videography work. Volunteers are needed to train as backup for the videographers. Roy also thanks the current Vestry members and Wardens along with the incoming members for their commitment and Liz Devoir for being with him on his journey.

Benediction and Adjournment: Fr. Roy closed with a prayer. The meeting was adjourned at 12:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Cheryl Gaillard, Vestry Clerk

Senior Warden's Report **Submitted by Cheri Thayer**

My report to the congregation last year ended with a promise of a full and exciting year in which we would cherish the Very Reverend Roy Tripp's final year of ministry and honor him by strengthening our commitment to St. Mark's and our mission to be an inclusive fellowship called by God, through Christ, to love and serve the world. Thanks be to God, I believe we did exactly that!

While it was not easy to let Roy go, in true St. Mark's spirit, far more of our focus has been on the positive opportunity that comes with change, evaluating, organizing and planning for our future as we live out our daily mission. All of the reports included tell our amazing story; here are just a few of the highlights.

- In March over 100 parishioners shared their skills, talents and interests in an informal survey the results of which have been a treasure trove of information for the vestry and all of our ministry leaders as we seek to match the talents and interests of individuals with opportunities for fellowship and service.
- Our "Spirits Alive" Ministry Fair celebrating Pentecost on the postcard-perfect rain date combined good old-fashioned fellowship with the chance to learn more about all the ministry opportunities in our parish.
- Your vestry expanded the liaison roles to include newcomers, stewardship and worship to ensure critical areas have the necessary attention. As a result, our traditional newcomers' reception was enhanced with an informational program designed to help them understand the various options for involvement.
- The selection of the Search Committee was likely the most critical task undertaken by the vestry. It was truly a process led by the Holy Spirit and the dedicated members selected continue to demonstrate their worthiness to handle the task entrusted to them. We are blessed by their varied skills and unwavering commitment to St. Mark's.
- Technology challenges led us to improved hardware and internet connection that positively enhances the experience of those who find it necessary to join our worship via livestream.
- Carter Hoyt has spent months working on a new and improved website that will be launched soon in conjunction with posting for our rector position. Stay tuned for more information!
- Continuing the good work initiated several years ago under Don Altman's leadership, Jane and Michael Frederick volunteered to complete the conceptual design for a new facility to be constructed on the Green. The conversations around our search for a new rector continue to inform our efforts toward this goal.
- The Women of Grace is thriving, providing all the women in our parish an expanding variety of opportunities for fellowship, spiritual growth, and service opportunities.

- The capstone event of our good-bye to Roy was an amazing early December celebration of Roy's ministry and the wonderful people of St. Mark's! Thank you to Jane Forsythe and all those who made that happen!

Barbara Anderson has faithfully led our Outreach and Mission Committee for many years. Her heart of gold, commitment to our mission and drive for information has facilitated the good stewardship of the funds entrusted to O&M. She, along with Anne Errington, Judy Utter and Gayle Swann have decided that it is time to make way for new members and we heartily thank them for their dedicated service. Carol and David Whitworth will assume the leadership and continue the good work in 2025.

Jim Phelps is concluding his service on the vestry as junior warden. You only need to look around at our well-maintained building and grounds to know they have been in capable hands for the past three years. He has attended to his responsibilities with skill, care and always a desire to get it right! As a leadership partner and friend, he has given wise and considered counsel whatever the task at hand. Meg Catizone stepped in to fill a short-term vacancy on the vestry, quietly listening and sharing her impactful perspective. Our vestry works well together, not because we all see things the same way, but because we see things differently and respect one another. In that spirit, we look forward to the insights and talents of the new vestry members knowing they will find their own ways to contribute to the life of our parish.

As we begin 2025, I am excited to welcome the Reverend Pam Fahrner as our interim rector. Everything in 2024 has led us to this place and I am confident we are right where God wants us to be. I can't wait to see what God has in store for us!

Search Committee Report

Submitted by Sallie Stone

In April 2024 the vestry chose seven members of St. Mark's to serve on its newly formed Search Committee, their charge to identify and recommend a candidate for the position of the parish's next rector. It was the vestry's intention that, as a group, the seven—Beth Campbell, Shannon Duffy, Liz Esch, Scott Peters, Woody Rutter, Sallie Stone and Jim Turk—be representative of the parish in age, gender, professional and life experience and duration of parish membership. Committee members all were honored and humbled by the sacred trust placed in them.

The Search Committee met in June with the Rev. Cn. Philip Linder, the clergy transition officer for the Diocese of South Carolina, who described in detail the diocesan procedures in place for searching for and calling a rector and the ways in which he could be helpful throughout the process. Next, committee members turned to the essential underpinning of the process: learning from their fellow parishioners how they view St. Mark's, what their aspirations for it are and what they hope its next rector will bring to his or her role here. To that end, the committee engaged Holy Cow! Consulting to develop a comprehensive survey—which an impressive 158 parishioners (125 percent of our average weekly attendance) completed in October—and to interpret its results. To no one's surprise but everyone's delight, Holy Cow! affirmed that St. Mark's is a healthy, happy parish both inclusive and cohesive. Data from the survey and insights from parishioners offered during congregation listening sessions and informal conversations with committee members were foundational to the drafting of the two documents the committee will use to introduce the parish to prospective rector candidates: the parish profile and the Ministry Portfolio for Worshipping Communities, the document required by The Episcopal Church Office of Transition Ministry from parishes seeking a rector. On approval of the documents by vestry and diocese, the committee will post them on national church websites, and its real work—that of candidate recruitment and assessment—will begin.

Though specific details of the rector search during this coming phase must by right remain confidential, we on the Search Committee remain deeply committed to keeping the parish informed of our progress

as much as we are able and, most important, to continuing to listen and to seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit and of our fellow parishioners in our search for “a faithful pastor, who will care for God’s people and equip us for our ministries,” as we say together in prayer each Sunday morning.

Treasurer’s Report

Submitted by Lewis Tabb

Despite the initial uncertainty with Roy’s pending retirement announcement before the start of the year, 2024 was a pretty normal year. Operations were on a regular basis and our revenue and expenses were in line with historical patterns. We continue to be blessed by the faithful support of our members and visitors. There was a shift in revenue toward non-pledge, but the overall revenue was within 1 percent of budget

Operating expenses remain well-controlled and within budget. The judicious management of our resources by our staff and members is reflected in the small operating surplus we were able to run for the year compared to the small loss budgeted.

The pledge campaign for 2025 was successful. The number of pledges was stable, but the amount pledged and the average amount of each pledge increased slightly. We often pick up a couple of new pledges during the year. The pledges received thus far for 2025 provide the resources to continue at the new staff level and add some programs, which are reflected in the budget. The budget reflects a break-even, but it is a rough estimate as we do not know the timing of our new rector’s arriving, and the cost of search and relocation is an educated guess.

Our financial condition continues strong. We have rebuilt our reserves to the level before we acquired, renovated and expanded the sanctuary, and we have no debt. In addition, over the past three years the vestry has been able to transfer a portion of our excess funds to the endowment. The stewardship of Roy, the staff and the vestry makes my job much easier than it could be. We also have been fortunate to have members who contribute above their pledge amounts, thus allowing us to expand our Outreach and Mission, provide flexibility in using the rector’s discretionary fund, and provide for enhanced music opportunities.

During 2024, Donna Altman retired from the position of our bookkeeper. Her assistance in working with me for the initial five years of being your treasurer has been invaluable in my being able to do the job. We are very fortunate that Cheryl Gaillard immediately stepped into the role, and especially that she had prior experience working with our software vendor. This is not a one-person job and I could not have done it without their support, as well as that of Roy and your vestry.

Respectfully submitted,
Lewis Tabb, Treasurer

Budgetary details are included on a separate handout.

St. Mark's Episcopal Church		
Balance Sheet as of December 31, 2024		
Assets		
Current Assets		
Cash & Investments		
Operating Checking Account	\$97,290.51	
Rector's Discretionary Account	\$10,275.14	
Savings Accounts	\$180,947.21	
Total Cash & Investments	\$288,512.86	
Prepaid Expenses		
Prepaid Rent	\$1,700.00	
Total Prepaid Expenses	\$1,700.00	
Total Current Assets		\$290,212.86
Fixed & Capital Assets		
Sanctuary	\$420,995.28	
Total Fixed & Capital Assets		\$420,995.28
Other Assets		
Endowment Accounts	\$285,731.92	
1100 Paris Ave., Port Royal	\$100,105.99	
Post Office Key Deposit	\$5.00	
SCE&G Center Deposit	\$32.01	
Security Deposit 1110 Paris Ave	\$1,200.00	
Total Other Assets		\$387,074.92
Total Assets		\$1,098,283.06
Liabilities		
Current Liabilities		
Pre-paid Pledges	\$25,200.00	
Total Payroll Liabilities	\$6,032.52	
Total Current Liabilities		\$31,232.52
Restricted Funds		
Memorials	\$5,000.00	
Music Program	\$3,809.92	
22165 - Outreach Fund	\$700.00	
Rector's Discretionary Fund	\$2,946.89	
Deacon Discretionary Fund	\$1,000.00	
Total Restricted Funds		\$13,456.81
Total Liabilities		\$44,689.33
Fund Principal		
Equity	\$712,467.82	
Restricted Building Funds	\$50,038.13	
Endowment Equity Funds	\$285,731.92	
Cash Received	\$5,355.86	
Total Fund Principal and Excess Cash Received		\$1,053,593.73
Total Liabilities, Fund Principal, & Restricted Funds		\$1,098,283.06

Endowment and Investment Fund of St. Mark's

Submitted by Jim Phelps and Leigh Stone

With stability in the financial markets, the vestry agreed with the endowment committee's recommendation to open its doors to accepting grant applications for the entire year of 2024. The endowment's goal is to assist St. Mark's with fulfilling its long-term mission. The year also included the planned transition of members, with Leigh Stone becoming chairperson of the committee. Other members of the committee include Marilyn Smith, Teege Culp, James Tetler and Larry White as secretary. Rector Roy Tripp, Treasurer Lewis Tabb, Vestry Liaison Jim Phelps and Senior Warden Cheri Thayer were also included on the committee as non-voting members.

The endowment's investment fund in 2024 rebounded nicely after a rocky 2023. The January 1, 2024, investment fund balance was \$247,269.90 and grew to \$281,852.21 on December 31, 2024. The increased balance included contributions of \$10,199 and investment gains of \$25,183.73 (approximately 9.8%) offset by fees of \$800.48. An additional \$4,329.36 was in the checking account at year-end for a grand total of \$286,181.57. Year-end contributions in the checking account of \$3,015.36 were sent to State Street Global Advisors for investment in early January 2025. State Street is the fund manager, along with the Episcopal Church Foundation (ECF).

Thank you for your support of this worthy cause that will benefit current and future generations. Additional information on the endowment can be found by visiting the "Giving" tab on the St. Mark's website.

Junior Warden's Report

Submitted by Jim Phelps

2024 was a busy year for the church and grounds with activities that included weekly worship services and meetings in the church and center, weddings, hosting community events such as public speakers, weekly gathering for conversation with local officials and community members, Family Promise meal prep and a piano concert by USCB Artistic Director Andy Armstrong.

Many thanks to the Building and Grounds crew members for keeping the church and grounds in great shape. Members include Jim Berry, Dave Catizone, Sam Cooper, Teege Culp, Michael Frederick, Pete Gaillard, Charlie Jones, Rick Kroncke, Debbie and Jim Phelps, John Teter, Dave Strange, Lewis Tabb and Tom Tull. A special thank you to George Utter for keeping the crew scheduled and on mission. These volunteers share their time and energy throughout the year in making us proud of our worship home. As always, we are looking for new volunteers to help in these efforts. No experience required.

Thank you for your support that allows me to serve on your vestry as Junior Warden.

Deacon's Report

Submitted by the Rev. Ken Kraft

A highlight of 2024 was my return to near normal participation in the ministries in both South Carolina and Federal prison jurisdictions. For the first time in the previous two years, I was able to participate in the majority of the gatherings in both the state Ridgeland Kairos Prison Ministries and Episcopal Southern Deanery efforts at the Estill Federal Correctional Institution.

Both facilities are eager to have religious programs back in operation, benefiting not only the inmates but improving the working environments for the correctional staff and chapel activities. In the Ridgeland Correctional Institute, the two highly successful events in April and September raised the number of Kairos graduates by 77 inmates to a total of 240, approximately 20 percent of the total prison population. The warden would like that figure to grow to a stable 30 to 35 percent. To meet that objective, we will need to recruit six new male volunteers for each weekend event this April and October. Bakers can heat up their ovens as the number of cookies will increase also.

The Estill ministry is still looking forward to the change in inmate population from male only to a female majority soon but not yet announced. Our program is headed by Larry Watt and Scott Bester from Denmark, SC, and aided by suggestions from a cadre of inmates as to their wishes on subject matter. Greatly aiding the success of the program was the switch from top down choices to bottom up desires. As soon as the announced decision of the female arrival is made, there will be a need for female volunteers to join the "Hearts and Minds" program as mentors. Ladies from the church, be prepared. There will be necessary training and background checks that will precede participation.

Finally, some have asked about the Allendale church future. While I wish there could be a definitive answer, the Bishop is moving toward a study of the locale for alternative uses and a possible return to regular services. I will know more soon, hopefully.

Thank you for all your support.

Blessings,
Deacon Ken+

Music and Choir Report

Submitted by Karen Harmon, Director of Music

The Music Program at St. Mark's showed continued growth in parishioner participation in choir and worship. First, many thanks to the St. Mark's choir for their continued dedication and service. They faithfully attended weekly rehearsals on Wednesday afternoons, as well as 35-45 minute rehearsals prior to the worship services. St. Mark's members who participated in choir this year are Margy Anderson, Susan Balkite, Beth Campbell, David Catizone, Sally Domby, Anne Errington, Barney Forsythe, Kathlyn Gray, Alice Hydorn (choir librarian), Rick Kroncke, Anne Marshall, Sally Mayse, Bill Moore, Martha Moore, Maggie O'Sullivan, Jim Rowe, Chuck Smiley, Margaret Tabb, Neil Thompson, Jim Turk, Carol Whitworth and David Whitworth. We welcomed into the choir out-of-state members Walter Dixon and Marty Wheelwright for several services, and Walter enhanced worship with beautiful tenor solos. For Easter and Christmas services, St. Mark's was blessed with visiting musicians on cello, violin and trumpet, as well as trumpet and cello on the Day of Pentecost. Music was expanded at the 4 p.m. Christmas Eve service with a solo by Lily Kate Ferguson and a duet by Maureen and Rick Kroncke.

Through financial gifts to the music program, five Malmark Handbells were purchased, one as a gift from the choir. The added tone color provided a sparkle for major feast days and at other services. Handbells were also used in solemn ways to accompany chant and as an aide to meditation for Maundy Thursday. The first ringers were Barbara Anderson, Sallie Stone, Beth Campbell, Barney Forsythe, Kathlyn Gray, Alice Hydorn, Rick Kroncke, Bill Moore and Neil Thompson.

Many thanks to Carol Whitworth who faithfully and skillfully served as substitute musician in my absence.

Some highlights of 2024 include

- Increased choristers in the St. Mark's choir
- Purchase of five Malmark handbells
- Enhanced music for the seven major feast days
- Advent Lessons and Carols Service
- Annual Saturday Choral Workshop in September
- Joyful and energized singing by choir and congregation
- Reorganization of a small room in St. Mark's Center for a music library and storage.

St. Mark's has a unique choral situation with two separate choirs evolving from the 9 and 11 a.m. services. Last year I began a choral schedule which would bring together all choristers for one 9 a.m. and one 11 a.m. service each month. However, that left each service without choral leadership once a month. This year our dedicated choristers agreed to sing at both Sunday services once a month. Thanks, choristers, for this extra service and also for showing clearly your role as leaders of congregational singing.

This past October, I announced my resignation effective January 31, 2025, due to a move to Silvassa, India, necessitated by my husband's work. Members of a search committee for a new Director of Music are Alice Hydorn, James Tetler and Amy Whitehouse, led by Senior Warden Cheri Thayer.

Serving as Director of Music at St. Mark's is the most joyful and love-filled service of my life. Thank you, Fr. Roy Tripp and staff, our wonderful choristers, and the entire St. Mark's family for honoring me as your music leader for the past three years.

Nominees for Vestry

Jane Forsythe --My journey in the Episcopal tradition began when I married Barney (a cradle Episcopalian), moved to Berlin, Germany, and was received by the British Bishop of the Armed Forces in 1972. During the ensuing 52 years I have worshiped in churches with as few as 20 souls and some with more than 1,000. And, I have heard the Holy Spirit's calling to serve in capacities that I never anticipated or felt remotely qualified for.

In small congregations there is no hiding. I found myself "volunteering" to conduct a vicar search; to be a vestry member; a warden; and a treasurer (talk about stepping out in faith!) At one point I was not simply a member of the Altar Guild, I was the Altar Guild while serving in our congregation at West Point, NY.

I joined teams that ministered to students in middle school, high school, and cadets. These included TEC (Teens Encounter Christ), Marriage Encounter, Tres Dias/Cursillo, Evenings for the Engaged, and Bible studies. At St. Mark's I had the privilege of serving on the Diocesan Bishop Search Committee and with various parish groups. This patchwork of ministries has, truly, fed my soul.

All that activity does make sound it sound like I'm a professional church lady. I have also been privileged to serve as a professional early childhood educator and administrator. As a teacher, surrounded by rooms full of four to six year olds, I relearned how to live in wonder and awe. As an administrator, my admiration for those who teach and who are caregivers will always be spelled with a capital A.

If elected to serve on your vestry I hope to continue to support our collected ministry of openness, inclusion and service, to each other and the wider community.

Kathlyn Gray--I spent my career teaching secondary school chemistry and working as an independent upper school administrator in Kentucky, Ohio, Georgia and Pennsylvania, as well as in Prague as upper school principal at the International School of Prague. My final adventure in education was serving as the Director of the Stanford University Online High School.

In 2015, I closed the full-time work chapter of my life and enthusiastically retired to my former home on Fripp Island and moved to Port Royal this past June. Even before moving to Beaufort, I found St. Mark's Episcopal Church online and immediately knew our church's mission matched my own. Currently, I sing in the choir, serve regularly as a reader and Eucharistic Minister, and have been a part of the Sacred Ground Ministry for the past three years. I have had the privilege of serving on our vestry for the past three years and led the Interim Rector Search Team. I am a volunteer at Port Royal Elementary School and the Good Neighbor Medical Clinic.

Mark Whitehouse--First, what matters. I love the Lord, accept salvation through Jesus Christ and look forward to serving God's creation through the power of the Holy Spirit. I accepted Jesus Christ as my personal savior in 1984 after a lengthy intellectual struggle with God, peppered with doubt, and questions like "is this really the best way to save the world?" and observations like "that might have worked back then but it does not seem like it is working now," and demands like "give me a sign." God was patient and He did make it crystal clear. I have never looked back.

Next, things that are important but matter a little less. I am married to the most wonderful woman on the planet and, while I have not yet met everyone, there is not a person I love more than Amy. We, mostly she, have raised four children and are grateful that God has a sense of humor and is full of forgiveness. We moved to Beaufort after 27 years in the desert in 2020, found St. Mark's, and settled into our new church home. Why St. Mark's? Easy answer – we felt welcome, and we still feel that way.

Next, things that might be relevant but do not really matter. Professionally, I have served this country in the US Army as a Field Artillery officer and I know how to blow things up. Relevance: I am fearless and my hearing is not so great. I spent over 20 years in consumer products as a product manager for some well-known brands like Hefty trash bags, Sno-Bol toilet bowl cleaners and Purex detergents. Relevance: I am good with trash, can deal with big messes, and am pretty good at cleaning things up. I have spent the last 20 years as an “entrepreneur.” Relevance: I can deal with chaos, limited resources, uncertainty and no paycheck. I do not like to sit still. I would appreciate the opportunity to serve our church as a member of your vestry.

Nominees for Annual Diocesan Convention

Delegates

Meg Catizone Wendy Moore Jim Nehf Charles Pinkham

Alternate Delegates

Sam Cooper Barbara Gephart Bill Grimes Nicole Passeggio

MINISTRY REPORTS

Mission and Outreach

Submitted by Barbara Anderson, Co-chair

Many thanks to all St. Markers for making it possible to issue the many grants listed at the end of this report. We distributed \$47,410.00 to local, national and international groups. This figure is 10 percent of St. Mark’s budget. You have assisted innumerable adults and children in improving their lives in so many ways.

We had several speakers at our meetings, including representatives from Water Mission, Beazer's Baskets and HELP.

Two editions of “The Lion's Roar” were published, highlighting some of the organizations we support and the grant process. The Oaks at Salem was the venue for two sing-a-longs with the residents. The residents at assisted living facilities were also recipients of greeting cards several times during the year. Your generous monthly donations helped to keep the pantry shelves stocked at St. Francis Center and HELP.

St. Mark's also reached out with:

- Cookies and notes for Kairos Prison Ministry
- Socks for St. Francis and Port Royal Elementary through the “Sock It To ‘Em” drive
- School supplies and toiletries for Port Royal Elementary
- Meals and gift cards for Family Promise
- Water Mission through participants in “Walk for Water”
- Marchers for freedom and equal rights in the MLK parade

The committee thanks Father Roy, the vestry and you, the congregation, for support as we continue to serve God and the world. Going forward, we will continue to be good stewards of the funds entrusted to us.

Disbursements for 2024

Episcopal Relief and Development (ERD) 10% of budget	\$4741.00
Friends of Shanklin	2000.00

Good Neighbor Clinic.....	2000.00
Resorts of Beaufort, former BayView	1200.00
Disabilities Foundation of Beaufort (formerly ABLE).....	2000.00
Zaricki School, Tanzania	2000.00
Hopeful Horizons	2500.00
HELP matching gift	2000.00
Children of Light Ministries, Haiti	1000.00
The Complete Student	2000.00
Heroes on Horseback	2500.00
Habitat for Humanity	2500.00
Beaser's Bountiful Baskets.....	1000.00
St. Francis Center.....	3000.00
Family Promise	2800.00
Inspire by Action, Dominican Republic	1000.00
Native American Heritage Association	1000.00
Walk for Water	1000.00
Church of the Heavenly Rest, Estill.....	500.00
Thumbs Up.....	1200.00
Lowcountry Legal Volunteers	2000.00
Water Mission, Inc.....	1000.00
Episcopal Relief & Development, Hurricane Helene Relief	1906.00
Water Mission, Hurricane Helene Relief	1906.00
World Central Kitchen, Hurricane Helene Relief.....	1906.00
CAPA, Christmas gift cards for teens.....	751.00

Christian Formation

Submitted by Glenda Lee Nutting, Director

This past year has been one of new beginnings as well as growth for Sunday School and Stephen Ministry. Our Sunday School, which takes place during the 11 a.m. service, is lectionary-based, so the children are learning about one of the lessons being read in the Eucharist service. We tell the stories with props, crafts, and additional hands-on techniques that will bring the Bible to life. We meet in the conference room in the Center, and we have welcomed children who attend St. Mark's, as well as a few who do not. All are welcome!

Our Stephen Ministry training is underway with our first training class of caregivers. We meet on Thursday mornings in the conference room. Our sessions are 2 ½ hours each week, and we are just over halfway finished. Soon I will begin putting brief notes in "Red Lion Weekly" to let everyone in the parish know what all can do to support this important ministry.

Congregational Care

Submitted by Sally Domby and Judy Utter

Congregational Care had a busy year helping parishioners who were shut-in, ill or had other needs. We continue to welcome parishioners' requests for help and seek any referrals of parishioners needing help of which our congregation becomes aware. We are sorry to lose Mary Smith as a co-leader and wish her well in Albuquerque! Mary has been vital in helping establish this team. We welcome Judy Utter as our new co-leader and appreciate Linda Jones stepping in to head the Meal Train.

Prayer Ministry: Two types of prayer requests are available: 1) a confidential list whereby the rector and a small number of individuals pray privately; and 2) a public list that is published in the Sunday order of service. Diligent efforts continue to keep this list timely and updated. Contact: Paula Guerry.

Meal Train: Meals, tailored to the recipients' needs, are provided by volunteers to those in need due to health problems or other issues. Contact: Linda Jones.

Greeting Card Team: Cards are sent to parishioners for birthdays and get-well/thinking of you wishes as well as holiday cards to nursing homes residents. This ministry was successfully expanded this past year and enjoys the support of Women of Grace in addition to many faithful scribes. Contact: Gale Swann.

Flower Delivery: Altar flowers and handwritten notes are delivered each week to people who are ill, grieving or shut-in. Occasionally, flowers are sent for birthdays, etc. when there is no other immediate need known. The team enjoys the support of many hands to make this effort possible. Contact: Mary Bryan.

Transportation Team: A process was developed this past year for soliciting and screening volunteers to help congregants with transportation needs such as attending appointments, worship services and other church activities. We hope to find a leader for this team in the new year and additional volunteers.

Parish Life

Submitted by Jane Frederick

St. Mark's Parish Life Events in 2024 included:

- Advent Wreath Making
- Oyster Roast in the Park
- Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper
- Palm Sunday Cross Making
- Easter Vigil Reception
- Bishop's Reception
- Coffee Hour after the 9 a.m. Sunday service
- Blessing of the Animals
- Women of Grace third Thursday of the month lunch
- Pentecost and fall picnics on the green
- Foyer Group Kick-off Dinner
- Retirement Party for Father Roy Tripp

All events were well-attended by St Mark's members and were made possible by a group of dedicated volunteers. We are thankful for these events that help us to grow in faith and strengthen our bonds of fellowship with each other.

Worship

Submitted by Carter Hoyt, Programs Associate

A new adornment to our worship in 2024 was the magnificent oyster shell crèche created by Chris Nietert, with the wood base and "surround" discovered (at St. Christopher Camp & Conference Center) and fashioned by Jack Nietert. Be sure to thank them for this lovely and generous gift.

As I do every year, I want to thank all of the volunteers who faithfully give of their time to make our worship happen in such magnificent fashion – our VPODs (Vestry Person on Duty), ushers, sacristans,

acolytes, lectors, eucharistic ministers, choir members, communion bread and love loaf bakers, the lincens and flowers teams, our banner hangers, and the grounds committee. We really could not do it without all of you. I am delighted to report that several folks have heard our pleas for new acolytes and sacristans and they will be in training early this year. A band of volunteer videographers has also been recruited and trained to assist with livestreaming when our wonderful Aly Dennison cannot be with us.

Our relationship with Port Royal Elementary School continues, and we have had initial discussions with them about ways we can enhance it perhaps through family movie nights, fun activities on the Green, or other initiatives.

Finally, soon each of you will be introduced to our new website which has been under construction for several months. This has been done in anticipation of our search for our next rector. We hope you will like it!

I want to give my personal thanks to Roy, Liz and Preston for the many, many ways they have each enhanced our lives as St. Markers. They will be greatly missed. We move into 2025, however, with confidence that the Holy Spirit will guide us to her chosen one.

Administration & Communications

Submitted by Julie Petroff, Parish Administrator

The Parish Register: The Rector performed two baptisms in 2024 (Sara Jane Reyes Frederick and Maisie Lee Wilson), officiated at two marriages of non-St. Mark's members, and conducted memorial services for Scott Shaffer and David Irwin. The bishop confirmed five people during her annual visit on October 13 and received one person into the Episcopal Church. Fourteen people formally transferred by letter from their previous Episcopal churches, and two transferred out due to an out-of-state move. (Note: If you are a confirmed Episcopalian and wish to transfer officially from your previous church, please contact the office and we will take care of the paperwork for you.)

Communications: Our primary method of communicating with parishioners and others is through our weekly e-newsletter "Red Lion Weekly." Approximately 73 percent of the 531 subscribers, a number of whom live out of the area, open it on a regular basis. Occasional e-newsletters from the Rector and Deacon Ken Kraft, as well as a quarterly e-newsletter "The Lion's Roar" from the Outreach and Mission Committee, helped advise people of our many programs and activities. You can subscribe to all of these at once on St. Mark's webpage.

We continue to livestream the 9 a.m. service on Sundays and an average of 35-40 people tune in, a few from out-of-state. St. Mark's also maintains a regular presence on Facebook by sharing news and pictures, as well as the Sunday service video. We advertise our worship services in *The Island News* and *Lowcountry Weekly*.

An important source of information for the congregation and the community is our webpage, which is undergoing a major redesign under the direction of Carter Hoyt. Carter also keeps our mailing list and pictorial directory up-to-date.