



ST. MARK'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

**“Opening the doors of Christ’s love:
an inviting, embracing and serving community
offering Good News in the midst of a confusing
world.”**

February 28, 2016

Important Upcoming Dates

**March 2 – Lenten Dinner and
Program, Church of the Spirit,
Kingstown – 6:30 pm Dinner, 7:15 pm
– “The Prophets”, 8:30 pm Compline**

**March 9 – Lenten Dinner and
Program, St. Mark’s – 6:30 pm
Dinner, 7:15 pm “The Prophets” with
The Rev. Meredith Heffner, 8:30 pm
Compline**

**March 24 – Maundy Thursday,
Dinner, Eucharist, Stripping of Altar
with San Marcos**

The Third Sunday in Lent

Soil was at a premium in Israel. but the fig tree took up the deepest soil, and required the most water. A fig tree doesn’t grow fruit until three years after planting. The owner in this week’s Gospel, had given the tree “due season” to bear fruit and yet the tree bore no fruit. It took up valuable space and resources. The owner questioned why the tree was allowed to “even use up ground.”

Though occupied by at least six different peoples, God

had given the Israelites the choicest ground. Their land possessed everything necessary to make themselves a great nation, indeed, a light to all nations. They were strategically positioned to send the fruit of God north and south, east and west; but instead, in-fighting continued to make them a worthless fruit tree. Everyone one of us will have to answer (from God’s perspective) this same question; “Why does it even use up the ground?” This morning we hear Jesus’ parable of the fig tree, telling us to repent and bear good fruit. We know what the Christian life requires of us and yet, if we are honest with ourselves, we also know how far short we fall. Isn’t it time that God got fed up with us? What kind of fertilizer do we lack?

Even Saint Paul found himself trapped. In Romans 7 he writes: “It seems to be a fact of life that when I want to do what is right, I inevitably do what is wrong. I

love to do God's will so far as my new (redeemed Christian) nature is concerned; but there is something else deep within me, in my lower nature, that is at war with my mind and wins the fight and makes me a slave to the sin that is still within me. In my mind, I want to be God's willing servant, but instead I find myself enslaved to sin. Who will free me? Thank God! It has already been done by Jesus Christ our Lord. He has set me free!" "Repent," Jesus says.

"Acknowledge your sinfulness." None of us is without fault, but if we want to get ahead in this world and be accepted by others, it's generally better to conceal our shortcomings and put on a good front for others. As the little girl said to her classmate who had to sit in the corner, "To err is human, but to admit it is just plain stupid!"

Jesus tells us to disclose the evil within us, to admit that we have failed. The apostle John tells us the same thing very clearly when he writes, "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us." Saint Augustine once wrote, "Whatever we are, we are not what we ought to be." Lent is that time to take a close look, and see where we are!

Welcome Newcomers and Visitors

The members, staff, and Vestry of St. Mark's Episcopal Church welcome you to our services. If you are looking for a church home, or want more information about St. Mark's, please make use of one of our visitor's cards and give to our clergy or place in the offertory plate.

Your pledge to the work and ministry of the church is desperately needed. Pledge cards may be found in the back of the church and will be received whenever you are able to prayerfully consider your commitment.

Please pray for those who are in trouble, sorrow, need, sickness or any other adversity, especially in the St. Mark's Parish: Beth Oakes, Richard Sparks, Phil Brown, Shirley Hunter, Clara Bottner, Betty Hughes, Lindsay Drabick, Dick Stockstill, Juliana, Albie, Lou, Janet, Judy, Sarah Derringer, Muriel Hughes, Mary, Caroline Bradford and Candace Fisher.

Also for our Extended Family: Donna Mayne, Elizabeth Jenkins, Nancy DeLay, Margo Digan, Phyllis Nezar-Biggs, Daniel Gold, Sylvia Beauchamp, Janet Coco, Kamryn Jespersion, Susan Oldow Patterson, Josephine, Linda, Ashley, Avery, Fr. R. Stephen Powers, Doug Smith, Sr. and Jr., Matt, Bill, Al, Gretchen, Gerry Massey, Shawn West, Martise Williams, Victoria and family, Walter, Keleigh, Father Paul Platt, Rosalie Duncan, Robert, David Biggs, Juliana, Vicki Robb, Janet Davis, Sandy Powell, Shaina Friend, James Kent, Chris Coley, Carol Ostergard, Tom Flick and Sandra Robinson.

For all military and civilian personnel and those serving in harm's way, we lift up Andrew Kley, Colin Maloney, Tim, Emily and family and Walter Smiley. We pray for those of every generation who live with the wounds of war or who have given their lives for this nation.

Announcements

St. Mark's Book Group will meet Monday, 3/15, at 7:00 pm in the library.

Giving Securities to the Church: If you would like to make a gift of stock or equities to the church, please call Ms. Carol Savage or Mrs. Patricia Drabick at 202-842-5608. St. Mark's also has an investment fund with the Diocese. Gifts may be made through the Diocese directly to St. Mark's Endowment Fund, 1-800-DIOCESE. Finally, donations may be made to pay down our mortgage at John Marshall Bank. **Are you 70.5?** You can make a tax free donation from your IRA!

Fruit of the Spirit Community Garden 2016 Season from Candy Thompson: Happy New Year Gardeners! I want to provide a quick update on the garden: We have about \$270 carried over from last year. We plan to use this for repairs on the fence, purchasing straw, etc. We would like to hear from you about your intentions for your community plot at Saint Marks. We would like to know if you want to change plots. Some gardeners have only used a portion of their plot last year and we would like to move them to smaller plots. If needed, we will advertise for new gardeners using the local neighborhood newsletters. I am excited for this gardening season! And look forward to hearing from you on your intentions for 2016 gardening at St. Mark's. candythompson9@gmail.com.

FCIA Network, March 9 at 1:30 pm – Presents Refugee Resettlement Process in NOVA. Call 703-325-7608 to register. Fairfax County Government Center, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Rooms 9/10, Fairfax.

UCM Food Bank is in urgent need of one or two pound bags of rice. Other food needs, too, but smaller bags of rice are the priority. **UCM Cynthia Hull Food Pantry** is in urgent need of volunteers who can help manage the Food Pantry. One or two weekly shifts are available to help with this critical need: Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays 9:00 am. to 12:00 noon and Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays 1:00 pm. to 5:30 pm.

March Birthdays

3/1 – Nadine Hornberger, 3/2 – Shelley Luxner, Maxwell McIntyre, Christopher Williams, 3/5 – Frances Robles, Kosi Dominic, 3/6 – Jim Bailes, Eric Bryda, 3/7 – Pete Farley, 3/8 – Jessica Pierce, Elizabeth Addie, 3/10 – Cheryl Lewis, Leah Slobodin, 3/11 – John Youngquist, 3/12 – Pat Drabick, Jeremiah Bradley, 3/14 – John Dell, Wyatt Patterson, 3/16 – Kingsley Davis, 3/20 – Josh Pritchett, Jennifer Thomas, 3/22 – Elizabeth Jenkins, 3/23 – Kevannah Campbell, 3/24 – Faith Frederick,

3/25 – Fred Landon, 3/27 – Margaret Duczakowski, 3/30 – Earl Winsor, 3/31 – Patricia Straley, Quincy Dominic, Ben Miles, Hailey Johnson

This Week at St. Mark's

- Today** 8:00 a.m. HE, 9:00 a.m. Choir rehearsal (large classroom), 9:15 a.m. Adult Forum (PH), 10 a.m. HE, 11:15 am – Vestry Planning Committee Meeting, 1:00-3:00 p.m. San Marcos (Sanctuary, PH, GH), 4:00-8:00 p.m. Pan de Vida (Sanctuary)
- Monday, 2/29** 7:00-8:30 p.m. BSA Troop #4077 (PH)
- Tuesday, 3/1** 8:45-10:00 am - workout class (PH), 7-8:30 pm – GS Troop 4841 (PH), 7:00-9:00 pm – Pan de Vida Bible Study (Sanctuary)
- Wednesday, 3/2** 10:00 am HE, The Fairfax
- Thursday, 3/3** 8:45-10:00 am – workout class (PH), 9:30 am – Morning Prayer, 10:00 am – Holy Folders
- Friday, 3/4** 7:00-9:30 pm – Pan de Vida (Sanctuary)
- Saturday, 3/5** 9:00-1:00 pm – BS Troop 4077 Eagle Scout project (PH), 9:00 am- 2:00 pm – Boy Scout Troop 4077 (small classroom), 10:00 am-noon – Daughters of the King (large classroom), 6:00-9:30 pm – Pan de Vida (Sanctuary), 7:00-9:00 pm – San Marcos Bible Study (large classroom)

Adult Forum

- Today** Resilient Faith, DVD and Discussion on I Peter