

The Messenger

St. Mark Presbyterian Church

Boerne, Texas

FROM THE PASTOR

The New Year is underway and St Mark is not resting through the winter months! As I write this, youth are planning to attend Midwinters at Mo-Ranch, GEM nights are underway (including the first ever class offered for children), and soon the very first Fifth Sunday service will occur. To date, 3 families have joined the St Mark family in 2012. Bob and Meg Tucker, Albin and Bibi Kerekes, and George and Dana Stewart each have a rich and amazing background to share. The Tuckers were missionaries to Central and South America as well as Eastern Europe. The Kerekes are both geophysicists; Albin is Hungarian and Bibi is Turkish. George Stewart is an honorably retired Presbyterian minister. He and Dana have served many churches through the years. All 3 of these families have many and wonderful stories to share so I encourage you to take the time to get to know them and learn from them as they will no doubt learn from you. What a joy to see new faces and welcome new friends into our family of faith. If you are interested in joining St Mark or have joined and wish to learn more about St Mark I invite you to come to **St Mark 101 on Sunday, February 19, 12:30-2:30 PM.** Lunch is provided and child-care is available. At the January Session meeting, the budget for 2012 was approved. Overall the new budget represents a 14% increase over the previous year. This was possible jump because of your tremendous response on Consecration Sunday in October. Thank You!

The Session and Finance Committee followed 3 guiding principles in finalizing the 2012 budget:

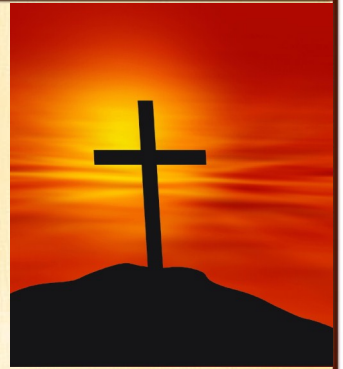
- 1) **Pay down our debt as quickly as possible.** (We began 2012 owing \$590,250 in bonds)
- 2) **Maximizing our Missions Budget.** (Missions is 10% of the total budget)
- 3) **Hold expenses steady.** (The ministry budgets were calculated using actual spending 2010-2011)

Finally, I encourage you to come to the Annual Meeting of the Congregation on Sunday, February 12, 2012 at 5:00 PM. There we will break bread together and celebrate all that the Lord did in our midst last year. We also will elect the new class of Elders and Deacons. Copies of the annual report and the budget will be made available to you. Additionally, the elders and I will be present to answer questions. As for myself, I am looking forward to my first full year as your pastor. The past 8 months have been a wonderful and joyful for me. I am excited when I consider what the Lord has in store for us together in 2012.

Michael



SESSION HIGHLIGHTS



John Merritt and the Finance Committee reported year-end figures. St Mark finished 2011 with about \$20,000 in receipts above our budget and with expenses approximately \$20,000 below our budget -- about \$41,000 to the positive! Thank you, St Mark congregation, for your generosity and steadfast commitment to meeting and surpassing your pledges. Finance also reported that we've made significant progress in paying on our long-term debt which is at \$590,000 at close of the year. Also in the Finance arena, after a lot of hard work and give-and-take within the ministries represented on Session, a 2012 budget was approved. This approved budget (\$622,572) represents a 14% increase over the 2011 budget. Watch for the Annual Report due out soon which will detail the various ministries individual budgets. Again, Session is thanking the congregation for its faithfulness and giving spirit!

Mark your calendars --

The first '5th Sunday' is coming up in two weeks -- 29 January. The Rev Dick Powell will fill the pulpit and lead St Mark in a uniquely blended service at 10:45 a.m. followed by a potluck lunch for all to share in fellowship, good food, and lively conversation. Don't forget to sign up in the Narthex as to the dish you're bringing.

G.E.M. night 2012 started on 19 January with four exciting courses geared for the young and not-so-young of our congregation and community. Dinner is served each Thursday at 6:00 p.m. with classes following at 7:00 p.m. You can count on being done by 8:00 p.m. so it won't be a late evening. Check the Sunday bulletin or call the church office for more information.

On 17 March, Boerne Parks and Recreation will have an outdoor family fair in the Boerne town square. St Mark will be there with information and 'freebies.' Want to help? Contact Elder John Miller to get the scoop.

Also in March, on the 31st, Kendall County Women's Shelter will have its 3 mile walk/run. Evangelism is also looking for volunteers to help with this event. Contact John Miller for more details.

The Representative Nominating Committee is making great progress in identifying and interviewing potential officers to serve St Mark as elders and deacons. If you know of someone you'd like to nominate or if you would like to be considered to serve in either of these capacities, you're invited to contact John Miller, Chair of the RNC soon. The RNC is working together a slate of officers to present to the congregation at its Annual Congregational Meeting scheduled for 12 February.

Have you participated in Relay for Life in the past? Natalie Roetheli has done a superb job of heading up St Mark's effort and volunteers in the past but now she's taking a break and Elizabeth Kavanagh is stepping up to the challenge. When you see Natalie, thank her for her hard work and then call Elizabeth and volunteer to help her in 2012!

SECOND ANNUAL ST. MARK ADULT OLYMPICS

Saturday Evening, March 24th
6:30 to 10 pm in the FLC

Come enjoy an evening of fun, fellowship and competition! Ten teams (with about 10 per team) compete in 4 different games. Each team rotates through all the games during the evening to compete with other teams to determine the gold, silver and bronze winners! Not the athletic type - don't let that stop you! The 4 games are:

Name That Tune
Trivia
Golf Putting
Basketball Shooting

Contact Nalga Mebane if you are interested in helping or Charlie Sapp if you are interested in being a team captain. Teams will be forming during February. All St Mark adults, high schoolers and visitors are eligible. No meal this year, but bring an appetizer (A – M) or dessert (N – Z) to share. Create a team name (required!), logo, yell, hats, T-shirts, costume, etc to compete for the “Best Team Spirit” award.

Sponsored by the CG's

Sanctuary Flowers for 2012

If you are intered in donating flowers to be used in the sanctuary on Sundays, please sign up on the 2012 flower chart on the w3all near the doorway leading to the ELC. Lynn Bellow will call you with a gentle reminder when its your turn.



TECHIES NEEDED

Our Sanctuary and FLC are equipped with state-of-the-art sound, light and video capabilities. However, our ability to take advantage of these capabilities is dependent on having members who are trained and available to run them. A training day is being scheduled with the equipment's installers for a Saturday morning in February. In addition to our current staffing we need a new crop of techies. If you are willing or know someone who you think would be good and be willing, please contact either John Merritt at 210-364-7601 or Brenda Phelps at 830-331-9018.

ELC Golf Tournament

The Early Learning Center is so grateful for the past support of our St. Mark family for our major fundraiser, the Swing Fore Kids Golf Tournament. This year we meet again at Riverhill Country Club in Kerrville on Saturday, April 21 at 1:30pm (shotgun start) for golf and we invite your participation. We encourage you to consider forming/sponsoring a team to play or registering as an individual. We invite non golfers to attend our dinner and silent auction . This year's Grand Proze Raffle Award will be for a \$1500 Visa Gift Card—we have only 500 tickets at \$20.each for purchase at the ELC office. The \$ raised will be used for scholarships, repairs, equipment and other needs. Contact Cheryl or Marilyn at 830.249.3813

Musings on the Search for Authenticity (or, Once Upon a Time There Was a Wedding in Costa Rica)

I love my Church. Recently my wife Ruth and I took a two week vacation to Costa Rica. I had not traveled out of the country in many years, and we had not had a two week vacation alone for, well, maybe never. When I checked my messages upon returning I found one from John Stassi. He had noticed that we had not been at service for awhile and was concerned. Apparently someone set him straight that we were, most likely, just fine. While Ruth and I traveled around Costa Rica we kept hearing this phrase pura vida! (pure life!). If you expressed pleasure about a meal to the waiter, the response would be «Pura vida!». The coffee this morning was excellent! «Pura vida!». How was your day? Pura vida! We came to understand that this was more than a smiley face kind of response for tourists but was in fact a national motto describing the direction this country by intention was moving. What else could you conclude about a country in which 20% of the population are teachers? *What as individuals, a community, a country, do we desire most from the very depths of our souls?* Pura Vida!

! There it was again! Pura vida!

We finished our trip with friends at the wedding of a young co-worker of mine and her young man. What a joy and honor it was for us to be a part of this most joyous celebration. At the rehearsal dinner the father of the groom gave a toast to the young couple, quoting Rabbi Harold Kushner, that his wish for them was that they have a life together that matters, and that this could only happen through their love for each other, the love they had for their family and friends, and the love they received. Ah! There it was again! Pura vida!

There is a Greek word «ἀνυπόκριτος» which can be translated as genuine, authentic, denoting “the unfeigned simplicity of that which is irrevocable and definitive.” The word appears in this passage from Romans 12:9: Let love be “without hypocrisy” (ἀνυπόκριτος). Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good.”

Pura Vida!

Craig Childs



Library News

Thank you for the devotional books, Bibles, biographies, and fine works of fiction you've given the library this New Year.

We're sorting through and preparing them for the shelves now.

One gentle reminder- we don't have need for used study guides/ participant manuals that are often included in bible studies.

Also while Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins have written popular fiction concerning Armageddon, the viewpoint written in the series is not accepted by Presbyterian theology. Several years ago this was pointed out to the library committee and we removed books by these authors from the library. If you have recently donated some books from the series and we have a number of them, you can find them in the library storage room.

Again thank you for your contributions and never hesitate to share your reading material!

Book Discussion

On Monday, Feb. 28 our reading group will meet in FLC104 at 1:30PM to discuss Major Pettigrew's Last Stand by Helen Simonson.

The novel is set in a small village in England and tells about a man's quiet life that changes when he makes a new friend.

SPOTLIGHT ON A CHILD



This month we shine the spotlight on Dakota Klein. Dakota is 8 years old and a 3rd grader at Cur-rington Elementary. Dakota loves playing soccer and baseball. His favorite color is red, and he loves

to eat pizza. Dakota enjoys science at school. His favorite things about St. Mark are Sunday school, praying to God, and eating cookies in the Family Life Center. In his free time Dakota likes to read and watch TV.

ADULT CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

G.E.M. NIGHT

(Greet, Eat, & Meet)

GEM Nights are in full swing! We meet in the FLC on Thursday evenings through March 8 for food, fellowship, and study. There is something for everyone (children included!), so bring the entire family! It's not too late to join us! Class offerings include:

Life Together (*a Dietrich Bonhoeffer study*):

Michael Brundeen

Total Money Makeover: Tom Allred

Knit 2gether: Susan Penrod

Parenting Class: Survival Skills of Healthy Families:

Geri Clouse

Youth Gathering (*grades 6-12*): Jessika Goad

Let Us Break Bread Together: *A Communion Class for*

Kids (K-5th grade): Jennifer Agarwal

Pick up a copy of the new GIFT flier in the hallway leading to the sanctuary and check out all of the Sunday school classes and Small Group offerings at St. Mark! Interested in joining a Small Group or starting a Small Group of your own? Contact Jennifer Agarwal in the church office: (830) 816-3000.



Youth News



I can't help but get sentimental this month. February is a great time to show love for ALL of God's people. Our St. Mark youth are busy and thriving. Please see below all the wonderful things that are happening in the lives of our young adults. Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality. Romans 12:9-15

Junior High Mid-Winters-February 3, 4 and 5th.

Ask our youth about:

Keaton Cox has been practicing and playing well for BMSN basketball.

Nash Bellow is working on his "banana bomb".

Erin Kavanagh is reading a great book, and working on her DI project

Kamryn Barkley has started Club Volleyball, Go Kamryn.

Sara Hoffmann is showing her sheep for the first time this year and has also started Club Volleyball.

Ethan Brundeen is spending time with his friends.

Cito Garza was accepted at Hermann Sons Camp as a C.I.T. for this summer.

Ginny Brundeen is gearing up for another play. Ask her what she got for Christmas.

Katelyn Phillips and her family are attending GEM night, take some time to visit with this wonderful family.

Kaley Barkley's is also busy with school and volleyball.

John Hodge just turned 12 last month.

Stefan Garza had a really good time seeing the S.A. Rampage Hockey game on Sunday. He recommends everyone go to a Rampage game.

Slade Klein got some great additions to his Coca-Cola collection.

Spotlight on Brandon Goad

Hi, I'm Brandon Goad! I am 12 years old and I will be turning 13 January 26. My mom is the financial secretary and is now also the youth director. I really like my mom being the youth director because it gets me way more involved in youth group. I love to play sports, especially football!!! I play percussion in my school's band and I really enjoy it. I will also be trying out for track this year and I'm excited to see if I will make it. I have a little sister Emily that is 8. Having a sister can be hard because a lot of things can be unfair between us, like when she gets more money, or when she gets a Sonic slushy. I do have to realize that she never got to be with mom and dad by herself, like when she wasn't born, my parent's attention was all on me. So to sum it all up... I might think my life is crazy with all this stuff, but it's nothing compared to what some people go through!

