

An Abbreviated History of St. Mark Presbyterian Church A Congregation of the Presbyterian Church (USA)

St. Mark Presbyterian Church is located the foothills of the Texas Hill Country in an historically German town named Boerne that was founded in 1849. Boerne is 30 miles northwest of San Antonio, Texas. In the late 1800's there was a Presbyterian Mission in Comfort, Texas, but the first organized Presbyterian church in Kendall County was St. Mark, and it remains the only Presbyterian congregation of PC(USA) in the county today.

Most of the charter members of St. Mark were members of the Leon Springs Presbyterian Church. On October 4, 1964, two elders of Leon Springs Presbyterian Church who were living in Boerne, Col. Will Parker and John Merrill, were authorized by the Session to explore interest among Boerne residents in organizing a Presbyterian church in their small town. At a meeting in the Kendall County courtroom, chaired by Arthur Leesch, about 35 people expressed an interest in beginning a church in Boerne.

"The Presbyterian Mission of the Holy Spirit" was formed with the first service being held in the Boerne High School cafeteria on November 29, 1964, with Reverend Fred Maples, pastor of the Leon Springs Church, serving as Pastor and Moderator of the Steering Committee until May 30, 1965 when the former Alamo Presbytery (UPCUSA) accepted a Charter for St. Mark Presbyterian Church. On that date, Reverend Douglas Brackenridge, a professor of religion at Trinity University in San Antonio, began serving as the Organizing Pastor.

A slate of ten elders were chosen by the congregation and then a Site Committee was formed and offered several possibilities for the location of the new church. Through the dedication of Lena Taylor, a realtor, the present site of the church was purchased, over three acres at a cost of \$10,000, where the church is presently located today at 208 West Bandera Road. No other expenses were incurred, as a professional surveyor/church member led others in clearing and leveling the land, the original owners of the property donated the cost of paving the street, and a church member/attorney donated the preparation of all the legal papers.

Pat Parker suggested "St. Mark" as the name of the new church because the symbol of the lion and the scriptural witness of the strength of the apostle were most appropriate to the character of the congregation. The first worship building was dedicated on Easter Sunday March 19, 1967 at a cost of \$36,403. That building is currently used by the Early Learning Center on weekdays and by Sunday school classes on Sunday.

A "Pulpit Committee" recommended to the congregation that the Reverend Wayne Adcock be called as Pastor, and he was installed on December 6, 1965. Young and energetic, he served conscientiously and efficiently until August, 1971. At that time the membership was 128.

By the beginning of 1980, the church had grown out of its facilities. With a membership of 125 members, two morning worship services were full and Sunday school was running over. Ground was broken on the new Sanctuary and office area on February 15, 1981 and the structure was completed within 6 months at a cost of \$223,000. The gratitude of the Session and Congregation was conveyed to building chairman, Don Cloud, at the dedication services on June 30, 1981.

The stained-glass windows were not a part of the original Sanctuary plan and shortly after the dedication, a committee chaired by Catherine Benner chose The Apostles' Creed as a theme for the artistic representations. Built by the Orco Stained Glass Company at a cost of \$18,000, the windows were paid for through individual donations and they were dedicated on Pentecost Sunday, 1984. They continue to be the focal point for the beauty of the sanctuary.

St. Mark has had many dedicated pastors over the last 45 years, and they were:

Reverend Fred Maples - Founding Pastor - November 29, 1964 to May 30, 1965

Reverend R. Douglas Brackenridge - Interim/Organizing Pastor - May 30, 1965 to November 30, 1965

Reverend E. Wayne Adcock - First Installed Pastor - December 6, 1965 to August 5, 1971

Reverend William H. Orton - Pastor – January 30, 1972 to December 31, 1976 (Honorary Retired)

Reverend Ralph M. Graham - Interim Pastor - January, 1977 to April 9, 1978
Reverend Don M. Owens - Pastor - April 1978 – 1986 – April 30, 1978 to June 30, 1986
Reverend Lander L. Bethel, Jr. - Associate Pastor – March 10, 1985 to August 31, 1987
Reverend David P. Meriwether - Pastor – July 15, 1987 to November 1994
Reverend Phineas A. Washer, Jr. - Interim Pastor – February 1, 1994 to March 15, 1995
Reverend Edward Crowell Dawkins – Pastor – March 19, 1995 to June 6, 1999
Rev. Paul DeMotte - Interim Pastor – June 30, 1999 to March 7, 2002
Reverend John W. Watson – Pastor – April 21, 2002 to March 15, 2009 (Retired)
Reverend Doctor David M. Evans - Interim Pastor - June 10, 2009 to February 13, 2011
Reverend Michael E. Brundeen – Pastor – July 1, 2011 to Present

St. Mark enjoys an active commitment to the "larger church" of Presbyterian life. Members of our congregation have served on many Presbytery committees, three as Commissioners to General Assembly, as staff at Presbytery and two St. Mark members graduated from seminary with another member presently enrolled there. Recently a committee was formed to promote interest in and assist those who might have an interest in seminary. Our congregation is a consistent leader in giving. The church membership now registers approximately 350 members with increased programs in all areas of Christian education.