

ST. MARK'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH
BASKETS OF BLESSINGS



Our Story Begins With A Mission...

*To see Christ in and to be Christ to others
as we are led and empowered by Grace.*

OBJECTIVE

Our objective has been to weave and create a parish profile that will at once define who we are and what we seek as members of St. Mark's Episcopal Church, San Marcos.

GOALS

As we developed and created this document, it has become a "love letter" to a prospective new rector. Along the way, it serves also as a love letter to visitors and new members, and perhaps even to those people who have been here a while but have not yet found their niche.

This project is an anchor for a communications effort that will include new-and-improved digital strategies, tried-and-true, proven methods of delivering the Good News to all members of St. Mark's, as well as our community that is San Marcos, Hays County and the Diocese of West Texas.

CHALLENGE

We do not all come to St. Mark's looking for the same thing. Like these baskets, we are all woven a little differently. Although we have much in common, we are all unique. When asked to describe St. Mark's, we are somewhat like the blind men describing the elephant or these woven baskets.

SOLUTION

We have already begun to describe the elephant. The Vestry has met several times to focus on this priority. The well-attended Parish Profile Workshop was held last spring, and questionnaires focusing on personal priorities and the qualities we each look for in a rector were collected from members of the parish.

Our vestry fine-tuned the information gathered from the parish family to to define and describe all that we are, and all that we want to be.

Our vestry has identified and answered a litany of general questions about St. Mark's, all of which are included in this Love Letter to our prospective rector as well as to visitors and new members, who may be curious about who we are.



This is a story about baskets of blessings. Baskets waiting to be filled.

ST. MARK'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

PARISH PROFILE

The Episcopal Church in San Marcos dates from July 16, 1865, when Bishop Gregg, first Bishop of Texas, reported that he had “preached and administered communion, a large and attentive congregation being present.”

The first rector on record was Rev. Wallace Carnahan, who served from 1875-1876. Thus, St. Mark's Episcopal Church has had a continuous presence in San Marcos for over 125 years. We birthed St. Stephen's in Wimberley and also Christ Chapel, which was located on our second campus.

We recently moved to our current location, the third in the history of St. Mark's, on 25 acres of Texas Hill Country. Along with the sanctuary and parish hall, the master plan includes a Christian education building and chapel in the next construction phase. Our historic and newly refurbished pipe organ was installed in the sanctuary choir loft, and the chapel altar and furnishings will be evenly distributed once the full campus is complete.

While we are deeply proud of our heritage, we are also focused on our future and looking for God's calling for us through the 21st century. We see St. Mark's Episcopal Church as an open Christian community seeking to grow in our friendship with God and in compassionate engagement with the world.

We are guided by the Episcopal spirituality we have inherited, and we are attracted to its breadth, depth, balance, stability, maturity, beauty, and respect for other paths.

We welcome anyone who would like to join us on our journey.



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As part of the search process for a new rector, we gathered for a parish-wide workshop to discern our strengths as a congregation and to look at the challenges we face.



OUR STRENGTHS

WELCOMING

We are an open community, in deep relationship with one another, and we accept and appreciate the diversity of our members and visitors. We extend our welcome to others wishing to join us in this parish family.

EMPHASIS ON EDUCATION

We value our many opportunities for spiritual development, including our adult education program, Sunday school, School of Wisdom, and St. Mark's Episcopal Preschool for children ages three to five years. The St. Mark's School of Wisdom is a ground-breaking educational opportunity for all seekers of Christian spirituality in the surrounding community and offers intellectual study on the depth of religious wisdom. Classes are offered on Monday nights and Wednesday afternoons.

FACILITIES

Our new campus is beautiful, situated on 25 acres of natural surroundings, and includes a sanctuary and parish hall and a planned Christian education building and chapel. Our labyrinth is the only one in San Marcos. We celebrate our buildings, the grounds and landscaping, and the fact that we have the resources to lead us to be free of debt. We believe our facilities offer many opportunities for growth.

WORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

There are a variety of worship opportunities available to us, not only on Sunday mornings, but also throughout the week with Morning Prayer and a Monday night program. We celebrate spoken Rite I at the 8:00 AM service on Sunday, followed by a 9:00 contemporary service (revision being considered), and Rite II at 11:00 with choir, organ, and a bell choir. We appreciate the music offered, including the use of various instruments and our talented musicians.

TALENTS AND SKILLS

The people of our parish have many talents, skills, and interests and offer these and their intellectual insights as gifts to the church. We enable lay leadership in our many ministries, and there is always someone ready to lift a hand when another is ill or unable to make it to church or wherever help is needed, including maintaining the grounds.

MUSIC MINISTRY

With a talented choir led by choral scholars at Texas State University, along with our musicians, we are proud of our music ministry at St. Mark's. Our new sanctuary offers the best acoustics and sound system in the area, and our Hoffman organ is not only used for services, but also as a practice instrument for music scholars.

*As we weave the
story of who we are,
we become stronger
together,
celebrating our
strengths and
recognizing our
challenges.*



At the center of our campus, St. Mark's offers this labyrinth as a pathway to enliven each person's relationship with the Holy Spirit.

OUR C H A L L E N G E S



CONGREGATION

Regretfully, our vestry / rector / congregation relationships deteriorated significantly in 2010. The bishop appointed a conflict resolution mediator - a process that resulted in the resignation of the rector. Lessons learned through this experience, include the need for more transparency which will build trust, prevent unnecessary conflict, and strengthen our leadership styles and effectiveness. While our congregation has begun to heal, work remains to be done in this effort.

COMMUNICATION

We recognize the need for better communication within our parish, utilizing email, bulletin boards, weekly bulletins, and signage, as a few examples. We also feel the need for more transparency within our congregation, and we'd like to see more communication between the rector and vestry and the rest of the parish. As we consider our communication needs, we also need to form a common mission of St. Mark's, San Marcos, and get our message out into the community.

YOUTH/YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY

A concentrated emphasis on youth and young adult ministries is needed. We need to use our space and resources to attract younger generations of families and young adults, for we have had difficulty retaining their membership in recent years. We need to implement a vital youth program and reach out to students at Texas State University by bringing them to our campus for worship and fellowship.

SOCIAL OPPORTUNITIES

We would like more social activities in which the whole church can be involved, such as dinners in the parish hall or joint game activities. As a large church family, we would appreciate the opportunity for further development of community and time to come together in fellowship.

*"Where it is right,
strengthen it;
where it is in want,
provide for it;
where it is divided,
reunite it.
Look graciously on Your
Church, and so guide the
minds of those who shall
choose a rector for this
parish, that we may receive
a faithful pastor, who will
care for your people and
equip us for our ministries..."
- from the "Prayer for the Search
Committee"*

VITAL STATISTICS

Baptized members: 454

Average Sunday attendance: 119

Total Operating Revenues (2010): \$326,982

Total Operating Expenses (2010): \$303,484

Stewardship for 2010 (75 pledge units): \$222,119

Stewardship for 2011 (84 pledge units): \$258,420

Sunday worship consists of a Rite I service at 8:00 AM, a Rite II service with contemporary music at 9:00 AM (currently under revision), and a Rite II service with the chancel choir and organ music at 11:00 AM.

Adult and children Sunday school is offered at 10:00 AM. In between services and after 11:00, folks gather in our parish hall for drinks, snacks, and fellowship.

Morning Prayer is offered Monday through Friday at 8:00 AM, and Evening Prayer is offered on Mondays at 5:30 PM. The St. Mark's Preschool children's chapel is held on Tuesday mornings with children's singing.

Our sanctuary is a pearl as a music venue, and our choir includes section leaders that are choral students at Texas State University.

Among our fellowship activities is Tres Magos (Three Kings) in January. We offer a Shrove

Tuesday Pancake Supper, and we hold weekly Lenten Luncheons with interesting speakers. During Easter weekend we have an Easter Vigil reception and an Easter egg hunt for church and community children.

Our church, as a family, retreats to Family Camp at the Mustang Island Retreat and Conference Center in June each year (a diocesan camp). We also sponsor an environmental fair and a fall spiritual retreat.

We try to come together four times a year by offering one service on a specified Sunday, allowing the entire congregation to worship together and draw emphasis on a certain ministry and how to become involved.

PARISH LIFE & WORSHIP



OUR

MINISTRIES

- **Acolytes**
- **Altar Guild**
- **Christian Education/Formation**
- **Communications**
- **Daughters of the King** – A prayer group to arouse interest for Christ and His Church.
- **Environmental Stewardship** – Has implemented resourceful activities and items at St. Mark's.



- **Episcopal Church Women (ECW)** – Creates a community and fellowship for the women of the church; the principle event, in addition to 3-4 annual meetings, is the ECW Paper Party, a fund-raising event that has become an institution in the San Marcos community, enabling the ECW to raise and donate money to St. Mark's, as well as to non-profit entities.
- **Flower Guild** – Group of volunteers that prepare and arrange altar flowers, at times choosing from their gardens.
- **Greeters/Ushers**
- **Grounds/Landscaping/Maintenance**
- **Hospitality** – Providing a welcoming atmosphere to all who come to St. Mark's, with coffee/tea/snacks before and after church services.
- **Lay Readers and Lay Eucharistic Ministers**
- **Labyrinth**
- **Los Hermanos** – Creates a community of fellowship for the men of the church who participate in service to St. Mark's Church and the community.
- **Music Ministry**
- **Newcomers' Team** – To intentionally attend to the needs of the newcomers at St. Mark's.
- **Pastoral Care Team** – Meets weekly to assist families and individuals needing food and solace.
- **Spiritual Formation Committee**
- **Stations of the Cross** – A half-mile participatory living diorama that draws the community during Lent, in collaboration with the First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).
- **Youth Ministry**

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- **African Jewelry Ministry** – Through annual jewelry/household accessories sales, our parishioners support others across the planet.
- **Angel Food Ministries** – Collaborating with the First Christian Church and the First Lutheran Church, food is distributed monthly.
- **Camp Hope** – A summer day camp experience in conjunction with the First Lutheran Church.
- **CROP Walk** – Spear-headed by our youth.
- **Financial Outreach to Salvation Army** through discretionary funds – we have a footprint in the community as a resource for meeting needs.
- **Hays County Food Bank**
- **Honduras Mission** – Support for a local school and breakfast program.
- **Lessons and Carols** – An Advent offering to the community of San Marcos.
- **Meals on Wheels** – A collaborative effort with other churches in San Marcos to deliver mid-day meals to elders and many who are “shut-ins.”
- **Music Ministry** – Ongoing relationship with choral department at Texas State University brings musical opportunities and concerts to St. Mark’s. We offer choir scholarships to their extensive music program.
- **Redwood Community** – Assistance for a local low-income area; goal is to provide a facility where Redwood can provide social services to the community.
- **School of Wisdom & Practical Spirituality** – By addressing a wide range of spiritual interests in a Christian context, the school has resulted in more new members for the church than anything else in the last ten years.
- **Spiritual Direction Groups** – Five to six groups meet monthly at St. Mark’s.
- **St. Mark’s Computer School** – Instruction on the computer offered to the community.



- **St. Mark’s Preschool** – Quality preschool education open to 3- to 5-year-old children in the community.
- **Stations of the Cross** – A Lenten offering in conjunction with the First Christian Church.

OUR CORE VALUES AND VISION AREAS

Core Values

What we are all about, who we are, what we offer as a Parish, and why we do what we do.

Spirituality

A long history rooted in the Book of Common Prayer as a spiritual resource, engaged in the School of Wisdom and Practical Spirituality, desiring an authentic relationship with Jesus.

Outreach

Seeking and serving Christ in the world, healing and restoring our families, parish family and Texas State university students, faculty and staff.

Children and Youth

Committed to be an intergenerational community that includes children and youth in fellowship, spirituality and mission.

Community

An open Christian community, seeking to grow in our fellowship with God and in compassionate engagement with the world.

Vision Areas

The parish we aim to become: a vivid word picture of our desired future state, large enough to challenge, clear enough to guide.

Growth and Newcomers

Providing a welcoming and intergenerational community, with services and facilities to meet the needs of all ages.

Youth/Young Adults

Offering a vital and growing youth and young adult programs, fully utilizing our facilities, reaching out to our youth and young adults, students and faculty of Texas State University as they regularly attend worship, spiritual formation and fellowship activities.

Mission and Outreach

Encouraging greater participation and develop additional leadership for the numerous mission and outreach programs identified in the parish profile and new programs not yet identified. Our communications regarding the opportunities and ongoing activities for our programs are continually improving.

Spiritual Formation

Building the foundation of our church family by encouraging spiritual growth through worship, education, study, spiritual direction and social interaction.

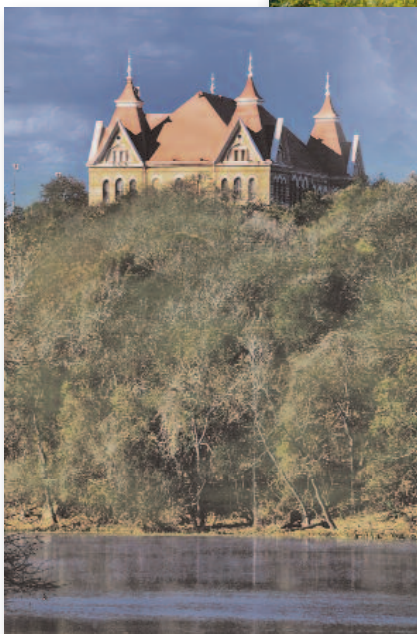
Social Opportunities, Building Community

Involving the entire church in social activities. As a large church family we develop community and come together to experience God's Grace and Love.

Our Rector Profile

Our rector shall have the ability to lead the church while also being actively engaged with the congregation; someone who models our mission statement with enthusiasm and energy; caring for all, with flexibility and grace. The results of a parish-wide desired skills/experiences survey are prioritized as follows:

1. Good pastoral skills
2. Effective preaching skills
3. Strong children's Sunday School program
4. Youth ministry
5. Encourage and enable lay leadership
6. Good counseling skills
7. Ministry to families
8. Interest in various expressions of worship
9. Christian adult education
10. Openness in sharing his/her personal faith



THE CITY OF SAN MARCOS

San Marcos is located in Hays County along the I-35 corridor between Austin and San Antonio. Sitting along the banks of the San Marcos River, the city offers beauty, Texas Hill Country charm, and plenty of activity. The area is considered to be among the oldest continuously inhabited sites in North America, and currently boasts a population of approximately 50,000 residents.

San Marcos is home to Texas State University, the sixth-largest university in the state. With more than 32,500 students, Texas State offers undergraduate and graduate students a choice of 97 bachelor's, 89 master's and nine doctoral degree programs in disciplines as diverse as geography, aquatic biology, electrical engineering and mass communication. Research and development expenditures at Texas State have more than tripled in the past five years.

San Marcos has over 1,200 acres of parkland for recreation. The Aquarena Center is located at the headwaters of the San Marcos River and offers glass bottom boat rides, kayak tours, an aquarium, a wetland project, among other educational opportunities.

The largest employers in San Marcos are Texas State University, San Marcos Consolidated Independent School District (SMCISD), Hays County, Hunter Industries, and the Central Texas Medical Center. The SMCISD operates eleven campuses to meet the needs of more than 7,000 students. Student academic performance is the main priority of the district. For the fifth year in a row, San Marcos campuses have been recognized for gains in student performance by the Texas Education Agency. Other educational opportunities for children are provided by several academically excellent private schools for grades K-12.



THE DIOCESE OF WEST TEXAS

The Diocese of West Texas comprises 90 congregations spread over 60 counties in South Central Texas. Bishop of the diocese is the Rt. Rev. Gary Lillibridge, and Bishop Suffragan is the Rt. Rev. David Reed. Headquarters for the diocese are in San Antonio.

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St. Mark's

Vestry - 2011

Bruce Barnes,
Senior Warden
Sarah Carlisle,
Junior Warden
Melissa Byrn
Larry Hanson
Andrea Heaberlin
Dean Lulich
Ed Longcope
Joan Matthews
Kaare Remme
LeAnne Smith
Lynn Villarreal

St. Mark's Search

Committee - 2011

Dianne Pape, *Chair*
Peter Baen
Jim Byrn
Donnelle Gooch
Dickie Heaberlin
Celeste Healy
Diana Hendricks
Gerald Hill
Jim Kimmel
Susie Lewis
Ken Nesbitt
Kevin Valenta

September, 2011

*Design by Diana Hendricks
Photography by Diana Hendricks,
Dickie Heaberlin and Ken Nesbitt.*