



ST MARK'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

CALLED TO BE CHRIST CENTERED

Touching Lives + Transforming Hearts + Teaching God's Word

On July 13, 1877, the first service of record for what was later to become St. Mark's Parish was conducted by the Rev. William Roberts Wetmore, who had pedaled a bicycle from Lincoln for the occasion.

During the formative years of the parish, services were held in the old Academy on the north side of town, as well as the City Hall and the old YMCA building on the corner of Main Avenue and South Street.

A church building was erected on West Long Avenue and was consecrated November 20, 1903, by the Rt. Rev. Junius M Horner. St. Mark's officially became a parish in 1915 with an enrollment of 74 communicants.

The present location of St. Mark's was acquired and converted in 1948. The Parish Hall was added in 1955 and upgraded with additional meeting space in 2005.

St. Mark's Episcopal Church

258 W. Franklin Blvd.

Gastonia, NC 28052

704-864-4531

fax 704-865-3367

www.stmarksgastonia.org

The Rev. Shawn Griffith, Rector

The Rev. Greg McIntyre, Asst. Rec.

The Rev. Pat Cheshire, Deacon

Mrs. Julia Bozarth, Dir. of Music

Mrs. Polly Redd, Dir. of Christian Formation & Communication

Mrs. Trish Anderson, Bus. Admin.

Mrs. Jean Eaddy, Office Admin.

The next day John again was standing with two of his disciples, and as he watched Jesus walk by, he exclaimed, "Look, here is the Lamb of God!" The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. When Jesus turned and saw them following, he said to them, "What are you looking for?" They said to him, "Rabbi" (which translated means Teacher), "where are you staying?" He said to them, "Come and see." John 1:35-39

Our annual meeting this year will be held Sunday, Jan 15th and I hope and pray that you will make every effort to be there. Over the last two years St. Mark's has been going through a process to help us be a more vital congregation. Our purpose is better focused and we have seen ministries grow from the hearts of people who are passionate about reaching out to others. We want to encourage that mission-ary part of who we are by finding additional ways of being Christ to the world.

I know that over the past year there has been some concern expressed in certain circles about ministries falling down or lacking support and leadership. I want to be clear that it was the changes I made and not the responsibility of others that resulted in the sense of chaos we have experienced together. I also want you to understand why I made those changes.

Most churches are losing members and giving is decreasing because "The Church" is internally focused only on surviving. Most churches are operating on an organizational model that no longer leads responding to the Holy Spirit but instead fearfully manages its own demise.

I needed a vestry that was freed from running committees to help vision a new way of being in communion as a people of faith and with the world. And so I asked the vestry members to let go of committee responsibilities and to help lead this parish into the future.

Two wonderful things occurred when I made that decision. The first thing that happened is something I was hoping for. The vestry has found new energy bringing about new ideas to enrich our common lives, strengthen our ministries in the world, and proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ.

The second thing that happened was something I did not expect. There is an old saying in the church that 20% of the people do 80% of the work. In the Episcopal Church that 20% is usually the vestry and a few others. At St. Mark's vestry members have been doing a great deal of the work to support our common life, so when the vestry members stopped, so did much of what people value, such as meals for those home from the hospital. (continued on page 3)

Worship Services

Sundays

8:00 am Eucharist

Traditional Rite I Service with sermon and music; Morning Prayer on 5th Sundays

10:30 am Eucharist

Rite II Service with choir; Children's Chapel during Liturgy of the Word portion

Weekdays

Eucharists

3:30 pm 1st Wednesday of the month, Covenant Village

6:00 pm Wednesdays, following 4:30 Bible Study

7:00 pm Thursdays (1st, 2nd, 3rd & 5th) with healing, Order of St. Luke Ministry

Holy Baptism

Baptism is the accepted method for becoming a member of the Episcopal Church for all ages. Baptisms are generally held as part of the regular Sunday worship and traditionally are done on All Saints Sunday in November, Epiphany I in January, the Easter Vigil the Saturday before Easter Day, and Pentecost Sunday. Other times may be arranged by contacting the clergy or the church office.

January Service Schedule

Children's Epiphany Pageant

Sunday, January 8

8:00 AM Holy Eucharist Rite I

9:30 AM Children gather in Parish Hall to prepare for Pageant

10:30 AM **Holy Eucharist Rite II with Children's Epiphany Pageant as lessons and sermon**

No Breakfast, Sunday School, or Chapel.

Annual Meeting

Joint Service, Sunday, January 15

9:30 AM Holy Eucharist Rite II with Chapel & Nursery. Continental breakfast before & after the service.

10:45 AM Sunday School Classes for ages 3 through 7th grade, Nursery continues

10:45 AM Annual Meeting for 8th grade and older & all adults, including election (by drawing names from a hat) of 4 new Vestry members, review of past year and look ahead in areas of shared ministry, an exciting new vision for how we do ministry at St. Mark's. Be sure to attend. Your presence and voice are important.

11:45 AM **Potluck Lunch for all !**

Please bring a dish to share with the Parish Family - either meat, vegetable, salad, or dessert. Beverages will be provided.

January 22 and 29: Regular Schedule Resumes with 8 & 10:30 services with Chapel during the 10:30 service, 9:00 Breakfast, and 9:30 Sunday School Classes for all ages.

(continued from page 1) A friend of mine once said that her husband thinks that there are kitchen fairies in their house. These fairies wash the dishes and put away all the open food. Brothers and Sisters in Christ, while we believe in Angels and the Holy Spirit, we have no parish fairies that set the Altar every Sunday or plan the picnics or teach in Sunday school, or even feed the hungry and take meals to others.

I am sorry that I did not have in place a plan that would have reduced the brief loss of parish support that happened when the vestry moved their attention away from running activities and focused on prayer, discernment, and leadership. But I think the blessing is that now we can see that if we are to be a vital congregation it will take all of us working together.

I began this article talking about the Annual Meeting that is coming up. We are not going to give committee reports. We are not going to spend hours reviewing a budget. What will happen is that the clergy and lay people will present to you what we believe God has presented to us.

You will not receive information about what the church is doing, as much as you will receive an invitation to be a part of the shared ministry that from this day forward defines us as a people of God.

Now, more than any other time in the six years that I have been with you, I truly believe that the Holy Spirit is speaking to us "Come follow me." I have already seen what God is doing in our midst and I rejoice in those blessings.

I mentioned in Adult Formation class one Sunday that St. Mark's is one of a very few churches in our Diocese that is growing. Almost every meeting I attend, I hear about churches that have to go from a full time priest to part time clergy. Many of those ministries are being stopped because giving is deceased.

Our membership at St. Mark's is growing. Average Sunday Attendance (a standard measure of church growth) continues to go up each year. Our giving is increasing. We have more opportunities for spiritual education. Our people feel empowered to initiate ministries that touch the lives of those in our city. With the blessing of Greg and his family, we are strengthening our parish now and for the future.

Please come on Sunday, January 15, listen and share in this discussion. We encourage you to accept the vestry's invitation to follow the Holy Spirit. As Paul says in Corinthians, we are one body because we have one baptism. We need you, we need everyone. Come and see.

Shawn +

**Children's Epiphany Pageant
Sunday, January 8, 2012
as the Lessons and Sermon
during the 10:30 service**



The children of the parish will retell the story of Jesus' birth on Sunday, January 8. Be sure to come to again see how Jesus first came to earth and who came to worship him.

Rehearsals are Thursday, 1/5 at 4 pm for readers and narrators; Friday, 1/6 at 4 for everyone and Saturday, 1/7 with costumes for all. There will be a continental breakfast available on Sunday morning as we get ready at 9:30 in the parish hall, but no regular breakfast nor Sunday School classes will be held.

We hope to see everyone in the pews for this wonderful service. As a congregation we will also hear about the baptism of our Lord and renew our own Baptismal Covenant during the service. See you there.



**Faith & Health Ministry
for St. Mark's**

Monday, January 23rd at 7 PM in the Vestry Room will be a meeting to explore a **Faith and Health Ministry Program** for our parish.

Charlotte Craig, RN & CaroMont's Wellness Program Director, and Mike Johnston, CaroMont Chaplain, will join us to explain the church-based wellness program they are part of. The Faith and Health Ministry of Gaston County helps congregations in the CaroMont service area develop health ministries that promote both individual health and community wellness. This ministry can give greater access to information, screenings, and educational opportunities that nurture us all by promoting health and wellness for the body, mind, and spirit. It might even involve a parish nurse type program for us. Any St. Mark's member involved in the medical profession in any way and those who are just interested in working with others to promote wellness are encouraged to attend this meeting. If you have any questions, contact Fr. Greg.

Comings & Goings

Office Hours The church office is closed Fridays but messages are checked during the day. If you have a pastoral emergency, call Fr. Shawn at 704-718-7034 or Fr. Greg at 828-230-7617. Keep these numbers handy.

CPC's Miles of Pennies: Continue to bring your change to put in the large container by the door for our Miles of Pennies collection for children's printed materials around the world. A mile is \$844.80 and we have sent in our first mile.



ECW Women's Circle: All are welcome at the ECW Circle Group which meets the first Monday of each month at 10:30 at Covenant Village. Betsy Steketee coordinates the group and they are doing a survey-type study of the Old Testament this year. The next Circle Meeting is in February when we will look at Israel under the kings Saul, David and Solomon.



Prayer Shawl Ministry: Knitters and crocheters meet on Sunday mornings at 8:30 with Nancy Brewbaker in the Balthis Room to make prayer shawls for others to be wrapped in prayer. Speak to her about how to get started.

St. Mark's Nursing Home Birthday Ministry on the 1st Friday of each month at 3:30 pm brings flowers and a card to **Abingdon Place** residents with birthdays during the month. The group shares a simple Bible story, along with cake and ice cream. Plans are to expand to other sites soon. Anyone interested in donating flowers, giving bud vases, or being part of the group that visits, contact Troy Merritt (704-604-3636) or Mike Janik (704-825-9942).



Bible Study Groups:

Wednesday Afternoon Group meets at 4:30 pm each week in the Balthis Room to study the Acts of the Apostles. Everyone is welcome. The Wednesday Bible Study is followed by a mid-week Eucharist for those who wish to stay. Speak to the clergy for information.

Belmont Evening Group meets once a month on a weeknight at 6:30 pm at the home of Blaine and Cookie Rudisill in Belmont. They are studying Genesis. The next date is Wednesday, January 11. For directions or more information, call the Rudisills at 825-3045.

Thanks from CAM: CAM has written to thank us for our October food contributions. St. Mark's, along with other churches in the community, donated enough food to provide 1103 bags to 529 people during the month. Thank you to all who contributed. Keep CAM in your thoughts and with donations during the rest of the winter. Contributions of food or money can be made at any time and the need continues to grow. Contact Hal Domenico for how you might get involved.



The Order of St. Luke meets each Thursday for a service of Eucharist with Healing at 7 pm. The group meets at St. Mark's the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 5th weeks and at All Saints on the 4th week. If you have questions or want more information about the Order, speak to Deacon Pat Cheshire.

Our very active **Daughters of the King Order** meets the 2nd Sunday of each month following the 10:30 service. Any woman interested in studying to be part of the Order should speak to Brenda Gilbert or any daughter.



Our IHN Visitors will be with us the week of January 29 through February 5. Volunteers are needed to provide meals and to spend the night at the church during the week. Jimmy and Ann Jordan will be putting out a chart for sign-ups in early January. There are lots of ways to help so watch for the sign-ups and help extend the famous St. Mark's Hospitality to our guests.



The Choirs are beginning work on a special Gospel Sing to be held on February 12 in partnership with several other downtown church choirs. Mark your calendars and watch for details in the February Newsletter. Anyone interested in joining the choir should speak to Julia about what singing with them entails.



2012 Pledge Envelopes are in the office and will be on a table in the parish hall displayed by name to collect on Sunday if you indicated you wanted them on your pledge card. Any questions about pledges or envelopes should be directed to Trish Anderson in the office.

During Playground Construction (which is starting soon), please knock loudly at either of the parking lot side glass doors and wait for us to hear you and come to let you in as the Franklin Blvd. side will be closed, or you can call the office to ask to be let in.



In the last newsletter I talked about helping children be more comfortable in church. Since then I have had several people speak to me about the general atmosphere in our services. The last time I preached I was aware in a different way to both a crying child and someone's phone going off during the service, more than once. We all have gotten so conditioned to having our phones with us at all times that we sometimes forget to silence them when we are in church or other places that should be quiet, I know. So how do we find the balance between maintaining that quiet, prayerful space in our sanctuary that allows people to listen to the voice of God as they prepare to worship and still wanting to greet and welcome the members of our parish family back after a week apart? That is the dilemma we find ourselves in as adults. I personally think we need to keep in mind that we are in a shared space. When we come in the door to the building, we can easily speak to people, smile at our friends and acquaintances, welcome those who are visiting, and generally "catch-up" without worrying that we are bothering others. As we move toward the steps and doors into the narthex and sanctuary, however, we should remember to be more reverent and quieter, both for our own mindset as we enter and for all those who are already in the pews. And this is true whether we are coming into St. Mark's proper or joining a worship service in the parish hall, in the yard, or at the park. When we worship, we need to be open to hearing God's message to us, to hear that "still small voice of God" that whispers in our ear and helps us know where we are to go. We cannot do that if we are filling our heads with talk of last night's TV show or the game coming up that afternoon or the latest items our children are selling for school. These are conversations for after church or in the parking lot as we come in, not during our gathering for worship. Children also need to be reminded that they are in holy space when we are in church and they should use lower voices and be respectful of those around them. None of us want to be a distraction to others or an impediment to God. So turn off the ringer on your phone, smile to everyone, and save that voice for passing the peace during the service.

Blessings for a bright Epiphany, Polly

A New Year's Reflection...

I know that the beginning of the Church year is the first day of Advent, but try as I might, I can't keep myself from aligning my enthusiasm and energy with the secular New Year. I think it's because I've really come to love New Year's resolutions. Life with young children has led me out of the phase of my life where the New Year was just a good excuse for a great party. If you've ever tried to find a babysitter on New Year's Eve, you know what I'm talking about. The parties were fun and I miss them, but now that I have begun to bring in the New Year in a more sedentary fashion, I have to admit I'm beginning to like the secular holiday more and more. I even find myself looking forward to it. And I definitely don't miss the way I used to feel when I'd wake up on New Year's Day.

Somehow, a tradition has crept into my home where we have a New Year's Eve bonfire. Our family is big on bonfires. My wife, Kathleen, is a closet pyromaniac, I think; she'd say the same about me. She's the driving force behind the once-a-month full moon bonfires in our yard where we howl at the moon and stare at the fire. We even kept this tradition going when we lived in Manhattan. It became a community event at the school. Seminarians like to howl at the moon, too, it turns out, and everyone needs a little pagan ritual in their lives probably. At our New Year's Eve bonfire, though, we write down something we want to get rid of in the upcoming year. It sounds corny (because it is), but there is something very healthy in evaluating your life and thinking intentionally about what we want to let go of. It is a good thing to denounce those parts of our lives that don't serve our greater good—those things that keep us from growing into our fully created expression of who God wants us to be, namely, Children of God who are created in God's own image. Writing those down and then watching them burn is not such a bad thing to do once a year.

The New Year is an opportunity to ponder the need for a blank slate in our lives—a fresh start. It has a lot to do with our Christian concepts of forgiveness. Both are processes. Neither one means, necessarily, that we will be broken one day and completely whole the next, although we don't know what is outside the realm of God's possibility. More often we let old ways go over time. (continued on page 8)

St. Mark's is changing how we do ministry. We are using a more shared approach that recognizes **every member of the parish**, not just the clergy and staff, as part of the "ministry team". **The Pastoral Care Support Team** is a group of people dedicated to helping the parish care for each other, particularly during times of individual or family crisis. This group coordinates meals, prayers, equipment, and visits all with that personal touch that is so much a part of St. Mark's. One of the great comforts of belonging to a parish is the support that you have during those difficult times.



The Ministry of Pastoral Care: Bereavement Ministry Team

At one time or another, all of us will face the death of someone we know and love in our family or extended circle. Recognizing this, St. Mark's has established **The Bereavement Ministry Team** as part of the Pastoral Care Support Team. The Bereavement Ministry Team, led by Brenda Gilbert, offers the family the choice of either a meal at their home (such as lunch or dinner before or after the funeral) or a reception in the parish hall. Each family is also presented with a "Beyond This Day" memorial book and gift box to hold special mementos of their loved one. If you would like to part of this worthwhile ministry by either providing food for the meal or reception, by serving guests at the reception, or by other support, please contact Brenda at 704-478-6030.

FAQs About Our Security System



Why did St. Mark's put in a security system?

Our security camera system has been planned for years and is the result of a study of safety issues we face as a downtown church. The plan for our system reviewed recommendations by the Gastonia Police Department and the NC guidelines for House of Worship Safety, along with best practices for churches across the US. The system is primarily focused on monitoring the entrances and exits to the church and the nursery area. It also is focused on safeguarding our staff, who often work alone during the week. The cameras are a backup system to the locks securing our facility.

Who has access to the system?

Access to the camera system is limited to office staff during the work hours so that they can monitor the entrances to the building. The St. Mark's Safety Team are all trained on the system in case of an incident that requires retrieval of recorded video.

Where are the cameras?

Interior cameras monitor the office hallway and the hallway leading to the parish hall, as well as the nursery rooms. Future exterior cameras will monitor all exits, the columbarium and playground.

Who looks at the video?

During the week, office staff can use the system to monitor entrances and work areas. At other times, cameras will be accessed for safety incidents. In an emergency situation the system will be checked as part of our steps in calling 911, as appropriate (ie. lost child, intruder, theft, etc.). In non-emergency cases all requests to view footage must be approved by a member of the clergy.

I heard the cameras monitor audio; are we being recorded?

The system has the capability to record audio. However, wiretapping laws in NC prohibit recording without permission. The audio of our system, therefore, has been disabled and has never been used.

How often are videos looked at?

Unless there is an incident or clergy approved request to access, the video will not be reviewed. Live video is used to monitor for safety during the work week to see who is approaching.

What are the future plans for security?

Part one of the plan was to ensure the safety of our staff and children. This involved covering the doors and nursery areas. The next phase will coordinate vestry plans for the playground and improvements in the columbarium with exterior camera installation.

Who do I contact with further questions? Dan Gilbert heads up the safety team d.gilbert@yahoo.com.

YOUTH NEWS

Fun fall youth events included the trip to Laser Tag and a lively bunch at the November Lock-In. December had the trip to a Christmas Tree Farm in Vail, NC and a great afternoon ice skating in Charlotte. The adult leadership is busy planning more exciting events for January all the way through the Spring. Some proposed activities will be a Souper Bowl / Super Bowl



Event the 1st weekend in February and a winter Ski Trip. January events are on the enclosed calendar. Watch emails and newsletters for details as they are finalized and details are made available. Anyone who has questions or would like to be involved with the youth ministry should contact Fr. Greg or speak to Rebecca Adams or Tom Gray.



Did You Know... ?

- ...The welcome posters you see on our interior doors during the Church seasons this year uses artwork by several contemporary Episcopal artists. Advent was "Starfire in the East" by David Orth, Christmas was "Be the Peace" by Diane Walker, and Epiphany is "And I Will Bless You" by Barbara Desrosiers. If you want more info on any of the pictures this year, the artists' name and web information are located on the bottom of each picture. (And special thanks to Walter Hobbs who prints these for us.)
- ...Daughters of the King members pray for the parish and their needs regularly as part of their Prayer commitment.
- ...The Brotherhood of St. Andrew is responsible for the *Forward-Day-By-Day* that is mailed to you from the church. We also thank Jean Deci who puts on the addresses and bundles them for mailing each time. Members of the Brotherhood also cook breakfast at the Salvation Army once a month led by Don Miller.



Camp Henry Dates for 2012

- June 17-23: Senior High
- June 24-30: Grades 3-5
- July 1-7: Grades 6-8
- July 8-10: Parents w/ 1st Timers & Camp Henry Service Camp
- July 11-14: Mini Camp
- July 15-21: Grades 4-6
- July 22-28: Grades 7-9

2012 Folders are available in the office and on the bulletin board near the kitchen. Make your summer plans now.

Parish Transitions

Transfer In - Catherine Cauthen Young, from Shandon Methodist Church, Columbia, SC

Transfer Out - Juddie Penegar Finison, to Avondale Presbyterian Church, Charlotte, NC

Deaths - Brother-in-law Jerry Creamer (PA), brother Bob Crawford (CO), & nephew Jesse Dabenport (NC), all from Brook Crawford's family

Chrissy Willett, sister-in-law of Liz Willett, (following a final Thanksgiving visit with family here, in Clearwater, FL

Roy McGill, Tina & Scott Queen's grandfather and Valerie & Duncan's great-grandfather, in Gastonia

Ron Rader, Shawn Griffith's step-brother, in Huntington, WV

January 2012

Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

1 8 & 10:30 HE	2 Office Closed 10:30 – ECW Circle, Covenant Village Every Mon-AA 8p	3 Every Tues & Thurs ↓ 7 pm-St. Mark's Aikido Club	4 4:30 pm Eucharist @ Covenant Village 7 Chancel Choir	5 4 pm – Pageant Rehearsal Readers Only 7 pm - OSL Healing Service	6 Office Closed 3:30pm-Abingdon Place Birthday Party 4pm-RehearsalAll	7 1pm-Pageant Dress Rehearsal for all
8 8-HE I 9:30Gather 10:30-HE II with Pageant; Hospitality & DOK to follow 4pm Club 45:5:30 EYC	9	10	11 4:30 Bible Study 6pm-HE 6:30 Belmont Study 6:30 Bell Choir 7pm Chancel Choir	12 7 pm - OSL Healing Service	13	14
15 9:30 Joint HE Service 10:45-SS & Annual Meeting 11:45-Potluch Lunch No EYC Meeting	16 ML King Holiday – Office Closed	17	18 BS, HE, & Choirs	19 7 pm - OSL Healing Service 7 pm-PFLAG, Bathis	20 Vestry Re-treat with Randy Ferebee, through Saturday after-noon →	21 Vestry Re-treat continues
22 8 am - HEI 9am-Breakfast 9:30-SS for all 10:30-HE II 5pm EYC Popcorn Theology	23 7 pm Faith & Health Ministry Meeting, Vestry Room	24	25 BS, HE, & Choirs	26	27	28
29 8 am-MP I 9am-Breakfast 9:30 Classes for all 10:30 HE II 4-8 pm EYC Bowling IHN Visitors Arrive	30 IHN in residence through Sunday, February 5 →	31				

January Schedule of Sunday Lay Servers

Vestry Person Responsible for January Lock-Up - Judith Maloney

January 1, 2012

Christmas I

(Continuation of January 15 Schedule)

Layreaders: 8:00 Ed Hoerning; 10:30 Mike Janik,
Brenda Gilbert, Joe Saunders (C)

Ushers: Chuck Forbes, Don Howe, Dan Gilbert

Acolytes: Austin Biles, Duncan & Valerie Queen

Greeters: Don & Pat Miller

No Breakfast, Children's Chapel, or Coffee Hour
Scheduled.

Nursery: Julie & Chris Christy

Children's Chapel: Polly & Jim Redd, Anthony Varriale
Nursery: Anna & Richard Carsner

A Light Continental Breakfast will be available before
and after the service.

No Coffee Hour Scheduled. Potluck lunch after the
meeting.

January 8, 2012

Epiphany I

Children's Epiphany Pageant

Layreaders: 8:00 Elizabeth Willett, Pat Townsend;
10:30 Pete Brake, Ann Jordan, Fred Hadfield(C)

Ushers: Greg & Rebecca Adams

Acolytes: Clay Williamson, Ally Adams, Jackson
Cloninger

Greeters: Alex & Terri Williamson

A Continental Breakfast will be available before the
pageant

Nursery: Page & Ryan King

Coffee Hour: Mary Carter Butt

January 22, 2012

Epiphany III

Layreader: 8:00 Jeff Bozarth, Judy Maloney; 10:30
Chad Barker, Liz Domenico, Chris Christy (C)

Ushers: Duane Pendleton, Tom Murphy, Don Miller

Acolytes: Coralie Watts, Harry Tiller, Sophia Varriale

Greeters: Jeanna & Russ Tiller

Children's Chapel: Julie Christy, Debbie Brake, Eli Dills

Nursery: Leilani Rabourn & Terri Williamson

Breakfast: Greg Dills

Coffee Hour: Brenda Gilbert

January 29, 2012

Epiphany IV

Layreaders: 8:00 (MP) Elizabeth Willett, Mary Stamey;
10:30 Claude Hueitt, Jeff Bozarth, David
Burns (C)

Ushers: Mary Carter & Jim Butt, Dan Gilbert

Acolytes: Stewart Butt, Thomas & Sophi Jolley

Greeters: Tim & Candy Grooms

Children's Chapel: Kristen Major, Marcia & Ethan
Thrower

Nursery: Heather & Tripp Griffin

Breakfast: Russ Tiller

Coffee Hour: Tina Queen

January 15, 2012

Epiphany II


Annual Meeting with 9:30 Joint Service, followed by Potluck Lunch

Layreaders: Jay Barnes, Wendela Correia, Paul John-
stone (C)

Ushers: Steve & Trish Campbell

Acolytes: Alex Campbell, Reynold & Mary Lyon

Greeters: Celia Billings, Blaine Rudisill



ALTAR FLOWERS

The sign-up sheets for altar flowers in 2012 are located near the elevator. Up to 3 families may provide flowers for any given Sunday in memory or honor of a loved one or occasion. Cost is \$43.00 per donation and special requests for flowers used or color are accepted. Altar flowers may be taken home or sent to the hospital or other shut-ins at the request of the donors. If you would like more information about how to give altar flowers and the general process, call the church office and speak to Jean or Trish. We have two potted ferns which are used on Sundays when no donations for flowers are given.



ST MARKS EPISCOPAL CHURCH

258 WEST FRANKLIN BLVD.

GASTONIA, NORTH CAROLINA 28052

(continued from page 5) We let our wounds heal over time, and we come to new life over time. Just because my son wrote down “no more pull-ups at night” (actually he got me to write it down because he can’t write yet) doesn’t mean that he won’t stop wetting the bed right away. It’s going to take time. And actually for him, getting rid of the pull-ups is a very brave step. Pull-ups have been a comfortable part of life. They are his safety net. And they’re all he’s ever known. But in order to grow he has to let them go and risk wetting the bed, which is uncomfortable. Personally, I am way past being ready for him to give them up; it will mean that I am officially done with diapers.

I guess letting go of something in the New Year is tied into the whole New Year’s resolution thing. I usually try to take things on at the New Year in addition to letting things go. And then at some point during the year, these healthy things that I have tried to instill in my life usually fade away. On a good day I can take a “nothing ventured, nothing gained” approach and just have fun with them. I have no real wisdom on how to sort out the New Year’s Resolution thing, because on a bad day I feel like I am just setting myself up for failure. I do think that the very fact that people make these resolutions is a statement of our human need to change and better ourselves. In Christian terms, we view this as dying to old ways in order to have new life—new life in Christ. Also, much of our scripture and tradition tells us that real change comes ultimately through God’s grace.

This letting go, and taking on, and changing, and growing, is never a bad human endeavor. God wants this for us whether we use secular holidays or Christian seasons as the vehicle to help set our intentions. So maybe you will set some intentions in this New Year. And if you do, just remember, whatever you take on as a New Year’s resolution... you can always give up for Lent.

God’s Peace,
Greg McIntyre +