

St. Mark's Episcopal Church
Annual Report – January 26, 2020

“Our goal should be to live life in radical amazement, (to) get up in the morning and look at the world in a way that takes nothing for granted. Everything is phenomenal; everything is incredible; never treat life casually. To be spiritual is to be amazed.” Abraham Joshua Heschel

“He comes in the form of the beggar, of the dissolute human child in ragged clothes, asking for help. He confronts you in every person that you meet. As long as there are people, Christ will walk the earth as your neighbor.” Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Dear St. Mark's Family,

We are now celebrating our 152nd year together as a mission of the good news of Jesus Christ. We are a growing community of love and joy and hope, grounded in our relationship with the Lord and with each other, grounded in spiritual amazement and service to especially those who are rejected by our world and society and those who suffer in any way.

Thank you for all of your hard work in time, talent, and treasure, week after week. You are the ministers of the church. We have lawyers and doctors, dentists, engineers, housewives and househusbands, politicians, students and retirees. Those are all ministries because everything we do is serving the Lord and serving and loving all people, the millionaire who has struck oil and the person who is homeless living on the side of the church and under the bridge on LincolnWay, and everyone in between.

We have 262 members and over 170 active non-members involved here in about 50 different ministries that range from Jim Dolby's Sharing and Bible Study Group, our faithful and spirit-filled adult and children's choirs, along with our Fresh Expressions Taize Team. Taize worship has become our second most attended worship service on Friday nights. We are now developing something called YES – a Yoga Eucharist Service. Imagine that. You will hear more in the coming weeks. We have Living Compass Lenten and Advent studies, our Sunday morning forums, the women's group: Girlfriends Unlimited, our ministry to babies, children and teenagers. Congratulations to high school student Harrison Rankin. He was elected to our vestry last year and then was one of fifteen boys throughout the entire country who was selected to spend a semester in Washington DC as a Page for the United States Senate. They were at school from 6 – 10 a.m. and then whipped over to the Capital from 10 – 5 p.m., then studied into the evening. He just returned this weekend. We have our Centennial Foundation Board that manages our endowment of nearly ¾ of a million dollars, and many faithful Vestry Board members who help guide the entire church. Parish Life continues to inspire hospitality and good food on Sunday mornings and other events. The Altar Guild continues to care for our sanctuary, working tirelessly every week, sometimes multiple times a week, quietly praying and serving.

Under the direction of Junior Warden, Angelene Kelley, and a faithful group of Junior Warden volunteers, our property, our holy space and sanctuary remains well-intact. This includes fixing a \$15,000 hole in the office ceiling that needed fixing (thank you asbestos) and a new boiler. For all of the property projects, Greg Sneesby, there is a special place for you in heaven for all the work you do around here!

The bell garden! We are getting ever so close to finishing our beautifully redesigned bell garden on the 19th street side of the property. Have you seen it lately? The lighting is now up. The bell has

been removed from the tower and is now in place. A special thank you to Rick and Ibby Davis for agreeing to house the bell in their garage for over two years!! This is the final part of our capital campaign that began many years ago. There is also a special place in heaven for you two as well!

We increased in pledge units this year from 74 to 81, a 10% increase. Our total pledge dollars increased as well from \$295k – 308k, a 5% increase. These are all good signs for our world and for St. Mark's Church.

Thank you to our extraordinary staff: Choir and Music Director Betsy Taggart and her assistant, Thane Yennie. Our Youth Director, Candy Snead, Sexton, Alek Keenan, and newly hired Norm Snead, our nursery staff, Marilynne Dobrzinski and Danielle Glowacki, and, of course, our Secretary, Wanda Hughes and her volunteer helper, Kathy Keck. Thanks to Ann Segrave, our financial documents are in order, with the help of treasurer Jimmie Richmond and finance chair, Sue Miller.

Thank you to Dave McElwain, our assisting priest, and his wife, Linda. You are both a great blessing to me and to this church.

So, what's next? We heard from you a few years ago that in the midst of many, many areas of service and worship, both outreach and ministry to babies, children and teenagers were particularly important. In outreach, we continue to serve in time and treasure Family Promise, Friday Food Bags, COMEA Shelter, Needs Local Food Band, Climb Wyoming, and we have recently explored partnerships with both Unaccompanied Student Initiative and habitat for Humanity. Through St. Mark's, we have dentists and lawyers who are helping teenagers who are homeless. We continue to have volunteers make meals and stay overnight in the church. We have given hundreds of thousands of dollars to these organizations. Our ministry to youth continues to abound and grow. I will have Candy speak in a minute about our ministry to youth, with people young and old helping out.

Soon, we will be having a St. Mark's Church event to explore InviteWelcomeConnect, a change of culture and practice through evangelism, or invitation, more intentional hospitality, or welcome, and discipleship, connecting people in more intentional ways to each other, to God, and in ministry. We need your ideas. This change of church culture requires input from all of you. Each church develops their own InviteWelcomeConnect culture because every church is different, yet all one in Christ. Save the date: Saturday, March 21 – An all-day event and feast that will inspire our parish to be transformed.

Thank you for all of the commitment and hard work through St. Mark's Church since 1868, 152 years in the making. You are part of this legend of Cheyenne. In the beginning, when all we had were bars and brothels, this church soon formed to make sure that people were cared for and loved, that the Gospel, the good news of Jesus Christ was shared. It continues to this day because of the legacy that includes you, all of those who show up week after week. Thank you for your faithfulness and for your continuing commitment to love and serve the Lord and each other. It is because of you that the Gospel of Jesus Christ continues to be proclaimed and shared in love.

Faithfully,

The Rev. Rick Veit
Rector