

St. Mark's Remarks

Seek God • • Serve Others • • Transform Lives

DECEMBER 2016

Services: 8:30 am-Praise Service . . 9:45 am-Children's Chapel & Lion's Den Fellowship . . 11 am-Choral Holy Eucharist Rite II . . 12:30 pm-Spanish Service . . Wed. 10 am-Healing Service

It's Advent. What Do We Do?

When I was a new Episcopalian, I remember learning how Christmas used to be celebrated only after a healthy dose of 4 weeks of Advent. I had already learned about Lent, a time of sacrifice, preparing for the cross in obedience and giving up something I craved, like chocolate. Not likely to be successful with THAT during the holidays! So, what do I do? What is the church doing?



Lo these many years after my initial questions, I realize I still have some work to do to fully grasp the concept of waiting in expectation for something I know has already occurred. No matter how hard I try to set aside time to meditate in the quiet glow of our Christmas tree (put up well in advance of December 24), my mind wanders as I wonder in front of the crèche... Should I keep the Baby Jesus under wraps until Christmas?

In her book, *The Meaning is in the Waiting: The Spirit of Advent*, (Paraclete Press, 2009) author Paula Gooder explores Advent with biblical examples of those who have waited, including wisdom-filled thoughts about "why God might want us to get better at it."

The Salvation story is like a snowball, rolling down a hill and picking up more layers with every revolution, Gooder

suggests, from the beginning in creation to God's many interventions with people:

In Advent, then, we wait for something that has already happened in sure and certain knowledge that it will happen again, and again, and again. It is this certainty that underpins the New Testament concept of hope." Ibid.

Advent is about the future too, as our readings from Revelation pointedly remind us. Gooder explores this as an opportunity to be aware that we are in a time of in between the beginning of the end and the conclusion of the Salvation story:

This explains why we can have a vision of the world as God yearns for it to be but not the ability to bring it about in full. ...we see glimpsers of God's glory in the world but have to wait for the time when that glory will suffuse the whole of creation." Ibid.

I am enjoying my journey with Paula Gooder's book this Advent, as it brings new focus to my daily meditations. I have found value in waiting!

It's never too late to squeeze Advent reflection time into your prayer life or Sunday Christian Formation classes. If you are looking for "what to do" for Advent, visit ecfp.org for a free Advent Calendar or other resources to enhance the quality of your wait.

... Linda Buskirk—ECF

St. Mark's Episcopal Church



322 North Horne Street, Mesa, AZ 85203

Office Hours: Tues —Fri: 9 am-1 pm

(480) 964-5820


E-Mail: office@stmarksmesa.org

Web Site: www.stmarksmesa.org



Join us at www.stmarksmesa.org for updates and more news!

Parish Directory

The Rev. Gerardo Brambila	Vicar
The Rev. Steven Ford	Assistant Priest
	
Chris Perry	Director of Music
Gloria McManus	Parish Administrator
Deb Cannon	Licensed in Children's Ministries
Kevin Nunez	Senior Warden
Terry Gordon	Junior Warden
Al Rausch	Treasurer

Bishop's Committee Members

Mayra Alvarado	John Ddamba
Elizabeth Hernandez	Dudley Jans
Patrick Mack	Jim Poulos
Paige Stalcup	



Ministry Leaders

Acolytes	Paige Stalcup
Altar Guild	Terry Gordon
Choir and Praise Ensemble	Chris Perry
Christian Formation for Youth	Deb Cannon
Communications	Dianne Nunez
	Kathy Cheatham/
	ML Burgess
Cursillo	Monica Larsen
Daughters of the King	Marge Fountain
ECW (Women's Ministry)	Jeanette Rogers
Food Pantry	Penny Place
Greeters	Judy Hossack
Hispanic Ministry	Fr. Brambila
Liturgical Arrangements	Viviana Brambila
Office Angels	Gloria McManus
Pastoral Care	Elaine Austin
PRIDE (Men's Fellowship)	Glenn Gordon
Scriptorium	Deb Cannon
Sunday Lay Ministries	Fr. Brambila/
	Gloria McManus
Tai Chi	Dee Greiner
Thrift Store	Sally Worthington
Ushers	Kathy Smith/
	Bob Cheatham

Visit us on the Web: www.stmarksmesa.org and join us on Facebook at St. Mark's Episcopal Church-Mesa, AZ

Kid's Korner . . .

All of the church school children will be preparing for their annual Christmas Pageant this month. The pageant will be performed during the 5:00 pm service on Christmas Eve. You don't want to miss this production, produced and directed by our very talented Sunday School teachers, and carefully portrayed by the very youngest to the oldest children in the Sunday School classes (and perhaps some guests). It's a memorable experience — so mark it on your calendar!



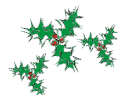
Cursillo Ministry News . . .

This year the annual Episcopal Cursillo Ministry Conference took place in the Diocese of Long Island, NY, October 20-22, 2016. Approximately 133 Clergy and Laity attended from 13 states, Washington DC, Barbados and the Bahamas/Caicos. Carol Williams, outgoing Cursillo President, and Monica Larsen attended from our Diocese. She was honored to serve as Acolyte as Bishop Provenzano of the Diocese of Long Island presided at a Eucharist. Deacons Denise Galloway of that Diocese and Vince Jang of San Francisco assisted. Presiding Bishop Michael Curry, in his letter to Conference attendees stated: "When I look to see where the Spirit is moving and Episcopalians are lit up with the love of Christ and each other, I know to look to Cursillo."

Info from the Office . . .

ATTENTION: The Sunday Spanish Service time has changed from 7:00 am to 12:30 pm.

Just a reminder that the schedules, i.e., Altar Servers, Readers, Intercessors and Chalice Bearers are posted on our website and copies are available for distribution in the wall pockets in the narthex. Please visit our web site at www.stmarksmesa.org — it is full of information — pictures, newsletters, information from our weekly bulletins — and, oh yes, even a calendar. You can find the schedules posted under the "Get Involved" tab.



On November 12, 2016, St. Mark's hosted an Ultreya in Knight Hall. Ultreya is an on-going, follow-up program for people who have made their three day Cursillo, linking them together in a Christian community that helps them support one another in their attempts to remain Christ-centered.

Apostolic enthusiasm is sustained as participants share their lives in Christ and are inspired by the lives of others in the areas of faith, holiness, and evangelization. Ultreya provides the continued support to make the Cursillo experience a lifetime one. If you are interested in more information about Cursillo, please contact Monica Larsen at 480-621-8158 or e-mail her at mlarsen498@aol.com.



Charles Carter gives his testimony and leads the group in song during the Ultreya.

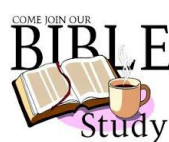


Christmas Compassion . . .

This year St. Mark's will sponsor five low income families with children at Christmas. We would like the families to enjoy a full beautiful Christmas with a tree, decorations, dinner and gifts of clothes and toys. We will gather donations and purchase gift cards for groceries, gas, and department stores. This will facilitate the purchase of clothes and toys, to avoid sizes and gender lists. Pre-owned, good condition Christmas trees and decorations will be appreciated. Anyone willing to help with this project, please contact Fr. Brambila or Gloria McManus in the office or see Mayra Alvarado in the Lion's Den between the 8:30 and 11 am services.

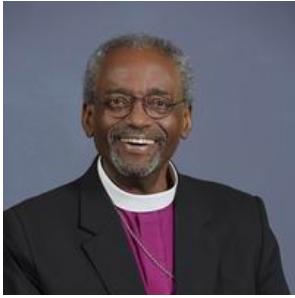


Bible Study Anyone?



A new Bible Study group will be starting on Wednesday, January 4, 2017 at 7:00 pm in the home of Carl and Mary Lou Burgess. Eric Hultquist has graciously agreed to lead the study in conjunction with Fr. Brambila. If you have been searching and searching for a Bible Study group — we invite you to join us. Please contact Eric, Carl, Mary Lou or Father if you are interested and we will provide you with all of the necessary information you need to enter and find the Burgess' home in Leisure World. Perhaps you have a friend or neighbor who would like to join us — please invite them too.

A Message From Presiding Bishop Michael B. Curry . . .



"The Episcopal Church Welcomes You," is not just a slogan, it's who we seek to be and the witness we seek to make, following the way of Jesus.

November 14, 2016

Episcopal Church Presiding Bishop and Primate Michael

B. Curry has issued the following statement:

Last week I shared what I pray was a reconciling post-election message to our church, reminding us that 'we will all live together as fellow Americans, as citizens.' Today I want to remind us that during moments of transition, during moments of tension, it is important to affirm our core identity and values as followers of Jesus in the Episcopal Anglican way.

Jesus once declared, in the language of the Hebrew prophets, that God's "house shall be a house of prayer for all nations" (Mk 11:17). He invited and welcomed all who would follow saying, "come to me all who are weary and are carrying heavy burdens" (Mt. 11:28).

We therefore assert and we believe that "the Episcopal Church welcomes you" – all of you, not as merely a church slogan, but as a reflection of what we believe Jesus teaches us and at the core of the movement he began in the first century. The Episcopal Church welcomes all. All of us!

As the Episcopal branch of the Jesus Movement today, we Episcopalians are committed, as our Prayer Book teaches to honor the covenant and promises we made in Holy Baptism: To proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ; To seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving our neighbor

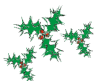
as ourselves; to strive for justice and peace among all people, and to respect the dignity of every human being.

As Christians, we believe that all humans are created in God's image and equal before God – those who may be rejoicing as well as those who may be in sorrow.

As a Church, seeking to follow the way of Jesus, who taught us, "you shall love your neighbor as yourself," (Mt. 22:39) and to "do to others as you would have them do to you" (Mt. 7:12), we maintain our longstanding commitment to support and welcome refugees and immigrants, and to stand with those who live in our midst without documentation. We reaffirm that like all people LGBT persons are entitled to full civil rights and protection under the law. We reaffirm and renew the principles of inclusion and the protection of the civil rights of all persons with disabilities. We commit to the honor and dignity of women and speak out against sexual or gender-based violence. We express solidarity with and honor the Indigenous Peoples of the world. We affirm the right to freedom of religious expression and vibrant presence of different religious communities, especially our Muslim sisters and brothers. We acknowledge our responsibility in stewardship of creation and all that God has given into our hands. We do so because God is the Creator. We are all God's children, created equally in God's image. And if we are God's children we are all brothers and sisters.

"The Episcopal Church Welcomes You," is not just a slogan, it's who we seek to be and the witness we seek to make, following the way of Jesus.

Presiding Bishop and Primate Michael B. Curry
The Episcopal Church



ECW's Christmas Spirit . . .

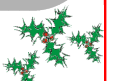
The members of St. Mark's ECW will be spreading their angel wings to fill requests from the Franklin at Alma Elementary School's Angel Tree this Christmas Season. The children at the school list 2 items they would like to have for Christmas and their requests have been hung on the school's Angel Tree. The children are so conservative and humble, asking for only 1 toy and 1 other practical item such as clothing and/or books. Maureen Davies who is a teacher at the school is leading the charge — so if you are interested in participating, please see her between the 8:30 and 11 am services on Sunday or give her a call at 480-641-5484. Her e-mail is davies.maureen@yahoo.com. They ask that the gifts be wrapped and returned to the church by Sunday, December 11th or returned to the school by Wednesday, December 14th.



Looking for some place for your old eye glasses??? There is a receptacle in Knight Hall on the table under the kitchen serving window to drop your old eye glasses. The Leisure World Lions Club will refurbish them for folks in third world countries. We Serve! Thanks Ray Haug.

A Time for Giving Thanks . . .

Our annual Thanksgiving Service and dinner was awesome and delicious on Wednesday, November 23rd . . . We had a good crowd - in spite of the "dreadful mokus" that has been attacking so many parishioners - and so much really good food and fellowship. For those who were not able to come, we missed you. Perhaps next year . . . Thank you everyone for your delicious dishes and thank you Father for the tamales! Yummy . . .



MarkDowns Thrift Store Looking for Help . . .



Tis the season for giving . . . Actually all year long is a season for giving and your parish thrift store needs your help . . . not just during this Christmas season but throughout the year. Can you give an hour — perhaps two or three per week to help at the thrift store? There is always something to do there . . . e.g., sorting, pricing, selling, straightening and sometimes there is a need to press some clothing or just use a dust cloth throughout the store. Do you know someone, perhaps someone you've met in your Lion's Club, your Optimist Club, your Recreation Center — or perhaps your neighbor or someone in your neighborhood who may be looking for something to fill their time? After all, it is only part time — 3 hours on the second and fourth Tuesday during the Food Pantry and every Thursday and Friday from 9 am to 1 pm. Our little thrift store is an integral part of our community and neighborhood and is a place where so many can come and buy affordable goods — They desperately need more help to do their marvelous work. Pray about it . . . Think about it. You will enjoy it.

Upcoming Events . .



December 11 — Our Lady of Guadalupe — 1 pm

December 11 — ECW & Men's Ministry Christmas Luncheon

December 16 — Los Posadas — Trinity Cathedral-Phoenix, 6 pm

December 17 — Los Posadas—Iglesia Sao Pablo —Phoenix, 6 pm

December 17 — Clean Up Day — 7 am

December 24 — Christmas Eve Services — 5:30 pm, 7:30 pm (Spanish), 10:30 pm (with music preludes 30 minutes before service)

December 25 — Christmas Day — 10 am service (English)

January 1 — New Year's Day — 10 am service (English)

January 22 — Annual Meeting — 10 am service (Bilingual)

Cursillo Grouping — Every Wednesday — 11 am in the Conference Room

***Baptism/Confirmation Class — Every Sunday —1:30 pm**

Scriptorium — new meeting times TBA — All are welcome

Tai Chi — Every Saturday Morning — 10 am in Knight Hall — All are welcome

***Note change in day and time.**



East Valley Pops Orchestra Rocks St. Marks . . .

It's hard to find a better place to be than at St. Mark's when the East Valley Pops Orchestra comes for their annual Christmas Concert — the Church comes alive with the sound of wonderful music! The Sanctuary with its marvelous acoustics is the perfect venue for orchestra music. On the eve of November 29th there was a sell-out crowd (even though the concert is free) and I could see the delight in everyone's faces. What a fantastic way to kick off the season. Thank you Chris Perry and the EV Pops!



This section of the Newsletter is provided for Parishioners to advertise their business. We will print a copy of your business card for a period of three (3) consecutive Newsletters. Rather than assess a fee for the publication, we are asking for a monetary donation to help defray the cost of printing the Newsletter. Currently, the Newsletter is distributed to all of our parishioners and guests — approximately 200 copies per edition. At the end of the three printings, you may renew your business card along with an additional monetary donation. Contact Mary Lou Burgess at mburg37114@aol.com or 480-218-5434 for further information.

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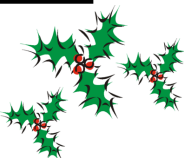
1106 N. Gilbert Rd. Suite 2
SW Corner Brown & Gilbert
Mesa, AZ 85203

Phone: (480) 844-0079
Fax: (480) 844-0048

info@mailandmoremesa.com
www.mailandmoremesa.com

Randy Rogers
Owner

Space available . . .



PAIGE STALCUP
Desert Pinyon Partners

480.227.4166
PAIGE@DESERTPINYON.COM

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