



ST MARK'S  
Episcopal Church

## The Missive

531 West College Avenue, Jonesboro, AR 72401

February 2015

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### A Message from Father Jesse....

As January concludes, we find ourselves well into 2015. However, I find myself continuing to think about this upcoming year, and the metaphor I “borrowed” for the annual to describe our church growth. If you were able to be here at our annual meeting on January 18 after church, you will remember seeing an image of a jet breaking the sound barrier, and also of Felix Baumgartner breaking the sound barrier while sky diving (falling) over twenty-four miles to the earth. I think this makes a great comparison to the work we do here as a church. The parallel I described is this: much like an aircraft approaching the speed of sound, a church will also get shaky as it approaches a growth barrier. While everyone is generally in favor of growth, the truth is that change and growth are hard; it takes intentionality and stamina to change. Things get “shaky” sometimes, and we have to have faith that God is in the mix working out something new and great to come. If you did not get a chance to attend the annual meeting, here are some links to the report and my presentation:

2014 Annual Report:

<http://www.stmarksjonesboro.org/wordpress/2015/01/15/2014-annual-report/>

Rector's sermon and report:

<http://www.stmarksjonesboro.org/wordpress/2015/01/18/sermon-1-18-15-annual-meeting/>

One of the ways in which a church gets “shaky” as it grows is that it feels less connected than it once did. There are new faces each week, too many people to meet than is possible, and fewer empty seats in the parish hall for lunches. So try and meet someone new this Sunday- there are plenty of new faces to chose from. Volunteer for a new ministry: usher, greeter, lector, choir- there are so many to chose from! Reach out and stay connected. Also, if you are having tests run or are otherwise admitted to the hospital, please call the church office or me directly and let us know. At present, there is no easy way for me to know who is in the hospital unless you call.

My office number is [870-336-9641](tel:870-336-9641), and it will automatically roll over to my cell phone if I am not at my desk. For emergencies, a phone call is the best way to go, as text messages, emails, and Facebook messages are not checked reliably in the evenings.

While growth is hard, it is not impossible, and if any church is ready to step forward it is St. Mark's. Thank you for your work here and your generosity, for the many ministries that work to keep this church going, and don't forget to say a prayer for St. Mark's as we walk forward into God's calling for this next year and the years to come.

God bless, Jesse+

## The Curate's Corner

This year, February is party in the front, fasting in the back. The first half holds the Super Bowl, Groundhog Day, Valentine's Day, Mardi Gras — and then we hit Ash Wednesday on February 18, to spend the rest of the month in the season of Lent.

"You are dust, and to dust you shall return." I heard that for the first time at my first Ash Wednesday service, in my first year at an Episcopal Church. The ashes were smudged on my forehead in the early hours of Wednesday. To notice death was nothing new, it was all around and in my mind, but unspoken. And now, to have another person proclaim my destiny of dirt — and to hear others being told the same — it was like a great exhalation of the breath we'd all been keeping in, an acknowledgment of the great elephant of mortality standing in all our rooms.

It wasn't an elephant, though. Dirt had come into the sterile room, covering our neatly swept floors and coating everything in its dust.

Lent, being the season of penitence and preparation for Easter's new life, itself requires some preparation. I don't think it is a time of dry drudgery, but a return to the earth of our lives. What matters? What will prepare the soil for the miracle of resurrection? What values should I be nurturing? What takes me away from living an authentic life?

We are dependent on dirt. We may think of dirt and soil as inert things, but they're very much alive — a healthy soil contains millions of microorganisms, living and dying and reproducing and decaying, creating the conditions that sustain life on our planet. We live because of it, we return to it, we need it.

That first Lent, I had prepared to begin the daily practice of Morning Prayer (from our Book of Common Prayer) and reading from a small book of daily insights on the Rule of Benedict. I'm much more of a "taking on" than a "giving up" sort of person (and even giving up meat could have been said as taking on vegetarianism.) This year, I'm focusing on more than metaphorical soil, and one of the things I'm signing up for is an EnviroLent daily devotional to be more in touch with creation and creator:

<http://ecotheo.org/2015/01/be-a-part-of-envirolent-2015/>

How are you preparing for our return to dirt and dust?

In hope, Amber

## Episcopal Church Women

ECW is a service group made up of the women of St. Mark's parish. St. Mark's cares about the meeting the varying needs of the women of the parish. The Episcopal Church Women's organization would like to know what your interests are and how we can help meet your needs as a Christian woman in today's world. We will be sending out a survey via email and post to all the women of the parish asking your input. Please take part in the survey so we can grow our organization and provide programming, outreach and service to not only the women of St. Mark's, but our whole parish and the community.

Members of our new leadership team are Laura Reynolds and Tammy Fowler, co-presidents, Sue Westenrieder, secretary, and Janice Kroeter, Treasurer. Our next meeting is Saturday, February 14 with refreshments at 9:30 and meeting starting at 10:00. We look forward to seeing you there!!

### .....Wanted: Old Photos.....

ECW is hoping to gather and organize memories from St. Mark's history and we need your help.

We would love to find old photos from the 40's, 50's, 60's, 70's, 80's and 90's of events, people, the building etc. If you have some to share, please contact Janice Kroeter at 974-1593.

### **PLEASE COME GET ME AND TAKE ME HOME!**



**Six or seven coats are hanging in the office hallway and are covering up the Quiet Bags. Some are adult coats and some children's. Please do check to see if one belongs to you or your child and take it home.**

**There is a closet in the narthex where you may hang coats which will keep the Quiet Bags from being hidden from view.**

## Christian Education

As Christian parents your most important task is to raise your children according to the ways of God. We want to partner with you in this endeavor. That is why we make accessible ministries designed for children here at St. Mark's. Both Christian Education and Children's Chapel are two ministries where St. Mark's young people can build faith, have fun, and develop friendships. A place where children can learn and grow in their Episcopal faith.

We are always looking for adult volunteers to help create a safe learning environment for children and to make ministry programs kid friendly, so if you are interested in sharing of your time and talents in ministries for children please speak with Fr. Jesse or contact Rose Mary (870-935-0236 or [rosemarylatan-ich@gmail.com](mailto:rosemarylatan-ich@gmail.com)) for more information.

There will be no Christian Education sessions scheduled for Wednesday, February 18 so that children will have the opportunity to attend Ash Wednesday services with their families.



### February—a Challenge for the Senses

I just wonder if anyone else gets depressed in the winter when the temperature is cold, the wind is piercing, and often the sky is clouded. This winter has been cold, so my mood has been a little less than great many days. I don't have financial problems, housing problems, car problems, or many other types of problems which our clients at Helping Neighbors Food Pantry have, so I can only imagine what many of them are going through. Many rely on food stamps and unemployment insurance, both of which have been cut during the past year. I do want to praise St. Mark's for the donations during 2014, because without churches like ours, the problems would be much greater. We donated about \$8,000, about 5,000 pounds of food and about 800 hours of volunteer service. Think about whether you would like to have a food drive during 2015 similar to the 15 can challenge. I was proud of our 1,600 cans of food, and we can always use additional canned foods, especially canned meats and soups and also jars of peanut butter. For all of the efforts you put forth during 2014, pat yourselves on the back, because all of you ROCK! I'm proud to be a part of St. Mark's, not only as a place of worship but also as a place of caring for those in our community. Please keep up the good work and help us to make 2014 an even better year.

Barbara

## *February Birthdays*

2/02 Elizabeth Matthews  
2/08 Mary-Margaret Nester  
2/09 Drew McJunkin  
2/11 Scott Wright  
2/11 Amanda Wheeler  
2/12 Avery Toombs  
2/13 Maggie Guinn  
2/17 Aylia Poston  
2/17 Mike Cobb  
2/17 Becky Wells  
2/18 Rachel Pearson  
2/18 Stephanie Matthews  
2/20 Rebecca Penley  
2/20 Kay Faulkner  
2/21 Edward Gary  
2/28 Claire Nix  
2/28 Beverly Pasmore  
2/28 Drake Thompson



## *February Anniversaries*

2/09 Carroll and Ruth Scroggin  
2/13 Randy and Rhinda Kesselring  
2/18 Tracy and Carol Neves

### Two Saints'

#### February Schedule

Feb 07– Team # 2  
Feb 14– Team # 3  
Feb 21- Team # 4  
Feb 27- Team # 5



## St. Mark's Day School

The cold weather has kept us inside for far too long! St. Mark's follows the Jonesboro Public School closings for inclement weather.

The next big event is Valentine's Day. On Valentine's Day the children enjoy being "postmen" and delivering their candy and valentines to teachers and friends.

We have opened enrollment for the Summer Program and will be offering full and part time care for the months of May, June, and July. The hours and options will be the same as the regular school year, so spread the word and get your name on the list!

Fall enrollment will begin the 1st of March. Call the school office for details. Thanks, Peggy

## Upcoming Events...

### February

- Feb 8 Coffee with the Rector  
Rector Open House
- Feb 13 Diocesan Convention
- Feb 14 ECW Meeting
- Feb 16 Vestry Meeting
- Feb 17 Chili Cook-off  
(Bring all chili at 5pm)
- Feb 18 Ash Wednesday
- Feb 19 Men's Club
- Feb 22 First of Confirmation Classes



### *Services*

*7:00 am*

*12:00 am*

*7:00 pm*

## Financial Update

	<u>January</u>	<u>Year to Date</u>
Pledges and Offerings Received	\$ 24,437	\$ 24,437
Needed to meet budget	<u>26,765</u>	26,765
Budget Surplus (Shortfall)	\$ (2,328)	( 2,328)
<b>Actual Expenses Paid</b>	<b>\$26,616</b>	<b>\$ 26,616</b>
<b>Actual (Shortfall)</b>	<b>(\$2,179)</b>	<b>\$ ( 2,179)</b>
<b>Loan Balance</b>	<b>\$173,608</b>	