

St. Mark's Episcopal Church

PARISH PROFILE



Into Christ, Out to Serve

Casper
Wyoming

About St. Mark's

The people of St. Mark's have been celebrating the Word of God together since 1891 when the congregation first gathered in a little white clapboard church in downtown Casper.

The present church was built in 1925 — its elegant structure features glorious stained glass windows and a magnificent pipe organ. Rich acoustics make the church a popular venue for instrumental and choral events.

We are a parish with a passion for shared ministry. The extent of our lay ministries is somewhat broad and varied. Because we are a smaller, fiscally-minded parish, we rely on volunteers rather than a lot of staff to keep St. Mark's running smoothly.

How we allocate our time, talent and treasure reveals our longstanding commitment to our church and our community.

Presently we have 300 or so families on our rolls and total Sunday attendance is about 120-135 souls, depending on time of year, weather and special events on the calendar.

Of course, our Christmas and Easter services are always popular with our congregation and our community. Because of our history of hospitality and open door policy of hosting local activities, St. Mark's is highly regarded



St. Mark's parish is 120 years old — our home is a lovely gothic-style church built in 1925. We are the city's oldest congregation. Descendants of the first couple married at St. Mark's in 1891 still worship here.

throughout Casper. A significant portion of the population has ventured through our doors at one time or another.

While we have not been immune to the tribulations within the national church in recent years, St. Mark's has emerged from those trials relatively unscathed and surprisingly healthy.

We are seeking a new priest because our previous rector was elected as the Bishop of Wyoming in March 2010. He was consecrated in Casper on July 31.



Wyoming is heaven on earth for those who love the outdoors. If you are looking for wide open spaces, spectacular scenery and limitless outdoor recreation, then Casper is the place to be.

About Casper

Casper (population 54,500) is the second largest city in Wyoming. While the state is the 10th largest geographically, the population has flourished in recent years to 550,000. Casper sits near the heart of Wyoming, making it a center for hospitals, higher education, business, industry and media. The offices of the Diocese of Wyoming have recently relocated to Casper.

The city has been growing steadily, fed by activity in the energy and construction sectors. Our community boasts good schools, excellent medical facilities and a range of cultural offerings. See www.cityofcasper.com and www.casperwyoming.org for more information.

Who We Are

Our parish represents a cross section of the community from slightly diverse socio-economic groups. Wyoming does not have significant racial or religious diversity so the congregation is predominantly white.

With our Outreach and personal evangelism efforts, we have seen in recent years a widening range of economic and political diversity within our membership.

While Wyoming is a conservative state, our members span the political gamut. Like many other Episcopal congregations, our members tend to be educated and well-traveled.

Our members include loyal older congregants, some of whom have worshipped at St. Mark's for more than 50 years. (One member just retired from 75 years of ministry as first an acolyte and later a worship leader.)

In the last few years, we have seen an increase in young families with children. Our Wednesday night youth activities also draw more young people into our building and the Boy Scouts have an active presence too.

St. Mark's is a friendly and warm church with open doors — and open arms — to visitors. We try to make everyone feel welcome and gently engage newer members in activities and ministries. One recently-formed ministry, the Soul Knitters, inspires us with its creations



The Merry (Dis)Order of Fun Nuns are a big hit at special St. Mark's celebrations.



St. Mark's has two Sunday services: Rite I at 8 a.m. and Rite II with music at 10 a.m. Sunday school runs concurrent with the second service. A Healing Service is celebrated at 7:30 p.m. on Wednesdays. In recent years we have enjoyed broadening our liturgical horizons with services outside of the Book of Common Prayer.

of warm and loving gifts of knitted hats, scarves and prayer shawls to the members of the congregation and various non-profit groups within community. This ministry exemplifies where we seek to go as a congregation with our Outreach efforts.

We desire to continue to grow by offering rich, meaningful worship and ministry opportunities. We seek to feed and encourage people of all ages to blossom as they journey with Christ and with each other.

Sing A New Song

We are a people who love music and have members with varied choral and instrumental talents. With the retirement of our organist and choir director in late January, we are now exploring our options and opportunities.

We look forward to sharing our musical journey with our new rector. In the meantime, we'll continue to find creative ways to make a joyful noise unto the Lord!

Out to Serve

Every year, St. Mark's members bless thousands of lives by providing crucial financial support to non-profit organizations at home and abroad.

We tithe 10 percent of our plate & pledge income to Outreach and each month the funds provide stable support to local agencies.

Some regular recipients of our Outreach dollars include the Youth Crisis Center, Interfaith, a local shelter for single parents with children, a 12-Step community center, a local rescue mission, food for hungry children. We also support international programs such as Episcopal Relief & Development, the Little Roses girls school in Honduras and Feed the Children-Honduras.

One of our most exciting ministries began last year with a one-time "Mustard Seed" grant from the Diocese of Wyoming's Foundation. Cross Roads Ministry has grown into a vibrant Christ-centered ministry which provides paid work, job training, Bible study, fellowship and



The women in Cross Roads Ministry find faith, friendship and hope as they work to rebuild lives shattered by poverty, abuse and addiction.

support to women in poverty in our community. Each week, women from a local shelter and Oxford House meet to create handmade paper and note cards which are sold at local craft fairs and in St. Mark's "Sign of the Lion" bookstore.

St. Mark's also operates its own Food Closet which provides non-perishable items to hungry families year-round. The Food Closet is funded through dedicated gifts, Outreach dollars and grants from local foundations. Each year, we also conduct a toy drive at Christmas, an Epiphany gift bag project for women in shelters and

several "Dressers for Mom" fundraisers to gather baby supplies for expectant mothers.

Our members seem to have no shortage of generosity. St. Mark's has been a program church for 25 years and is designated a Jubilee Ministry Center. Our Jubilee accreditation is up for renewal in 2011 and we as a parish, along with our new rector, must prayerfully discern whether to pursue re-certification.



For nearly 90 years, St. Mark's beautiful brick church has been loved by members and the community. Generous bequests, a plate & pledge set-aside and a very dedicated building committee have kept the structure in excellent shape.

Stewardship

St. Mark's has recently adopted a year-round approach to stewardship of its time, talent, treasure and relationships. Each family is contacted and encouraged to pledge financial support. We're also aware of our responsibility for stewardship of our environment through highway clean-up and participating in a local "Sacred Ground" group.

The St. Mark's Foundation works to promote long-term stewardship by increasing endowment funds which are then used to invest in and enrich our people, our facilities and our Education & Outreach programs.

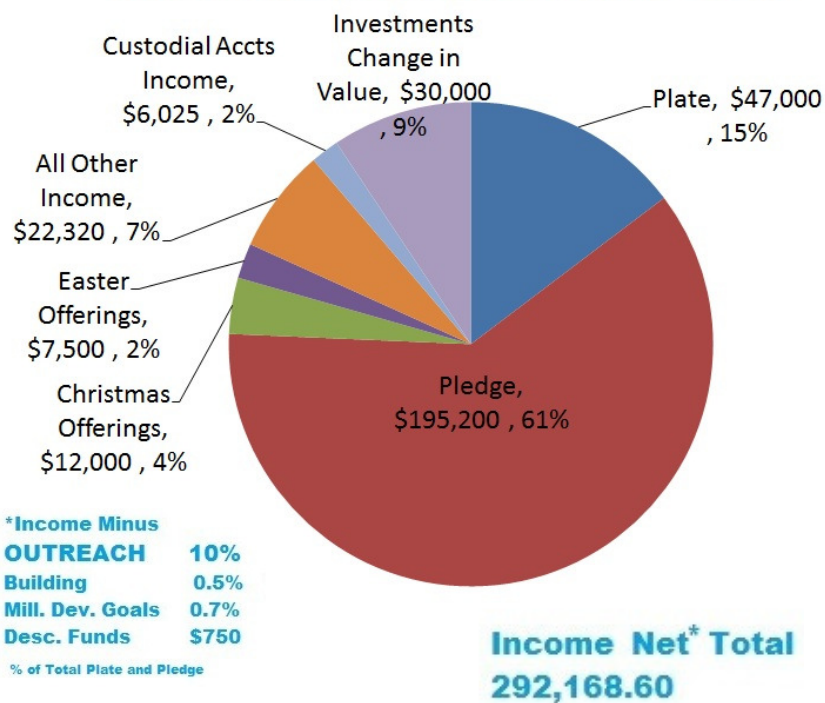
A History of Financial Responsibility & Stability

St. Mark's is very conscientious of how the church's finite resources are managed. Our Stewardship and Finance Committees, along with our Vestry, strive for a fiscally responsible budget.

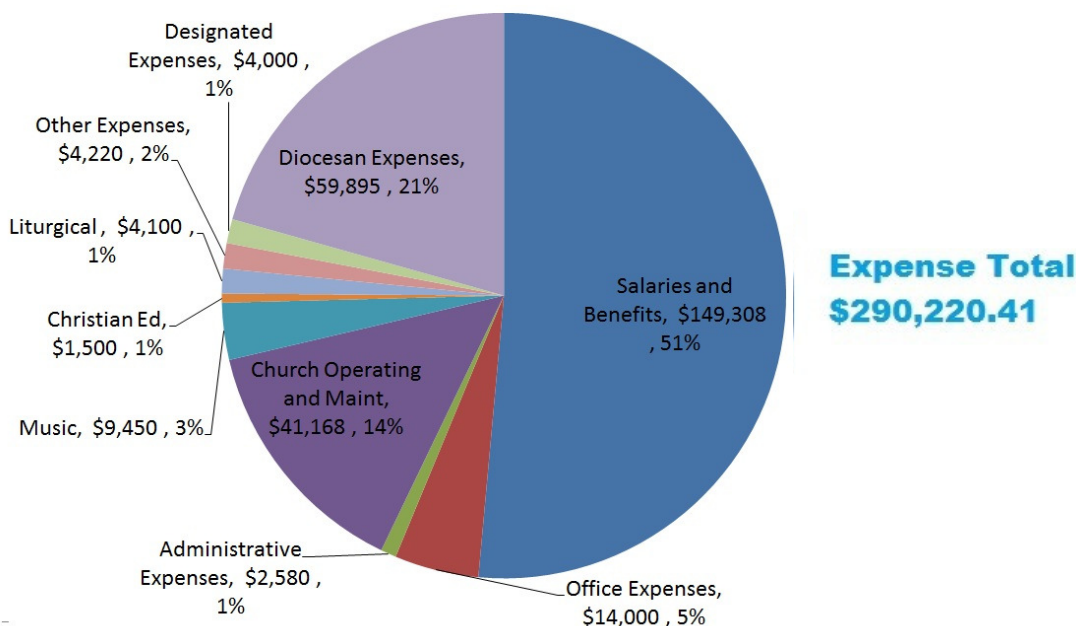
Through the years congregants have given generously to St. Mark's. There are various endowments and investments which supplement St. Mark's income. We have designated gifts and restricted funds to assist with the maintenance and upkeep of our historic building.

Our 2011 budget reflects historical average plate and member pledges. St. Mark's proudly gives 10% of our gross plate and pledge income to our Outreach Committee, a percentage to our Building Committee and Millennium Development Goals. The Vestry reviews budget requests and strives for a balanced budget — that goal has been achieved for 2011.

2011 Projected Income



2011 Projected Expenses



What's Important

During a recent parish survey and a well-attended follow-up meeting, members were asked to share their priorities for the coming years. The results were fairly definitive with several common themes emerging. Our first priority should be no surprise.

WORSHIP • We like it joyful and varied, and we actually want more services. We worry about our worship getting stodgy and enjoy broadening our liturgical horizons. We want to be sure new folks understand and appreciate the richness of our traditions, and we especially want more young people and children involved.

YOUTH MINISTRY • What church doesn't have youth as a top priority? Our future is in our young people and we need them. More importantly, we want them. We believe our current youth activities are not adequately integrated into our day-to-day church life and think that's a loss for everyone. We love having our youth lead worship and we want them to be regular ministers beyond serving as acolytes.

PASTORAL CARE • We pride ourselves on being a caring, loving church family and pastoral care is critical. But we don't expect the priest to do it all; rather, we're interested in how to be better care providers ourselves. We want training, support, mentoring and coordination of our pastoral care activities.

OUTREACH • So far we're really good about sharing our treasure with the community,



We love having our youth lead worship and want them to be regular Sunday ministers — beyond serving only as acolytes.

but we'd like guidance and encouragement to share our time and talents too. We want a priest who will actively network within the local community and work with other faith leaders to partner in Outreach efforts.

SUNDAY SCHOOL • Not enough babies are born in our church so we need to reach out and welcome young families into our church home. We want a priest who loves children and is willing to be a visible presence to invite them in. We desire ideas for creative curriculums, training for teachers and more ways to weave our children into worship. Enthusiasm and spontaneous joy are a big plus!

At the Crossroads

Additional Priorities

Stewardship
Fellowship
Lay Ministries
Adult Education
Evangelism

St. Mark's is in a state of transition — beyond simply needing to call a new priest. Our music program has tremendous opportunity to grow in new directions, as do our Youth & Sunday School programs. This year the parish must discern its status as a Jubilee Ministry Center and where our Outreach programs will next go. Additionally, our new Stewardship efforts need support as they continue to build momentum.

The years ahead will be exciting as we blaze new trails with the priest who's called by God to serve St. Mark's vibrant and loving community.

What We Seek

During our recent parish-wide meeting, members had the opportunity to share their hopes for the future of St. Mark's and the qualities they desire in our next rector. Here's an overview of what we seek...

TEACHER • PREACHER • FRIEND We enjoy interaction with our priest and like being stimulated by ideas and education. Worship is obviously very important to us and we are eager to continue experiencing alternative worship services. We also seek a rector who'll enjoy being in fellowship with us and can appreciate who we are as a congregation.

GUIDANCE • ENCOURAGEMENT • DIRECTION In many ways, our ministries are self-directed and self-sufficient so we aren't looking for a rector to micromanage us. Rather, we seek a leader who will work with us, inspire us and help us explore God's plan for our personal and parish ministries.

CONVERSATION • COMMUNICATION • COORDINATION We have a strong need for a rector skilled in communication who will be in regular conversation with us. We also believe that God is calling our next rector to be involved in ecumenical partnerships with Casper's faith community and help us to grow in meaningful relationship with others outside the walls of St. Mark's.

For more insight on life at St. Mark's
www.StMarksCasper.com

If You Have Questions

Feel free to contact our
Church Deployment Officer:

The Rev. Tristan English
Diocese of Wyoming
307-265-5200

Tris@wyomingdiocese.org



St. Mark's recently hosted an Indian dinner and textiles style show as a fundraiser for our Outreach efforts. We enjoy all sorts of fellowship activities throughout the year.

LAUGHTER • HUMOR • JOY We are a people who enjoy each other's company. We cherish our fellowship, our friendships and our pastoral care for each other — and we seek a rector who will share much laughter with us. We don't believe that our next spiritual leader must be the smartest, brightest and most skilled orator & fundraiser in the Episcopal Church. Instead we believe the person God is calling for us is filled with the Holy Spirit and will find happiness and joy at St. Mark's as we journey together in God's Will for us.

Let Us Pray...

Please Join Us in Prayer for St. Mark's Search Committee

Gracious Father, we praise you for the willing servants of our Search Committee. We ask for your wisdom, love and care to be upon them, and your Holy Spirit to be amongst them for strength and guidance. Lord, your plan for St. Mark's is perfect. Lead all decisions through listening hearts, clear minds and prayerful discernment. Reveal to our committee your call for the next Rector of St. Mark's, bearing the fruits of the Spirit as they seek your will. *Amen*