



fall 2011

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devoted

seek. strengthen. send.



Greetings and welcome to St. Mark!

School is back in session and things are getting back to “normal.” Perhaps that’s the wrong word. How about “familiar?” “Comfortable?”

Through most of the year, school is in session and, whether or not we have school aged children, weekly activities take place in a way we know, understand and expect. Our lives follow familiar patterns and we proceed in consistent and predictable ways.

Part of this is due to the fact that humans are, mostly, creatures of habit. That’s not necessarily a bad thing. Habits can help us cope when difficulties arrive. They can help us focus on other areas we need to process without worrying about the familiar items in our lives. They can bring us comfort when our lives are in chaos.

Even so, it is a dangerous thing to live by rote. It can numb us to greater possibilities. It can diminish our potential to see and live beyond the mundane. It can cause us to become stagnant rather than grow.

This is true in our spiritual lives as well.

Our “familiar” spiritual lives can bring us comfort and peace, but if we remain there, it can cause us to stagnate. The LORD does not want an idle disciple. That is an oxymoron. A disciple follows Christ! There is movement there. There is growth happening there.

As we progress this Fall in learning and following the LORD, it is my prayer that you commit yourself to taking, as Robert Frost said, “the road less traveled;” in your life and spiritual life. Shake things up by going to a new Bible study or listening to a different style of Christian music. Seek out a strong Christian mentor who can help guide you down a less familiar road, filled with new wonder, experiences, learning and beauty.

Perhaps you, too, will see that this makes all the difference in your life!

In Christ,

Pastor Scott

Staff

Scott Heitshusen 713 255 3611 Senior Pastor

Susan Converse 713 255 3634 Director of Operations

Timothy Duerr 713 255 3679 Associate Pastor

Bob Burgess 713 255 3612 Principal

Sheryl Seybold 713 255 3632 ECE Director

Julie Hardin 713 255 3631 Associate Director of Finance

John Marrs 713 255 3616 Director of Music Ministry

Wendy McManners 713 255 3625 Director of Family, Children & Service Ministry

Susan DePue 713 255 3610 Office Manager

Susan O’Connor 713 255 3618 School Office

devoted

FALL 2011

VOLUME 2, NUMBER 1

Fall Festival 2011

Friday, November 4
5-9 pm at St. Mark

Bring the whole family and join us
for an evening of candy, costumes,
live music and games galore!



valdosta, georgia || cory thorson

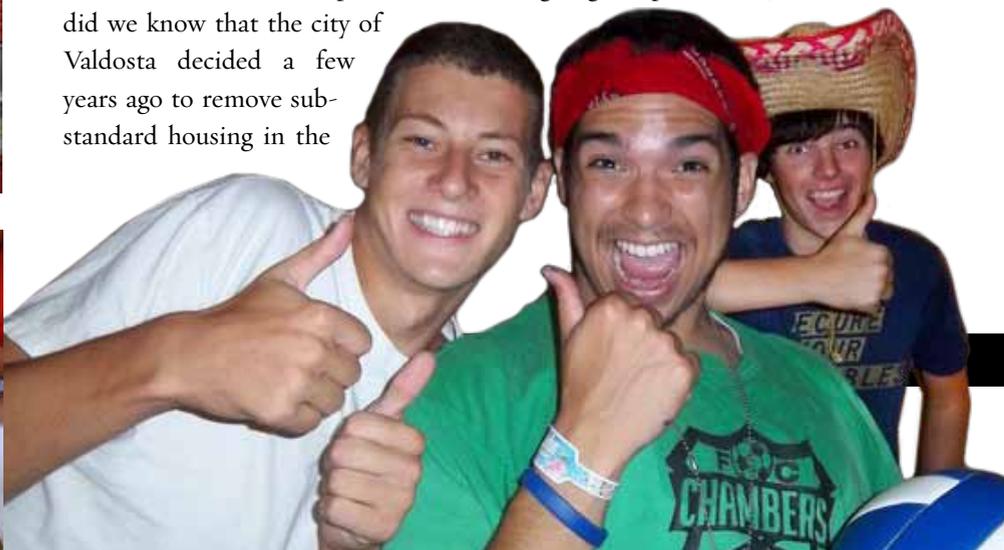


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I felt it was a great experience to see what time and a little hard work could do. I felt God showing through my hard work! It all paid off in the end when my house was complete.

-Caitlyn

”



After months of planning, fund raising, and preparation, June 25, 2011 had finally arrived. Our team arrived at St. Mark well before the sun came up to load the vehicles, pray with Fred and Katie Tonn and depart on the first leg of our journey to Valdosta, Georgia. We headed east on I-10 and after 10 hours we arrived at Redeemer Lutheran Church in Fairhope, Alabama, where we spent the night.

The team arrived mid-afternoon the next day in Valdosta where we were greeted by the *awesome red shirt staff!* The first evening program is where everyone met their Crew, the 5 or 6 person team that you work with throughout the week. After the evening program, the youth got back together and had their evening devotional time. 6:45 a.m. on Monday rolled around and it was *wakey wakey workcamper!* The crews put in a long, hot day of work and returned to Valdosta Middle School for showers and a good meal.

After another solid day of work on Tuesday, the group returned for what would turn out to be a very special night. The theme for this year's trip was *Connect*, based on John 15:5 "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing." Tuesday's specific theme was "You are the branches". From Facebook to cell phones to Skype, today's youth are connected to anyone anywhere in mere seconds. This combined with sports, school and future careers create an identity of who they are, but when their greatest identity comes from being connected with Jesus, they can begin to experience all the great plans God has for them.

At evening program that night, God really began to touch the lives of our youth. During the program, the youth filled out a label that asked five questions about themselves. Then they were told to put the labels on, and they learned that the way we see ourselves is usually not how God sees us. The youth were allowed to leave the label at the foot of the cross and then receive a blessing from the adult leaders describing who they really were in God's eyes.

Wednesday would be a fun day. On this day, the crews worked a half day and returned around 1 pm to have some fun. Valdosta is known for its huge theme park. While we wanted to check out the park, the cost was going to prevent us. Little did we know that the city of Valdosta decided a few years ago to remove sub-standard housing in the



city and had been working with Group and Lowe’s to do this. As a thank you, Valdosta and the theme park donated over 360 tickets so the entire camp could go for free.

Feeling refreshed after a good day of fun, the crews were back at it on Thursday, getting close to finishing their projects. During Thursday evening program, a number of our group, as well as many from the camp spent from 15 minutes to 2 hours in prayer at the foot of the cross, meeting with God. The fact that the group did not want to do devotions without every member was a testament to just how close this group (family) had become. What a blessing to be there!

By the end of the day on Friday, 35 of the 38 houses had been completed, but the day was far from over. At the evening program that night, the residents were all invited to attend and spent time worshipping with those that had been serving them all week. The Valdosta City Manager, Assistant City Manager, Principal at Valdosta Middle School and Representatives from Lowes spoke very openly about their faith and everything that had been accomplished.

The last day of the trip started early with the group attending our host church’s early service. Afterwards, we packed everything up and headed west! Finally, we could see the Lone Star State. While it felt good to see our home state, it was also bitter sweet. The week was full of God’s handiwork, good times and so many memories... until next year!



“ This is what it feels like to be loved! -Lanie ”

Valdosta By the Numbers

- Traveled over **1600** miles covering six states
- 1000+** items donated to the Valdosta Food Bank
- 17** churches from **11** states
- 10,860** man-hours worked.
- \$240,000** approximate value of the work done
- 38** homes worked on, **35** homes completed
- 16** St. Mark family members participated
- 1** awesome God that touched hundreds of lives



A big thank you to St. Mark for your support and prayers. Thank you to the adults who volunteered your time. You were a huge blessing to all! Also, thank you to the youth for showing so many what it means to be servants and leaders.



adult studies - AS OF 9/11

SUNDAY MORNING CLASSES AT 9:45 am

I Have Good News for You!

New member information class required for membership.
A new class will begin on Sunday, September 25.

Willis Schramper - schramperwa@aol.com
Location: Conference Room 155

Books of the Bible

Charles McDaniel - 713 996 1115
Location: CAFÉ A

Women's Bible Study

Cheryl Dinwoodie - 713 463 9550
Location: Conference Room 145

Defending Your Faith

Duane Heckman-713 461 2748
Location: Library

The Prodigal Father

John Brown - 713 329 9866
Location: CAFÉ C

The Many Wonders of Heaven

Class begins on September 25.
Chris Lorenzen - clorenzenjr@aol.com
Location: Room 221

Books of the Bible

Pete Peters - 713 468 1727
Location: Room 225

MIDWEEK CLASSES

Thursday Night Small Group

Come to learn more about Luther's Small Catechism.
Pastor Tim Duerr - tduerr@stmarkhouston.org
Thursdays at 6:30 pm; Conference Room 161

P.U.B. - (Personal Understanding of the Bible)

This is a men's only study. Bring yourself and your appetite for an evening of food, faith and fellowship.

Pastor Tim Duerr - 713 255 3679
3rd Tuesday of every month at 7 pm; SRO Sports Bar

Young Adult Small Group

A group of young adults who meet to study the Bible over dinner.
Currently this group is studying the book of Romans.

Pastor Duerr - tduerr@stmarkhouston.org
Location rotates around town

Men's Early Study

This men's study explores the issues men face living their faith, using books by current Christian writers as basis for discussion.

Duane Heckman - 713 461 2748
Wednesdays at 6:30 am; Conference Room 155

Women's Daytime Study

Join other women for a time of fellowship and Bible study. It's a great way to be refreshed in the midst of a busy life.

Katie Tonn - 713 461 4615
Tuesdays at 9:30 am; Conference Room 161

social groups

St. Mark Conservatory of Music

Private music lessons are available to all students of music— young and old, talented and inexperienced.

John Marrs - jmarrs@stmarkhouston.org

Prayer Chain

Individuals are organized into evening or daytime teams for passing on prayer needs of those who request them.

Katie Tonn - ktonn@sbcglobal.net

Prayer Time at the Altar

Join in prayer with others at the Altar.

Fridays at 6 am; Sanctuary
Fred Tonn - ktonn@sbcglobal.net

Healing Prayer

Come for prayer, whether your need is physical, emotional, or spiritual, and a team of people will pray for you.

Sundays at 5 pm; Sanctuary
Katie Tonn - ktonn@sbcglobal.net

42 Club

Open to anyone who enjoys a fun game of Dominoes.
2nd Friday of each month at 7 pm; Scout House
Gloria & Erwin Eschenberg - 713 465 8273

S.P.I.C.E.

Seniors Participating In a Caring Environment - all senior citizens are invited to join! Bring your own sack lunch.

1st Thursday of each month at 10 am; Scout House
Glenda Lehman - 832 370 7746

Quilting Club

Join us as we make quilts to benefit different organizations.

Thursday mornings from 9 am - 1 pm; Room 221
Margaret Schultz - 713 463 5379

Phase III

Women 50+ and widows meet for fellowship and support.

Meets once per month; rotate homes
Vivian Colton - grammycolton@aol.com

Lutheran Women's Missionary League (LWML)

This women's group meets monthly for prayer and Bible study, socializing, and planning future projects to support missions. Two opportunities are available:

» *Circle of Concern* meets on the 2nd Monday of each month at 9:30 am in Conference Room 161
Carol Wyman - 713 668 0548

» *Evening Circle* meets on the 3rd Monday of each month at 7 pm in Conference Room 161
Peggy Ramer - pramer@sbcglobal.net

Seekers

Come join us for laughter and fellowship with other St. Mark single members over 40.

1st Saturday : games & dinner
3rd Sunday : brunch after 11 am worship
Pete Peters - mpete37561@aol.com

Second Sunday Supper

Join us for a meal and music with your family in Christ.
2nd Sunday of each month at 6 pm; Cafeteria
Anna Helmich - 713 464 6487

service groups/opportunities

Altar Guild

Barb Mannlein - 713 688 7734

Bereavement Meals

Church Office - info@stmarkhouston.org

Children's Ministry

Wendy McManners - wcmanners@stmarkhouston.org

Choir/Instrumentalists/Worship Teams

John Marrs - jmarrs@stmarkhouston.org

Church Readiness Team

Church Office - info@stmarkhouston.org

Counting Team

Susan DePue - sdepue@stmarkhouston.org

First Impressions Greeting Team

Debra Pakkala - dpakk@comcast.net

Food Pantry

Katie Tonn - ktonn@sbcglobal.net

Gift Shop

Nancy Graham - 713 255 3616

Junior High Ministry

David McManners - dmcanners@goodsonauto.com

Lunch Bunch

Cafeteria - cafe@stmarkhouston.org

Nursing Home Ministry

Pastor Duerr - tduerr@stmarkhouston.org

Office Help

Church Office - info@stmarkhouston.org
School Office - soconnor@stmarkhouston.org

Peanut Butter Brigade

Stephen Monsen - texolina@hotmail.com

Senior High Ministry

Cory Thorson - cthorsen@harveybuilders.com

Stephen Ministry

Sharon Lem - lem@pdq.net

Tech Team

Kim Radtke - kradtke@stmarkhouston.org

Ushers

Steve Wible - s_wible@earthlink.net

Whole Person Health

Mary Marrs - mjmarrs@yahoo.com

2nd Family Care Team

Rita Schaller - ritaschaller@sbcglobal.net
Gerry Woelfel - gerry.woelfel@gmail.com



children's ministry

SUNDAY MORNING CLASSES AT 9:45 am

FaithWeaver

(3 YEARS - 6TH GRADE)

Every family member explores the same Bible lessons and discovers the same Bible truth in an age-appropriate class. Both adult and children's Bible lessons cover the same Bible story...so it's easy for families to talk about their faith!

3 years/PS : RM 116	2nd grade : RM 110
4-5 years/PK-K : RM 117	3rd/4th grade : RM 222
1st grade : RM 110	5th/6th grade : RM 226

Caraway Street

(3 YEARS - 4TH GRADE)

Caraway Street is an event that connects children to Christ through puppets. Children are escorted from the sanctuary at a special time during the regular Sunday service.

2nd & 4th Sundays at 8:30 & 11 am (September - May)

Location: Conference Room 161

student ministry

SUNDAY MORNING CLASSES AT 9:45 am

Junior High Bible Study/Confirmation

(SM² JUNIORS, 7 - 8 GRADE)

This year's Confirmation program combines 7 - 8 grade students to explore the awesomeness of God and the mysteries of faith, personally confess Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, identify themselves as members of St. Mark and a special part of the body of Christ. Confirmands are also encouraged to regularly participate in worship and prepare for Holy Communion, engage in Bible study and its application to life, strive to lead God-pleasing lives, and serve God by serving others.

David McManners with Pastor Scott and Pastor Duerr

Location: Music Room

High School Bible Study

(SM² SENIORS, 9 - 12 GRADE)

High School students will grow in faith, their personal relationship with Christ and who they are as God's people in a place where they can use their gifts to the glory of God. It is also a place where they know they are accepted, can ask hard questions, and find answers about faith and life in order to serve in meaningful ways in the church and in the world! Come early to hang out and shoot pool before the lesson.

Cory Thorson with Kaeli Bauer and Ray & Laura Chavana

Location: SM² Room (M-91)

Parent's Night Out

Saturday, October 29 from 5-10 pm

Let us care for your children ages 1 and up while you and your special someone have a date night!

\$25 - first child, \$15 - each additional sibling
SPACE IS LIMITED. NO DROP-INS ALLOWED.

Your kids will enjoy a Halloween Costume Party complete with pizza, cool desserts, crafts, games and a late night movie!

Download the registration form online at stmarkhouston.org/ministries

Contact Wendy McManners at wcmanners@stmarkhouston.org or 713 255 3625 for more information.



**Just for two.
Just for you.**

Registration with payment is due by **Monday, October 24** to Wendy McManners



If you will be 14 years old by July 8, 2012, please join us on Wednesday, September 14 at 6 pm in Room 155 for an informational meeting regarding next year's mission trip to Birmingham, Alabama (July 7 - July 15, 2012.)

A Group Workcamp mission trip is a big, high energy camp experience where the group will serve people in need through challenging home repair projects!

For six days, they'll join other youth groups, to transform a house while God transforms their faith.

Contact Wendy McManners at 712 255 3625 or by email at wcmanners@stmarkhouston.org.





The local pastor of this church and his wife. He serves this church and three others. They are "sub-parishes."



In 2007 Jennifer and I embarked on an amazing four year program which has helped me grow as a pastor, Jennifer as my partner, and both of us as a couple. The program is called the "Pastoral Leadership Institute" (plininstitute.org).

When this program begins, each pastor (and wife, if they are married), are teamed up with several other pastors and wives for the four years. Several times the entire group gets together for learning and support while at other times just the pastors or the wives get together to grow and learn.

Following the last year of study the groups go on an international mission trip. The one for the group Jennifer and I were in went to Tanzania on the east side of Africa!

We were extremely blessed to work with MOST Ministries (mostministries.org), an organization dedicated to sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ around the world through short-term mission opportunities that meet the needs of the people and church bodies in the countries they work in and with. MOST has done eye glass clinics, water purification projects, and much more; but they always work in a way so that the saving Gospel of Jesus can and will be shared!

For nearly two weeks in mid to late July, our PLI group (called "Galatia"), consisting of 5 pastor/wife couples, one single pastor, the executive director and team leader from MOST Ministries, worked to serve the people of Mwanza, Tanzania through eye glass clinics for 6 days. We were told to expect to help about 400 people through this clinic. The LORD allowed us to serve 600 people! We helped them with distance glasses and reading glasses. As such, we gave out 801 pairs of glasses! Yet, helping the people of Mwanza, Tanzania, see with their eyes was not the greatest part about the clinic. The greatest part is that, through the clinic, the saving Gospel of Jesus was shared with all who went through it, and we know that when the Word of God is shared, that Word is efficacious for salvation! (See Isaiah 55:10-11 and 2 Timothy 3:15-17)

In addition to serving others and sharing the Gospel through the clinic, we also traveled to two villages on two evenings and shared the Gospel of Jesus with several families and baptizing 20 people and families in those villages! Finally, we also travelled for two hours on a Sunday morning to worship with brothers and sisters in the Faith at "the church at the tree." As the name implies, this group of believers do not have a building and so worship each week at a tree in the midst of the village. That service was three hours of praising the LORD through liturgy, a lot of amazing singing and dancing (by the local choir as well as a guest choir), the blessing of the marriage of a couple, and "words of encouragement" from each of us visiting pastors. Finally, the preacher (who was the retired assistant to the bishop of the diocese, gave a stirring message to all of us there; including to the many people who came to listen and passers-by. A request was made if anyone desired to be baptized. Twenty-four people came forward! The leaders asked us, as the visiting pastors, to conduct all of the baptisms!

As we reflected on our time that day as well as in the villages, we realized that the LORD had allowed us to not only witness "Acts moments" (e.g Acts 8:26ff, etc.), but to also participate in them! How utterly incredible and marvelous!

The trip has caused me, once again, to consider how (and where) we worship, study the Word, and share the Gospel of Jesus! In the coming weeks and months I will share more about what implications the trip had for me and, consequently, for St. Mark!

Thank you for your support in prayers, finances, and otherwise so that Jennifer and I were able to grow in Christ and our understanding of His mission and desire for us as well as what it means to serve and share with others. All of you are a blessing to both Jennifer and to me!

new faces of st. mark lutheran school



bob burgess
PRINCIPAL



julie burgess
FIRST GRADE



jennifer stallings
THIRD GRADE



kelly williams
KINDERGARTEN



julie goodman
PRE-KINDERGARTEN



antoinette strong
SECOND GRADE



peter williamson
CHOIR



ST. MARK ASSIMILATION TEAM

If you are interested in becoming a member, or if you are a new member looking to strengthen your spirituality and grow in your discipleship, be sure to check out stmarkhouston.org often in the next several months. The St. Mark Assimilation Team is beginning to build a process of discipleship. The goal of this process is:

1. To grow the new member/new believer in their knowledge of Scripture and our church's teachings.
2. To enable new members/new believers to build relationships and get connected with other members of the St. Mark family.
3. To grow the new member/new believer's personal devotion and Bible study life so that they can grow in their relationship with the Lord.
4. To give the new member/new believer opportunities to put their faith into practice by sending out a stronger, more equipped disciple.

So, what exactly is it? The Assimilation Team is a group of devoted St. Mark members who are actively engaged in welcoming, introducing and befriending new Christians and new members of St. Mark, helping you get connected to the ministries and people of the St. Mark family. They meet monthly and seek to find ways to help people get plugged in, making St. Mark more of a family and less of a social club.

Like a personal trainer at the gym, we know you want to grow, get stronger and strengthen your faith. But like being at the gym, you may not know where to start, what exercises to perform or how to eat in order to get the maximum effect and see the results you want to see.

The Assimilation Team is your own "personal trainer". We have a plan, goals and the time to devote to seeing you build those spiritual muscles. We are actively working to help you meet your goals through Bible Study, worship, small groups, mentoring, family programs and various other avenues.

If you have any questions, contact Pastor Duerr at tduerr@stmarkhouston.org or 713 255 3679. We hope that you are blessed today and we look forward to getting to know you better. Godspeed.

Welcome to St. Mark Lutheran!

We want you to feel at home with us as we worship, praise and proclaim God's Eternal Love and Joy in Jesus Christ for each one of us! We offer several types of worship services in order for everyone to worship at a service that best fits their needs.

If you are interested in membership at St. Mark or would just like more information, stop by the visitors table in the narthex on Sunday mornings before or after services or you may contact the church office during the week at 713 468 2623.

Worship Services

SUNDAYS

8:30 am - Traditionally Focused

Using worship that is rooted in our rich heritage of grace, this service is for all who enjoy traditional elements of worship such as liturgy, Lutheran hymns, organ and classic instruments.

11 am - Contemporary Service

Offering a relaxed blend of majestic worship style and contemporary, this service includes praise singers, praise band and instrumentation to accompany praise songs and modern worship music.

WEDNESDAYS

7 pm - This midweek service is designed as a worship/Bible study hour with singing.

For Parents With Young Children

Children's church with the Caraway Street puppets meets during the 8:30 and 11 am worship services on the second and fourth Sundays of each month from September to May. This puppet ministry is an exciting and fresh Bible experience for children ages three through 4th grade. Books, crayons and pictures to color are available on the cart in the Narthex for your young children who are attending the worship service in the sanctuary. There is also a nursery for children under 3 years of age, which is located off the Gathering Area. An usher will be happy to assist you in locating the nursery.

Worship Message on DVD/CD

DVDs & CDs of the worship message may be received by filling out the information on the "Tape Ministry" envelope located in the pew rack and dropping the envelope in the offering plate. DVDs/CDs are duplicated by our volunteers and mailed on Mondays.

Hearing & Visual Assistance

For those with difficulty hearing, we offer a "hearing assistance" system. The individual systems can be obtained from the sound technician at the back of the sanctuary. We also offer large print bulletins for those that might need them.

Prayer Needs

If you have a prayer request, please feel free to come up to the front of the church after the service, where the pastors, elders and prayer partners will gladly pray with you. You may also send your prayer request to prayer@stmarkhouston.org and your prayer will immediately be placed on the prayer chain.

About St. Mark

St. Mark Lutheran Church is a Christ-centered community that is dedicated to sharing our love for Jesus Christ by caring for people and equipping them to live out their faith in the world.

We believe in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior from sin. We believe that the Bible is the foundation of all truth and guide for our lives. Because of God's great love for us, we believe that we best show our love for Him by our response of caring and kindness to others.

Our mission statement is:

In response to God's call, we live to **SEEK, STRENGTHEN AND SEND** fully devoted disciples for Christ.



St. Mark
LUTHERAN
CHURCH & SCHOOL

1515 Hillendahl

Houston, Texas 77055

stmarkhouston.org