



winter 2011

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# devoted

seek. strengthen. send.



It is amazing to realize that Thanksgiving, Advent and Christmas are upon us. It seems 2011 just began! Even so...“ready or not, here it is.”

I often think about how different this season is as an adult compared to when I was a child. As a child, it seemed “magical” and full of lights, pageants, food, decorating, singing, snow (before I moved to Houston, of course), food, gifts, family and more food.

No doubt God and His Son were paramount and I didn't lose sight of that, but it seemed like all of these things happened without any planning or effort on my part. How different it is as an adult with a family! The Savior and majesty are still here, of course, but the experience is vastly different when planning and effort are needed. Some of the “magic” is gone, replaced in some cases by pragmatic resolve and necessary procedures.

There is one part of the season which has grown so much more “magical” as a parent: the beauty of and meaning for my family! I don't just mean creating beautiful memories for my sons – although that is a great by-product. I mean seeing, understanding and relating that this season is all about family or, more specifically, being a part of His family! The season is all about how God so desperately wanted me, my family and you to be an integral part of His family for eternity, that He sent His only Son as a child in a manger to pay for our sins!

The reality and depth of that love is staggering! Consider the angels to the shepherds and the shepherds themselves in what they shared: “unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ, the Lord!” and “let us go to Bethlehem and see this thing which has happened for us!” For the Lord, this season is all about family – and how, through this baby Jesus, you are a part of His! Now that's something to celebrate this season and beyond!

From my family to yours: A very blessed Thanksgiving and merry, merry CHRISTmas!

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**

WINTER 2011  
VOLUME 2, NUMBER 2



# ST. MARK LUTHERAN *Holiday Schedule*

## Thanksgiving Worship

November 23 7 pm

## Advent Services - *Classic Family Christmas*

November 30	7 pm	<i>Mickey's Christmas Carol</i>
December 7	7 pm	<i>Donald Duck Christmas</i>
December 14	7 pm	<i>A Goofy Christmas</i>
December 21	7 pm	<i>The Gift of the Magi</i>

## Houston Lutheran Chorale Christmas Concert

December 3 7 pm

## St. Mark Lutheran School Christmas Concert

December 11 8:30 and 11 am (Birthday Party for Jesus during Sunday School hour)

## Evening of Praise and Worship

December 17 7 pm

## Christmas Eve Worship

December 24	4 pm	Family Service ( <i>Small One</i> )
December 24	6 pm	Contemporary Candlelight Service
December 24	9 pm	Traditional Candlelight Service

## Christmas Day Worship

December 25 8:30 and 11 am

## New Year's Eve Worship

December 31 6 pm

## New Year's Day Worship

January 1 8:30 and 11 am

Caraway Street will be held on the 2nd & 3rd Sundays in November and December.

# A Classic Family Christmas

Join us for Advent on Wednesdays at 6 pm as we sing your favorite Christmas songs, watch a Classic Christmas movie and hear a message of the underlying theme from each.

Bring your kids, grandkids and even your neighbor kids, as we celebrate Christmas as a *family*.

**November 30**

*Mickey's Christmas Carol*  
Joy

**December 7**

*Donald Duck Christmas*  
Peace

**December 14**

*A Goofy Christmas*  
Hope

**December 21**

*The Gift of the Magi*  
Love

# AN EVENING OF PRAISE & WORSHIP <sup>Christmas</sup>

This event will be a time of music, video clips and prayer. The choir and praise band will lead in singing some of your favorite praise, worship and Christmas songs. Join us for a relaxing evening of music and prayer, as we prepare our hearts for the celebration of the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

Saturday, December 17 at 7 pm in the St. Mark Sanctuary

Admission is free. Invite your friends and neighbors!



On May 7, 2011, 55 people of St. Mark, including leaders, laity, school parents and congregation members, met to begin forging a path for the future. We analyzed where the Lord has brought us and prayed about where He is taking us. We were honest about our strengths and weaknesses and came up with priorities to work on. Finally, we agreed to meet again to see how those priorities were playing out.

On Sunday, October 23, we met for the follow-up meeting. At that meeting, I was privileged to share the areas of priority and what we have been doing to address them. The priorities (with the total “votes” from across measurement categories) are:

**1. Youth (66)** Our youth leaders have added more spiritual growth and leadership opportunities in addition to fellowship and service events. The high school group is working towards a Youth Service, planned for January 29, 2012 on the newly renovated gym stage.

**2. Facilities (51)** An all staff work day and a congregational work day was held earlier this year. We tackled various tasks including renovating the gym stage, repainting hallways, spreading playground mulch, washing the bus, removing old chalkboards and many other improvements. We are preparing the replacement of the old Welcome Center carpet with new tile and carpet. Finally, the “patio area” will also get a much needed face-lift.

**3. School (33)** The school has added several new opportunities for students including photography class, yearbook class, media/presentation class and the option to participate in both band and choir as well as an expanded music program with more violins, a choir director and two student praise bands. In addition, we have several split chapels (elementary and middle school) scheduled through the year for more focused services and growth. We are actively building relationships with school families through classes playing/singing in weekend worship services a lot more and working with those who are not baptized and wish to be.

**4. Children’s Ministries (23)** This part of St. Mark is utilizing a new paging system for parents with children in the nursery and a Nursery Roll for newly baptized members (constant communication via mail for the child’s first 3 years.)

**5. Discipleship (23)** Cheryl Dinwoodie and Pete Peters have agreed to serve as Sunday Bible Class coordinators. There has also been a generous donor who has given a gift to cover the salary of a dedicated Discipleship Coordinator for a year!

**6. Environment (21)**      **7. Communications (17)**

To date, we have been concentrating on the top five listed with the last two to get some attention now.



Removing a one of four chalkboards during the Congregational Work Day



Sanding and refinishing the gym stage floor



Giving the hallways a fresh coat of paint



Cleaning the bus, inside and out!

## adult studies - AS OF 11/11

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 in January 2012.

Willis Schrampf - schrampfwa@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

### *Growing Old Gracefully*

Pastor John Freed - 713 462 7597  
Location: Room 221

### *Mirror, Mirror on the Wall*

Ginny Zuppan - 281 752 9869  
Location: CAFÉ C

### *Books of the Bible*

Pete Peters - 713 468 1727  
Location: Room 225

### *Men of the Bible*

Duane Heckmann - 713 461 2748  
Location: LIBRARY

### *College Bible Study*

Beginning December 4  
Jacquelyn Reuther - jacquelyn.n.reuther@uth.tmc.edu  
Rachel Pratt - itsravie101@gmail.com  
Location: M-01

### *Marriage by God's Design*

Sundays January 8 - 29, 2012  
Pastor Duerr - tduerr@stmarkhouston.org  
Location: Room 224

MIDWEEK CLASSES

### *Pastor's Bible Study*

In January, this group will begin the book, *The Disciple's Cross*.  
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

### *Fusion : For Young Adults*

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

### *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

### *Phase III*

Women 50+ and widows meet for fellowship and support.

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

***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

***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

***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

***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 - dmcmanners@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

***Second Family Care Team***

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

***Senior High Ministry***

Cory Thorson - cthorson@harveybuilders.com

***Stephen Ministry***

Sharon Lem - lem@pdq.net

***Tech Team***

Kim Radtke - kratdke@stmarkhouston.org

***Ushers***

Steve Wible - s\_wible@earthlink.net

***Whole Person Health***

Mary Marrs - mjmarrs@yahoo.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*

(SM<sup>2</sup> 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

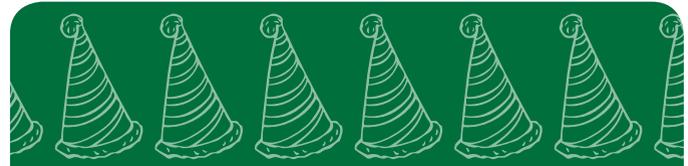
### *High School Bible Study*

(SM<sup>2</sup> 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: SM<sup>2</sup> Room (M-91)

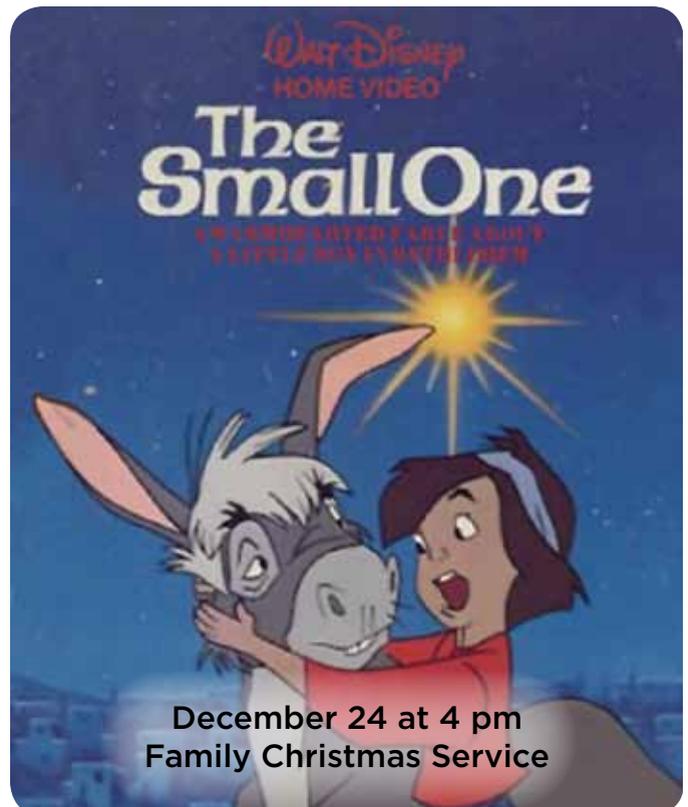


## Birthday Party for Jesus!

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 11 || 9:45 AM

Join us to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ! This year, we are encouraging everyone to participate by selecting a gift to purchase from the Giving Tree located in the Gathering Area.

Contact Wendy McManners or Julie Hardin for more information.



December 24 at 4 pm  
Family Christmas Service



# Parent's Night Out

December 3, 2011  
February 11, 2012

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

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



WHERE WOMEN BASK IN GOD'S PRESENCE

**St. Mark Women's Retreat**

**January 14-15, 2012**

Jordan Ranch in Schulenburg, Texas

**Cost** \$125.00  
(includes one night lodging,  
3 meals, snacks and materials)  
\$60 for the day only  
\$10 for Music CD

**Registration due by December 11.**

**Download a registration form at  
[stmarkhouston.org](http://stmarkhouston.org).**

**Mail form with payment to:**  
Peggy Ramer  
735 Langwood Drive  
Houston, Texas 77079

Join us as we hear God's word to us  
as women. There will be food, music,  
worship, Bible study, free time, door  
prizes and a fun service project.  
Make plans to come away to rest,  
relax, recharge and have fun as you  
fellowship with other Christian women.

**Be still and know that He is God.  
Psalm 46:10**

## new to the st. mark family!

Alexander and Alyssabeth Allen  
Alec & Aaron

Maria Ambriz  
Arianna & Zane Shabo

Linda Baimbridge

Laura Blome and Drew Johnson

Aaron and Dana Bubela

Bob and Julie Burgess

Shaun and Ginger Coleman  
Carter

Colin and Lisa Doyle

Tiffany Fernandez  
Dolan

Justin and Kristen Franks

Owen and Jessica Gill

Jared and Amanda Hammons  
Austin & Audrey

Michael and Lori Koehn  
Paige, Tyler & Blake

Pam Kyle

Nathanael and Tracy McCollum  
Hannah & Mason

Stephanie Meldrum

Frances Mendez

Stephen Moore

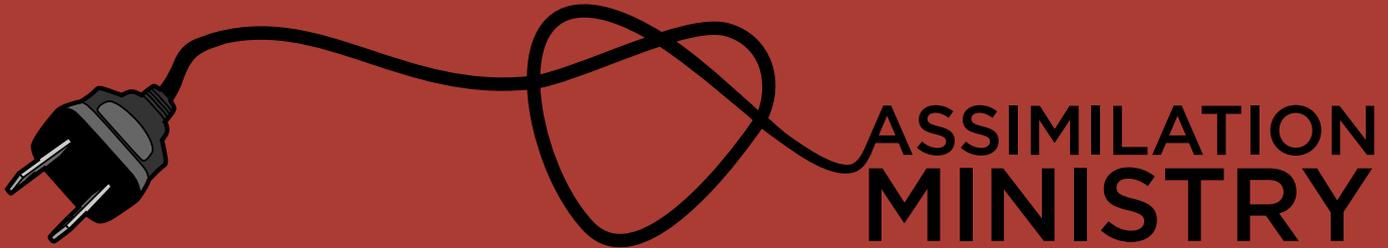
Bruce and Shawn Myers  
Ava & Camille

Christina Tilotta  
Joshua

David and Stacey Van Camp

Peter Williamson

Tracy Wolfson  
Gabrielle



What happens after someone visits St. Mark? Is there someone who reaches out to visitors? Who makes sure we keep up with our New Members? What does St. Mark do about our school families that don't have a church home?

We love visitors! Hopefully they filled out the Visitor card in the pews as well as stopped by the Visitor Table in the Narthex. Within a week, they receive a letter from Pastor Heitshusen as well as a follow-up call from Willis Schrapfer. We pray that if they are looking for a church home, they will continue to join us for worship Sunday mornings as well as consider our 13-week New Member class, I Have Good News for You!, which is held during the Sunday School hour. Likewise, if our school families do not have a church home, a letter inviting them to join us Sunday mornings is mailed.

The Assimilation Team oversees the New Member Class (I Have Good News for You!), 1st Impressions, Ushering and the Gathering Area. Team members include Art Borman, Larry & Carol Dube, Pastor Duerr, Tricia Grossman, Joyce Johnson,

Marc & Amy Kyle, Debra Pakkala, Willis Schrapfer, Christina Tilotta, Fred Tonn and Steve Wible. We meet once a month to follow up and brainstorm how we can ensure the spiritual needs of our visitors, new members as well as school families are met.

St. Mark's Assimilation Ministry is here to help new members as well as visitors become acquainted with the various ministries and activities of the church and to encourage their involvement in those particular areas which will help them grow in their faith as well as where their particular gifts can be used for service in the church. They will also help the church become acquainted with the new members and visitors.

If you have any questions or would like to serve our Lord on our First Impressions (Greeting) Team, Ushering Team or baking for the Gathering Area on Sunday mornings, please contact Pastor Duerr at [tduerr@stmarkhouston.org](mailto:tduerr@stmarkhouston.org) or 713 255 3679.

## 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](mailto:prayer@stmarkhouston.org) and your prayer will immediately be placed on the prayer chain.

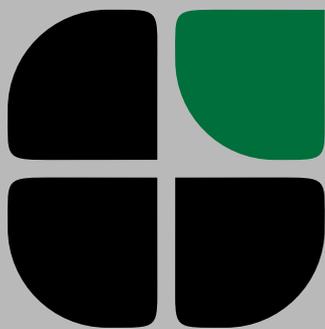
## About St. Mark

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](http://stmarkhouston.org)