

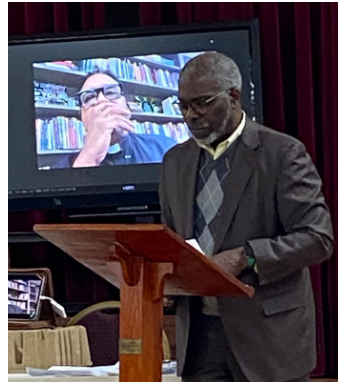
St. Mark's Grace

Moving from Membership to Discipleship



A publication of Saint Mark's Episcopal Church, Wilmington, NC •••• Volume 5, No. 1 •••• January - February 2026

Annual Meeting 2025



On Sunday, December 14th St. Mark's Annual Meeting was held in Jackson Hall after morning service. The meeting was opened with comments from Rev. Dr. Walker and Clarence Armbrister, Sr. Warden. A very comprehensive packet of reports from various church officers, and organizations was handed out for the congregation to review. They included reports from the Sr. Warden, Building & Grounds (Jr. Warden & Sexton), Organization Reports, Treasurer/Finance Report (which was distributed separately by the Treasurer) and a draft Church calendar for 2026. Discernment Questions were also handed out to members of the Vestry which were to be taken home, prayed over and returned at the Vestry Retreat. The Sr. Warden thanked Mr. Anthony DeReef and Mr. Travis Armstrong for their service on the Vestry. Nominations were taken for 3 new members. Finally, Mrs. Denise Armbrister (1-year term) Mrs. Grace



Byrd, Mr. Chris Jarrett and Mr. Paul Kane (3-year terms) were nominated and elected by the body. The Sr. Warden's Report began with the progress on last year's goals which included; Improving the Infrastructure of the Church, Increase Church Membership. and Re-evaluate Revenue Streams. The Brotherhood, ECW, Acolyte Guild, Alter Guild, Christian Education, and Stewardship Committee presented reports followed by the Treasure's Report. These organizations were asked to complete their 2026 calendars of events and return it to the Vestry so a master calendar can be completed, printed/posted and placed on the website. It was also decided that the celebration of the church's anniversary would be officially held in April of each year. At the conclusion of the meeting, it was agreed that 2026 will be another exciting year at St. Mark's.

Dioceses Elects First Woman Bishop

Rev. Dr. Walker's Resolution is Passed and Accepted At Convention

This year's Convention of the Episcopal Dioceses of East Carolina was held in Goldsboro, North Carolina on November 15th at St. Catherine's Episcopal Church. Clarence Armbrister was our delegate and Thomas Warren the alternate. Of course, the main event this year was the election of our ninth Bishop. After three ballots The Rev. Sarah Fisher, rector of St. Catherine's Episcopal Church in Marietta, Georgia, was elected.

Before becoming rector of St. Catherine's, she was associate rector of St. Patrick's Episcopal Church in Dunwoody, Georgia. She was ordained to the priesthood in 2005 in the Diocese of Atlanta and holds degrees from the General Theological Seminary and Agnes Scott College. The bishop-elect will succeed Bishop Rob Skirving, who will retire this year after 11 years in office. Pending the required consent of a majority of the Episcopal Church's diocesan standing committees and bishops with jurisdiction, Rev. Fisher will be ordained and consecrated as bishop diocesan on May 23, 2026, at the Riverfront Convention Center in New Bern, North Carolina.

During the course of the convention Rev. Dr. Walker, proposed a resolution that calls the Diocese to formally recognize African American Episcopal congregations as a vital and distinct witness within the life of the Church, shaped by a unique history of faith forged through slavery, segregation, and ongoing systemic racism. It affirms that the Black Church's experience cannot be fully addressed through a generalized framework of multiculturalism



Continued on page 4



Another Successful Thanksgiving Community Dinner

This year's Community Thanksgiving Dinner was definitely one of the busiest. Over 280 dinners were served with all the fixings, turkey, stuffing, gravy, ham, greens beans, mac and cheese, fruit, salads, bread, and an assortment of desserts, and beverages. Several other churches participated including Church of The Servant, Church of The Good Shepard and St. Paul's Episcopal as well as every organization within St. Mark's. The event was covered by WRAL TV News and the Wilmington StarNews Online.

The Community Thanksgiving Dinner was started in 2014 as an off-shoot of a twice-a-month feeding program for the needy that was run by the women of St. Mark's. Mrs. Marjorie Armstrong has served as The Thanksgiving Dinner's cheerleader and coordinator since the events inception. After the day was finished and everything was put away Marjorie gave a special "Thank You" to the women and men of St. Mark's including its organizations, her family and the community.

Happy Birthday

January

Anita Phillip Fulton-11th Dorcas F. Brown-15th
 Stephanie McGregor-16th McKiff Fulton-19th
 Daryle L Parker- 20th Sandra J McClain-21st
 Karen Graham-22nd Gail S Fulton-23rd
 Avayah N Logan-31st

February

Kenneth S Chestnut Sr-1st Robert T Chestnut Jr-7th
 Jacquelyn Warren-14th Randy Green Jr-27th
 Cameron Hill-28th

Let's Hear From You!!!

The deadline for the next issue of *St. Mark's Grace* is Tuesday, February 24, 2026. Submissions can be emailed, to the church at stmarkschurch600@yahoo.com or Karl Boykin at karl.boykin@gmail.com. So let's hear from you. Your letters to the editor/ideas/articles/comments/information/questions can also be emailed to karl.boykin@gmail.com.

A PRAYER FOR ST. MARK'S

Almighty and everliving God, ruler of all things in heaven and earth, hear our prayers for St. Mark's, Wilmington. Strengthen the faithful, arouse the careless, restore the penitent, draw the seekers, and increase our numbers. Grant us all things necessary for our common life, and bring us all to be of one heart and mind within your Holy Church; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

**We are
 St. Mark's Episcopal Church
 Wilmington, NC**

Serving our community for over
 156 years (1869 - 2025)

Mission Statement

We are an Episcopal community of faith located in Wilmington, NC, proclaiming GOD and striving to be disciples of Jesus's love, justice and hope. All are welcome.

The Rev. Dr. Skip Walker, Priest-in-Charge
 Cheryl Wagoner, Deacon

St. Mark's Vestry

Clarence Armbrister - Senior Warden
 Debora McRae - Junior Warden

Travis Armstrong
 Karl Boykin
 Anthony Dereef
 Henry Spool
 Thomas Warren

Staff

Mark Hellmann, Chuck Lindler, **Choirmasters**
 Darlene Fulton, **Treasurer**
 Amanda Grady, **Administrative Asst.**
 Henry & Sandra Spool, **Sextons**
 Jacquelyn Warren, **Clerk**

Services

Church Service - Sunday - 11am
Zoom optional (see page 6)

- Adult Sunday School - 10 am
- Youth Sunday School - 10 am
- Bible Study - Wednesday - 6:30 pm

St. Mark's Grace

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 600 Grace Street, Wilmington, NC 28401
 Phone: 910-763-3858 Fax: 910-763-3292

The Rev. Dr. Skip Walker, Priest-in-Charge
 Diocese Of East Carolina

Newsletter Editor: Karl R. K. Boykin
 Newsletter Committee: Amanda Grady, Clarence Armbrister, Jacquelyn Warren, Gail Fulton,

Articles, comments, letters and suggestions can be submitted to the Church Office (stmarkschurch600@yahoo.com) or karl.boykin@gmail.com



FROM THE PULPIT

A New Year - A New Beginning

St. Marks Family, As we step into a new year, many of us carry a familiar mix of hope and hesitation. We want renewal, but we know how heavy or challenging last year may have been. The good news of our faith is that God is not intimidated by our past or limited by our habits. In Jesus Christ, God specializes in new beginnings. The same God who spoke light into darkness speaks again into our lives, saying, "Behold, I am making all things new." The turning of the calendar is not just a human reset; in Christ, it is an invitation to spiritual rebirth.

Rev. Dr. Skip Walker

Saint Paul gives us language for this promise when he declares, "If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation; everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new." Notice Paul does not say we are simply improved versions of our old selves. He says we are made new. In Christ, we are not defined by last year's failures, regrets, or unfinished goals. We are defined by God's grace, which recreates us from the inside out. The new year, then, is not about sheer willpower but about surrender - allowing God to do in us what we cannot do alone.

At Saint Mark's, I encourage you to approach this year not with anxiety about self-improvement, but with openness to transformation. Ask not only, "What do I want to change?" but also, "What is God seeking to make new in me?" New beginnings in Christ may look like renewed prayer, restored relationships, deeper compassion, or a fresh sense of purpose. They may begin quietly, but they are no less powerful. God's work of renewal often starts small and grows steadily, like seeds planted in good soil.

As your priest, my prayer for you is that you will embrace this year grounded in the truth that you already belong to Christ - and because you belong to Christ, new life is always possible. Step forward with courage and hope. The old does not get the final word. In Jesus, and through the Spirit's work among us, we truly are a new creation. May this new year be one in which we live into that promise together.

NOTES FROM THE VESTRY

CLARENCE ARMBRISTER
SR. WARDEN

Greetings, my brothers and sisters in Christ! Happy 2026!

First, I would like to thank each of you who participated in our Annual Meeting on December 14. We accomplished several important tasks and received valuable information regarding the activities of organizations throughout the year. Among those important tasks completed was the election of four new members to the Vestry. Thank you Denise McGregor Armbrister, Grace Byrd, Paul Kane and Chris Jarrett for accepting this most important role in the life of St. Mark's. And I would like to say a final "thank you" to the two outgoing members of the vestry: Anthony DeReef and Travis Armstrong, for their faithful service during their terms.

One other very important task posed to us during the meeting that will go a long way in setting a path for St. Mark's future

is the "challenge" made by Rev. Walker to us to answer the Discernment Questions he posed to us. The answers to these questions which are divided into four areas will be considered by the Vestry at our retreat on February 7 to help us prayerfully and intentionally direct the activities of the church over the next year. The four areas of inquiry include the following:

- Questions About Energy, Capacity, and Season of Life
- Questions About What Really Matters (Priorities)
- Questions About Gifts & Passion
- Questions That Invite Courage and Honesty

Please take the time to give thought to the questions posed because they will help shape the vision for St. Mark's future. I am truly excited about 2026 and the year ahead!

God Bless!

CDA



Lord, we realize that we have not protected your creation. We were blind and content, and we failed to appreciate all that you have given us. Forgive us, Lord, and give us the strength and clarity to see our potential and to be your stewards in repairing your creation.

Lead us into action by the guide of your hand. Amen.

Pray for Archbishop of Canterbury: Justin

Presiding Bishop: Michael

Bishop Diocese of East Carolina: Robert and All Interim

Rectors Pray for our Parish, especially our Staff, our

Vestry and its Officers, and our Ministries and Commit-

tees. Keep all our members in your prayers and especially

the Homebound: **Edith Beatty, Marilyn Burrell, Marlene**

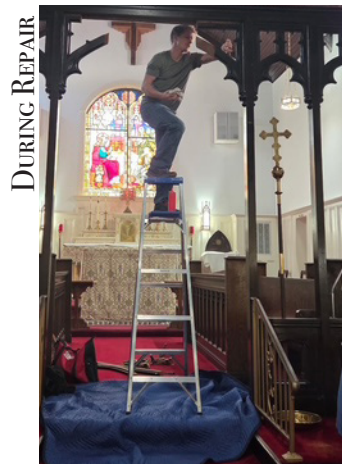
Frazier, Kimberly Kane, Ida King, Louise Outler, Julianna

Reese, Bernice Shaw, Gloria Williams, William and Dolores

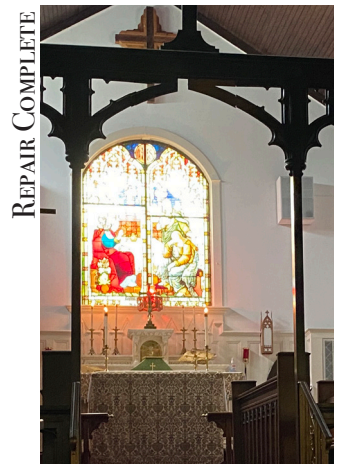
Smith, John Chisolm, Robert T Chestnut

Did You Notice...

CHANCEL LATTICE REPAIR



DURING REPAIR



REPAIR COMPLETE

A SALUTE TO AFRICAN AMERICAN VETERANS



Additionally, Tim shared information found on the husband of St. Anne Guild charter member Lettie Sharpless, and two former ministers who were army chaplains. Midway through the celebration, there was a surprise appearance by Frank Bland of Richmond, Virginia. His father, George Francis Bland, was born and educated in Wilmington. Enlisting in the Navy, he was serving on the USS West Virginia on the morning of the attack on Pearl Harbor. Frank was part of the 2024 commemoration, and this year told the stories of three great-uncles from Leland, who answered the call during World War One. The program drew a diverse crowd of attendees who, according to Pinnick, voiced their appreciation of this unique and special community history lesson.



On Saturday, November 8th, St. Mark's was the scene of the 4th annual Salute to African American Veterans. The doors were opened, and the community invited in to honor and learn about African Americans with Wilmington area connections that served the country. The event was cosponsored by the Wilmington African American Community Remembrance Project and the City of Wilmington's Parks and Recreation Department. Tim Pinnick, a frequent attendee of services and activities at the church, began the program paying homage to past church members who donned the uniform. He led off with reverence to Allen Evans Jackson, the namesake of the fellowship hall, by sharing that his son Henry Allen Jackson served during the closing months of World War One.

Brotherhood Advent Breakfast Feeds The Body And Soul

Saturday, December 6, 2025 • This year's Annual Advent Brunch, sponsored by The Brotherhood had several highlights with a spotlight on the "Brunch". As usual the capacity-filled Jackson Hall was permeated with the aroma of pancakes, eggs, sausage, grits, French toast, apple sauce, and a variety of beverages. The Brotherhood's President, Mr. Henry L. Spool welcomed the audience followed by Dr. Thomas Warren who offered the Invocation. Once everyone had gone to the buffet Mr. Kenneth Chestnut introduced the guest speaker, Dr. Herbert Harris.

Dr. Harris is a graduate of Columbia University in New York City, a retired attorney and Alpha Phi Alpha. He has authored several books, including a series entitled Life Lessons for Your Success and a fictional line of books entitled Tales From The Outskirts of Life. His books have been translated into Chinese, French, Italian, Portuguese, Romanian, and Spanish. Among his many other accomplishments he is a New Thought Leader, Spiritual Guide, and Co-Minister of Unity Spiritual Center of Wilmington, NC. He spoke

to the audience on the various signpost in our lives and how they all lead to us preparing the next generation. His inspirational speech led to a rousing standing ovation from the audience (especially the Alpha Phi Alpha's that were present).

Dr. Harris was followed by Mr. Chestnut who offered the Response. He spoke of growing up in his Wilmington neighborhood with Mr. Harris, the nicknames and great times they had.

The afternoon was wrapped-up with the benediction by Dr. Warren and a meet and greet with Dr. Harris.



Dr. Herbert Harris-Guest Speaker

Rev. Dr. Walker's Resolution Continued from page 1

and instead must be named, honored, and engaged on its own terms. By doing so, the resolution frames the African American Church's spiritual traditions, prophetic witness, and resilience as essential gifts to the entire Body of Christ and as central to the Church's baptismal commitment to justice, peace, and reconciliation.

To move from affirmation to action, the resolution commits the Diocese to a renewed partnership with African American congregations through the creation of a Task Force on the Future of African American Congregations. Led primarily by African American clergy and lay leaders, the Task Force will listen to congregations across the Diocese, examine patterns of inequity, and develop concrete strategies for sustainable ministry, leadership development, and equitable resource allocation. The resolution further mandated funding, reporting, and the establishment of a permanent structure of accountability to ensure long-term support, vitality, and equity for historically Black congregations within the Diocese. After discussion the resolution was passed and accepted.

Now More Than Ever!!

Wanted

Your canned goods and non-perishable food items for

Mother Hubbard's Cupboard

All items should be placed in the drop-off box in Jackson Hall

PARISH LIFE



This year we were able to purchase over 30 poinsettias that helped in adding to the beauty and warmth of the church during the holiday season. Even though the project was not meant to be a fund raiser, the overage will be divided between the Brotherhood and the Episcopal Church Women (ECW).

Thank you again, for your support.

Thanksgiving Community Dinner



Youth Ministry



We had a wonderful December Following the Star to Bethlehem. Our lessons focused on The Jesse Tree and the prophecy of Jesus' birth. Our journey took us to Bethlehem with Mary and Joseph, the Shepherds and the Wiseman. At the end of our journey we celebrated with our annual Christmas Tree decorating and gift giving party! What a joyous journey! Happy Blessed New Year! *The Youth Ministry*



Brotherhood Advent Brunch



January/February 2026 Schedule & Events

Date	Season/Event	Reader	Priest	Time
Sun, Jan 4	2nd Sunday After Christmas	Gail Fulton	Father Papile	Sunday School-10am Service - 11am
Sun, Jan 11	1st Sunday After Epiphany	Marjorie Armstrong	Rev. Dr. Walker	Sunday School-10am Service - 11am
Sun, Jan 18	2nd Sunday After Epiphany	Windell Hicks	Father Papile	Sunday School-10am Service - 11am
Sun, Jan 25	3rd Sunday After Epiphany	Yolanda Warren	Rev. Dr. Walker	Sunday School-10am Service - 11am
Sun, Feb 1	4th Sunday After Epiphany	Kenneth Chestnut	Father Papile	Sunday School-10am Service - 11am
Sun, Feb 8	5th Sunday After Epiphany	Travis Armstrong	Rev. Dr. Walker	Sunday School-10am Service - 11am
Sun, Feb 15	Last Sunday After Epiphany	Kay Papile	Father Papile	Sunday School-10am Service - 11am
Sun, Feb 22	First Sunday in Lent	Jennifer West	Rev. Dr. Walker	Sunday School-10am Service - 11am
Note:	Coffee Hour followers all Sunday Services unless otherwise announced.			
Sunday Zoom Service (11AM)	https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7770432765?pwd=RVZhUWkydG9oTTU2VTZiSTllYnJJQT09 Meeting ID: 777 043 2765 Passcode: c6E3xN One tap mobile: +13126266799,,7770432765#,,, *976913# US (Chicago) +16469313860,,7770			

Open Position - Church Sexton • Start Date: February/March 2026
See Bulletin Board in Jackson Hall for Job Description and Additional Information

St. Mark's In The News

St. Mark's stained glass window (behind the alter) is featured in an article in the StarNews (Sunday, December 14, 2025). Martha and Mary With Jeaus - (The sisters of Lazarus). As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him and his disciples. She had a sister named Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening as he spoke. But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made to feed their guest. She came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!"

See the rest of the story in the Bible - Luke 10:38-42.

