



## Liturgy Schedule

### Saturday Vigil:

5:00 p.m.,

7:00 p.m. (Spanish)

### Sunday:

7:00 a.m., 9:00 a.m.,

11:30 a.m.,

4:00 p.m. (Lifteen)

### Daily Mass:

Mon - Fri, 7:30 a.m.

### Adoration:

Mon, Tue, 8:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.;

Wed, 8:00 a.m. - 8:30 p.m.;

Fri, 8:00 - 11:30 a.m.

### Confessions:

Wed, 7:30 - 8:30 p.m.;

Sat, 3:00 - 4:00 p.m.

## Stewardship Integral to Life at St. Mark

If you want to see stewardship in action, all you have to do is look around at St. Mark. With more than 50 ministries bringing their time, talent and treasure to our lives here, there is no mistaking that we have embraced the true meaning of stewardship.

Tom Stecik, the Stewardship Committee Chair, says before he joined the group, he was a classic example of what stewardship on the surface means.

"I joined the Stewardship Committee at St. Mark seven years ago," Tom says. "Fr. Tim was pastor at the time, and placed a message in the Sunday bulletin for parishioners interested in participating on the Finance Council. I was late getting in touch with Fr. Tim, who informed me that he had already filled the spot. However, he said that the Stewardship Committee had openings, and asked if I was interested. I told him that my understanding of stewardship's role was encouraging offertory and other 'campaign' contributions. On the



phone, Father suggested that stewardship 'wasn't exactly' what I imagined, and invited me to attend a meeting or two without obligation. I remember thinking that whatever the Stewardship Committee was, they apparently needed help and, if I went to a meeting, I wouldn't back out."

The Stewardship Committee is one of the pastor's advisory councils and members are invited to join by the pastor. There are 10 members and the group meets once a month.

"The meetings are especially important during the run up to the renewal

# ***Stewardship Integral to Life at St. Mark***

*continued from front cover*

campaign,” Tom says. “Our mission is to further develop ‘Stewardship as a Way of Life’ at St. Mark. We work toward that goal by promoting understanding of the true meaning of stewardship and facilitating opportunities for our ministries to engage parishioners who are not aware of the opportunities to live a steward’s life at St. Mark.”

Stewardship Committee members take care of many tasks during the preparing for the Annual Stewardship Renewal Campaign that is held over three consecutive weekends. Work begins three months in advance and includes working with ministry leaders to update descriptions and contact information to be published in the parish Ministry Catalog. Ministry leaders are brought together to take part in formation activities and prepare for their part in the Ministry Fair.

During and after the Campaign, Stewardship Committee members encourage parishioners to follow Our Lord’s call to discipleship by returning Commitment Cards, as well as helping the leaders’ follow-up with those who have expressed interest in a ministry.

“Needless to say that the range of projects we undertake calls for organizers, program designers, project trackers, presenters, editors, ministry leader outreach, facilities specialists, and more,” Tom says. “Our 10 Committee members don’t think twice about contributing tirelessly according to their talents when any project arises.”

If numbers tell the tale about growth of stewardship at St. Mark, Tom points to a comparison of the number of Commitment Cards returned and the repeat participation in the ministries between 2014 and 2015.

“There was about a 25 percent increase in the number of cards returned by our parishioners,” he says. “We were really excited about it.”

The numbers have translated into the “three areas of giving” – offertory giving, volunteering, and devoting time to prayer and spiritual growth.

“We see this in action at St. Mark,” Tom says. “Members of our more than 50 ministries are nothing less than amazing, working to serve their fellow parishioners, as well as the local community beyond St. Mark and more.

“Most of us don’t differentiate between the parish and how we live our lives,” he continues. “From my standpoint, stewardship influences my business relationships, as well, to live as responsibly, to be the best I can all the time. That’s the same attitude you have to pursue if you’re going to try to live the stewardship life in the parish and outside.”

Tom notes that when a parish understands the true meaning of stewardship – and that it is not simply offertory giving – there is what might be called a “loaves and fishes” effect.

“In their pastoral letter on stewardship, *A Disciple’s Response*, our bishops instruct us that to truly be Jesus’ disciples, we have to first step back and recognize that everything we have has been given by Him,” Tom says. “Next, he asks us to develop our gifts and use them to serve others. As more and more of a parish community comes to accept these two statements and applies them in their lives, the possibilities are endless.”

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*A Letter From Our Pastor*

# *Make Prayer and Hospitality Pillars of Your Lenten Journey*

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

**I**n the coming weeks, we will conclude our Lenten observance, experience Holy Week, and celebrate the joy of Easter. Of course, I hope that you have made some effort to make this Lenten season special and significant, but if you have not, it is never too late to accomplish that goal.

With thoughts of Lent, Easter and the Year of Mercy at the top of my mind, I offer a couple suggestions to help carry you to the end of your Lenten journey.

As you know, prayer is foundational to stewardship, as it is one of the Four Pillars of a stewardship parish — along with hospitality, formation and service. With this in mind, here are some suggestions on how you might make your prayers even more consequential.

Pick someone to pray for, perhaps even someone you don't get along with. Just pray for them. You do not have to tell them you are praying for them, but the exercise is good for you, and for them, as well. If possible, find a time this month to pray before the Blessed Sacrament, especially if this is something you do not normally do. Pray every morning shortly after you get up, and again each evening before you turn in. It does not have to be a long prayer, but it does need to be done consistently.

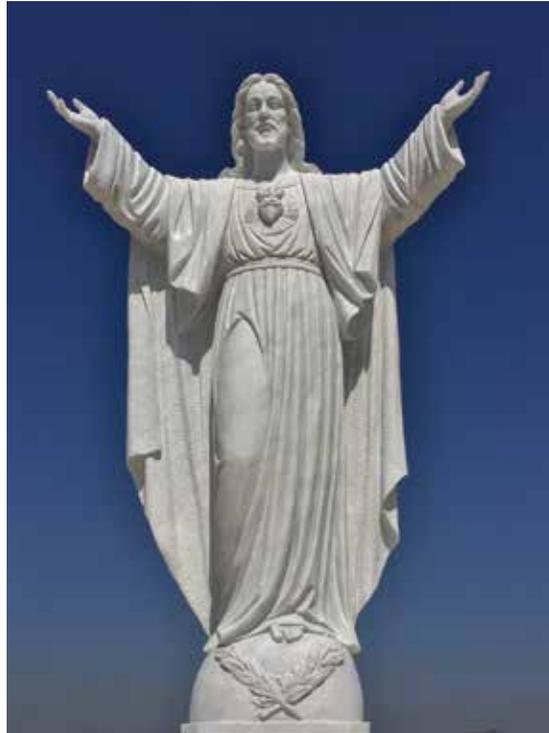
In terms of the pillar of hospitality, there is also much we can do in this area, both as a parish and as individuals and families. Here is a suggestion that involves hospitality — one that is also connected to gratitude and even the Year of Mercy. Many of us spend time at a computer. It is a way for us to stay connected to those who are close to us, and to the world around us. Why not begin and end each week emailing someone a note of thanksgiving? Again, it does not have to be lengthy, but when we think about it, each of our lives is filled with people to whom we should be grateful.

Just send that someone a note thanking them for something specifically, or in general. By starting and ending each week like that, our minds are in the right place for prayer and for having the attitude that Christ asks us to have.

I thank you for all you do, for our parish, for the Church, for one another, and for me personally. I am blessed. Like most, I may not express it often enough. I pray for you, and I ask you to pray for me during this holy time.

In Christ,

Fr. George  
Pastor



# A Look Back on Re

This winter, our parish community shared in events rooted in stewardship and fellowship – our Stewardship Ministry Fair and the Volunteer Appreciation Dinner. We thank all who participate in parish life at St. Mark, and we hope you will prayerfully consider how you may become involved within our parish family!

## Stewardship Ministry Fair



# *cent Parish Events*

## *Volunteer Appreciation Dinner*



# Parishioner Rick Wright:

After experiencing a corporate career that resulted in numerous relocations, St. Mark parishioners Rick and Martha Wright were looking forward to finally setting down some roots when they moved to Denton. Rick's career had included frequent travel, pulling him away even on weekends. So, he never really had the time to become active in a parish family.

Now at last, thought Rick, it was finally time to be settled! Using his business planning background, Rick eagerly began making plans for his retirement.

"It was easy to formulate a timeline, goals and things I wanted to accomplish in retirement that would keep me happy," Rick says.

Yet, one summer evening, while mowing the grass, everything changed. Having not yet decided which parish to join, Rick was approached by Fr. George after having dinner with Rick's next door neighbors, parishioners Andy and Melissa Lux. Fr. George walked over to Rick to introduce himself and to welcome the Wrights to the community. During this exchange, Fr. George offered a simple invitation – "Come grow with us." Not realizing the significance of those words at the time, this was the beginning of God's transformation in Rick's life.

Shortly after, Rick and Martha attended St. Mark's Ministry Fair, where Rick volunteered to become a lector and joined the Bread of Life Ministry. As a hospital RN, Martha was able to unite her professional background

with service by becoming an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion for the Hospital Ministry.

For Rick, however, this initial step was just the beginning of God's call. Within a few months, he was asked to backfill a volunteer money counter position. Soon, his attendance at daily Mass found him substituting as a lector and Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion. Then, on Wednesdays – and while not a fan of hospitals – Rick would spend part of the afternoon chauffeuring Martha to local hospitals for her ministry.

Rick was further blessed a year ago by being invited to join St. Mark's staff.

"It was a blessing to join the staff and learn how they are totally devoted to a life of serving this parish," Rick says. "They are very good at understanding the vision and direction St. Mark needs to go, making sure it is aligned with our Catholic faith, and ensuring that what we do serves the parishioners and ministries."

At the same time, Rick's love for proclaiming God's Word as a lector continued to grow. He began desiring to be able to go further, preaching the Gospel as a deacon. This desire was deepened further when he later began teaching a baptismal class.

"It was very exciting to go through this class with prospective parents and godparents, making me desire to go even further on this journey with them through the diaconate, allowing me to actually administer the sacrament," Rick says.



Rick and Martha Wright at Mary's house outside of Ephesus, Turkey



Rick and Martha Wright with their six granddaughters, awaiting the birth of their first grandson in April.

# Answering a Call of Service

Following the promptings of the Holy Spirit, Rick and Martha began attending diaconate discernment classes. And, after five months of classes and meetings, Rick was granted permission to enter the first-year deacon formation classes.

“It was as if the bishop was saying those same words, ‘Come grow with us,’” Rick says.

Together, the Wrights will take some time this spring to further discern this calling and are hopeful that the Holy Spirit will allow Rick to continue his service journey as a deacon of the Church.

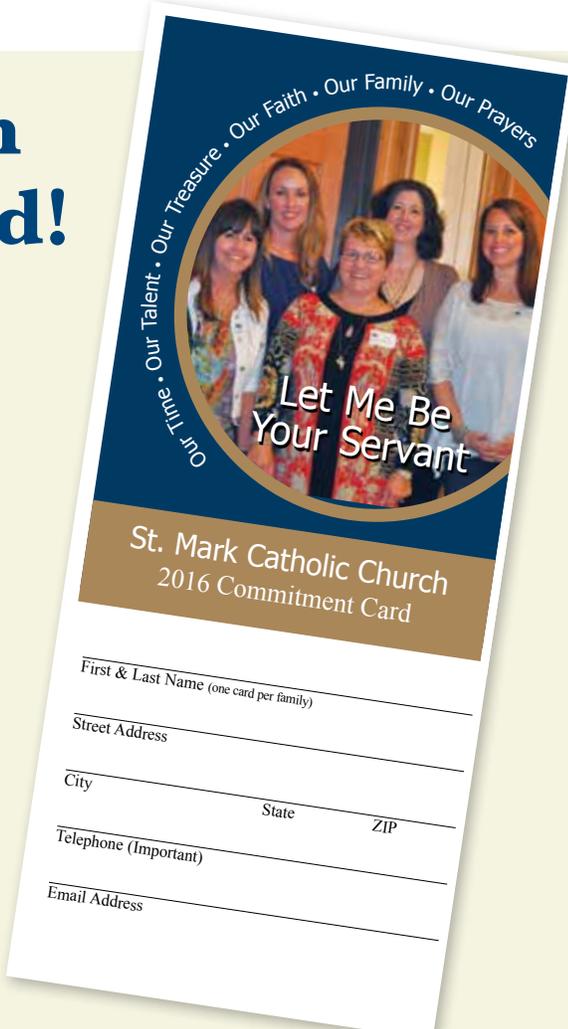
“Just when I had it all figured out, God called,” Rick says. “I found a totally new type of happiness in my retirement. We have found a faith community home here and, whether I become a deacon or not, I understand that my calling is to become a servant within our community. I thought I had it all planned out, but God had a better plan for me to serve, and grow with Him.”



*Since joining St. Mark's, Rick Wright's life has been transformed to one of service.*

## Don't Forget to Return Your Commitment Card!

**Please remember to turn in your Stewardship Renewal Commitment Cards to the parish as soon as possible. We appreciate your willingness to participate in the Stewardship Renewal. The more we grow to embrace and understand the stewardship way of life, the more our parish will flourish and grow!**



The image shows a sample of a commitment card for St. Mark Catholic Church. The card has a blue header with a circular photo of a group of women. The text on the card includes the church's name and year, and several fields for personal information.

*Our Time • Our Talent • Our Treasure • Our Faith • Our Family • Our Prayers*

**Let Me Be Your Servant**

**St. Mark Catholic Church  
2016 Commitment Card**

\_\_\_\_\_  
First & Last Name (one card per family)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Street Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
City

\_\_\_\_\_  
State ZIP

\_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone (Important)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Email Address

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## *Easter Triduum*

### LITURGY SCHEDULE

March 24, Holy Thursday

*Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper 7 p.m.*

*Adoration following Mass until 10 p.m.*

March 25, Good Friday

*Stations of the Cross, 3 p.m.*

*Liturgy of the Passion of our Lord, Veneration  
of the Cross and Holy Communion, 7 p.m.*

March 26, Holy Saturday

*The Solemn Easter Vigil, 8:30 p.m.*

March 27, Easter Sunday

*7 a.m., 9 a.m. and 11:30 a.m.*

*Saint Mark*