

Dear Companions on the Way...

I serve on a National Committee called the State of the Church Committee that looks at our membership data and trends. To anyone who follows these kinds of issues, you know that these are hard times for traditional institutions of all kinds, including the church. The latest figures for the Episcopal Church at the national level show that we have lost congregations, lost active members and lost average Sunday worship attendance. There are 7,095 Episcopal Congregations in the United States (down from 7,155 in 2005), 2,154,572 Active Baptized Members (down from 2,205,376), 765,326 Total Average Sunday Worship Attendance (down from 787,271).

While many might credit this drop to the recent controversies about sexuality and authority, that is only half the story. Every mainline church, even the Southern Baptists, are seeing reduction in members. Henry G. Brinton, a Presbyterian pastor, wrote recently in *USA Today* about these trends. He noted that “A generation ago, people turned to trusted authorities such as newspapers and mainline churches to get information. But trust in such institutions has fallen over the past 30 years, eroding the relationship between Americans and a number of traditional sources of trust. A poll called the General Social Survey has asked people whether they have ‘a great deal of confidence’ in social institutions, and their answers reveal a clear decline.

According to this survey by the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago, confidence has dropped since the 1970s in:

- Banks and financial institutions (From 35% to 28%)
- Major companies (26% to 17%)
- The press (24% to 9%)
- Education (36% to 27%)
- Organized religion (35% to 24%)

Brinton went on to say that “what is lost in this fracturing of church and society are the worldwide networks that have long been maintained by Protestant denominations. Isolated congregations can certainly meet the spiritual needs of individuals, but they cannot do the work of denominations in supporting thousands of missionaries around the world, creating seminaries for the training of clergy, or taking stands for peace, justice, and religious freedom on the national and international levels. In addition, independent congregations cannot be counted on to preserve a historically based understanding of the Christian faith, or to maintain the unity of the church across geographical or cultural boundaries.”

Companions *continued from page 1*

What we see in the Episcopal Church is that growing churches are those with a clear identity, a strong sense of mission, and are often those that are younger, both in membership and their locations. These trends are indeed cause for concern. It is important for us to be courageous in looking at our self and to then undertake the kind of activities that will continue to build our sense of identity and deepen our sense of mission. We at St. Mark's are not growing significantly, but nor have we seen our numbers shrink.

The world we live in is changing, and we must endeavor to discern where we are to change and adapt and where we are to stand firm upon the timeless foundation of Christ. We will not be changing our name in the near future, but we do need to have our ears and hearts open to the cries of the people we are sent to minister to. Bless you for your faithfulness to St. Mark's and to God.

Shalom,



Andrew

Calendar of Upcoming Events

- November 2 St. Mark's day at
Manna Soup Kitchen
- November 10 Work day at the houses next door
- November 10 Lay Eucharistic Visitor Training
- November 10 Community Forum at FLC
- November 11 "Support our Troops" Sunday
- November 17 Holiday Bazaar Craft Day
- November 18 UTO Ingathering
- November 30 World AIDS Day Service
- December 1 Holiday Bazaar
- December 7 St. Mark's day at
Manna Soup Kitchen
- December 9 Christmas Recital with Rochelle
Mann, flute, and C. Scott Hagler,
piano and organ
- December 12 Community Service of Lessons &
Carols and soup supper
- December 14 All-Church Caroling and
chili supper

Thank You from Jim and Jean Robinette

On behalf of the family of Helen Alvarez, a heartfelt thank you to the congregation for all of the prayers, cards, phone calls and good wishes during the time of my sister's illness and at the time of her passing. All that you did for us was greatly appreciated and brought us comfort throughout this difficult time.

Lay Eucharistic Visitor Training: Saturday, November 10

Join friends for an engaging training to become a Lay Eucharistic Visitor on Saturday, November 10 from 8:30 until 11:30 a.m. Following the early service, Eucharistic Visitors take the bread and wine to church members who are homebound or at Four Corners Health Care Center. Musicians are also needed! A light breakfast will be served, so please let Cheryl know if you plan to attend. E-mail her at CherylW@StMarksDurango.com or call the church office, 247-1129.

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

Property Clean-up: Saturday, November 10

On Saturday, November 10 beginning at 9:00 a.m. we will be gathering to clean and fix up one of the properties St. Mark's recently purchased just east of the church. We will be working at 361 9th St. to get the house ready to rent. Some of the tasks may include painting, ripping up old carpet, installing window treatments, window cleaning and pruning. Bring gloves to work in, painting supplies, cleaning supplies and whatever else you think may be helpful. If you can help any time on Saturday, please let the office or Father Andrew know. Lunch will be provided.

IYENGAR
YOGA
@ST. MARK'S



ON-GOING YOGA CLASSES BEGIN AT ST. MARK'S NOVEMBER 15!

Thursdays, 5:15 p.m. • **Joan Pope**, instructor • All levels welcome
Classes are \$10 each when purchased as a series. First series: \$40.
Choose four from November 15, 29, December 6, 13, 20. Next series
begins in January. Register at the first class.

Joan Pope recently moved to Durango from the mountains of North Carolina where she has been teaching Iyengar-influenced yoga since 1996. Joan received her teacher training with Lillah Schwartz, a certified Iyengar instructor in Asheville, NC. Joan has continued her studies with various teachers in the Iyengar tradition.

Abimsa, nonviolence, is a focus in Joan's classes as she encourages individuals to meet themselves where they are without judgment, and to allow yoga to help free them physically and mentally. Some of her students have commented: "Joan is a positive, patient, and enthusiastic instructor" and they describe her classes as "fun and laid back."

Joan is an occupational therapist at Four Corners Health Care Center in Durango. She enjoys incorporating gentle yoga stretches and breathing techniques into her treatments to assist her patients in maintaining function and mobility throughout the lifespan. Joan has a particular interest in teaching those with specific pain, injury, or illness to use yoga as a tool to assist in healing.

Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Durango Sets Recital Series

Marilyn Mangold Garst will open the recital series with a piano recital Friday, November 9 at 7:00 p.m. Also on the series are John Pennington, percussion, on Friday, February 15, 2008 at 7:00 p.m., and the Mangold Duo (Bonnie Mangold, cello, and Marilyn Mangold Garst, piano) on Friday, April 4, 2008. The church is located at 419 San Juan Drive in Durango. Tickets are \$12 and \$6 and are available at the door. Save \$2 per ticket when buying the complete season.

A Safer, More Compassionate World, Community Forum: Saturday, November 10

The Fort Lewis College Common Reading Experience and the League of Women voters is sponsoring this special community forum on Saturday November 10 from 9:45 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the FLC Ballroom in the College Union Building. Listen to those in our community who are making a difference in the lives of the most needy around the world. Those who are participating in the St. Mark's Parish read may find this of particular interest as the forum has incorporated the common reading experience *Mountains Beyond Mountains* into the event format. See the flyer on the bulletin board in the Communication Center for more information.

Veteran's Day "Support our Troops": Sunday, November 11

Blue Star Moms of Durango is inviting local churches to participate in a Support our Troops Sunday on Veteran's Day, November 11. There will be a box placed at the church to collect items for care packages to send to our troops for the holidays. Cards and letters of support are always welcome. There is an extensive list on the bulletin board in the Parish Hall, but some of the items being requested are:

Snack foods: sunflower seeds, nuts, dried fruit, trail mix, powdered energy drinks, gum, mints, crackers and easy cheese, single-serving Pringles, sweets that don't melt or smash, microwave popcorn, tea bags, instant coffee and hot chocolate, canned soups, tuna and chicken, Kraft mac and cheese, power bars, Slim Jims and beef jerky.

Personal Care Items: foot powder, contact lens solution, Avon Skin-So-Soft, lip balm, sun block, sunglasses, nasal spray, soft toilet paper, razors, soap in a plastic case, travel-size shampoo/conditioner, toothpaste, toothbrush, deodorant, mouthwash, odor-eaters, Qtips, shaving cream, big fluffy towels, hand sanitizer, dental floss, baby powder, Aspirin and Neosporin.

Entertainment/other: CDs, portable CD players, flip-flop sandals, mini fans, radio headsets, travel-size board games, AA alkaline batteries, mini flashlights, electronic hand-held games, joke and comic books, brain teasers, Frisbees, deck of cards, dominoes and Hacky sacks.

Holiday Bazaar Craft Work Day: Saturday, November 17

The Bazaar Committee is making preparations for the 2007 Holiday Bazaar, to be held at St. Mark's on December 1. There are lots of ways that you can help on the day of the bazaar, as well as preparing for the bazaar in the upcoming weeks. One way you can help: we will gather Saturday, November 17 to make some of the items to sell at St. Mark's craft table. Four different craft projects planned, including pine-cone wreaths, starch angels and coasters. Additional craft ideas are welcome. If you enjoy creating things, we need your help! Please call Ginna Harbison (247-4912) or Beth Scales (884-9172).

Used Wine Corks Wanted For Bazaar Project

Linda Dunaway has a special project for the St. Mark's Christmas Bazaar and needs used wine corks. Each project takes about 500 corks, so lots are needed. Please save yours and deposit them in the jug in the kitchen at church. The Holiday Bazaar is December 1 so time is running out!

St. Mark's Messenger Deadline

Deadline for the next issue is November 21.
Submit information for the newsletter to Tonya Wales at 259-4166 or detwales@msn.com
or contact Cheryl at 247-1129 or
CherylW@StMarksDurango.com.

United Thank Offering Ingathering: Sunday, November 18

The Fall United Thank Offering Ingathering is Sunday, November 18. Pick up your UTO box today in the Parish Hall, take it home and each time you are thankful for something in your life, drop a coin or a bill into the box as a thank offering. Bring your offering to the church on November 18. The UTO is a great way to practice mindfulness of the little (and big) things for which we are grateful, from safe travel to a delicious cup of coffee. The money collected for the UTO supports a variety of ministries. In 2007 the UTO Committee approved 104 grants totaling \$2,439,000. The two largest grants were to the Diocese of Sialkot in Pakistan to finish a hospital and to the Diocese of Alaska to build a new church in Homer.

A Durango Thanksgiving: Thursday, November 22

You are invited to Thanksgiving dinner on November 22 from noon to 2:00 p.m. at the La Plata County Fairgrounds Exhibit Hall. If you are lonely, want to be a part of a larger family, you're hungry or can't cook (or you don't like to cook), this community gathering is for you! If you would like to volunteer to help or would like to pre-arrange a ride to the event, please call Sylvia at 247-5990 between 2:00 and 8:00 p.m. any day of the week. Those who would like to donate a pie (or more!) may deliver them to the fairgrounds by 10:00 a.m. on Thanksgiving morning. Last year, approximately 120 volunteers served 550 people and delivered more than 75 meals.

World AIDS Day Service: Friday, November 30

On Friday, November 30 at 12:15 p.m., St. Mark's will offer a non-denominational World AIDS Day Service. It is a time to remember those we've lost to AIDS, those whose lives have been affected by the disease, and the friends and family who support them. All are invited.

Library News

Thanks to the generosity of Mike and Bev Darmour, the library now has these new Thomas Merton books in the library. Drop by and take a look. Books can be checked out any time the doors are open.

- *Praying With Icons*
- *Thomas Merton: A Pictorial Biography* (by Forest)
- *Life And Holiness*
- *Dialogues with Silence*
- *Merton's Palace of Nowhere*
- *Faith and Violence*
- *Opening the Bible*
- *Praying the Psalms*
- *When the Trees Say Nothing*
- *Thomas Merton, Contemplative Critic* (by Nouwen)
- *The Man in the Sycamore Tree* (by Rice)
- *Spiritual Direction and Meditation*

The library has also purchased a number of CDs by Richard Rohr. And, our library has seen some rearranging. There is a list posted on the card catalogue of all the library categories that indicates which ones are upstairs and which ones are in the adult classroom in the basement. The youth library

(including all the Veggie Tales on video) is now downstairs in the youth classroom with the animal prints on the wall. Feel free to check items out from upstairs or downstairs.

Outreach Committee Needs Knitters

Winter is coming and there are many children out there who need warm winter sweaters. We have yarn and patterns in the Parish Hall Communications Center; please help yourself. Bright color patterns are really welcome so you can use different colors and patterns for your sweater. When your sweater is done, please return it to the Communications Center and the Outreach Committee will send it out.

You Rang? Salvation Army Bell Ringers Needed

St. Mark's will be ringing bells for the Salvation Army Wednesday, November 21 through Sunday, November 25. We will be at the north entrance of Wal-Mart from 11:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. each day, excluding Thanksgiving. The bell ringing schedule is divided into three, two-hour shifts. We're asking for individuals to sign up for one (or more if you like!) of the two-hour shifts available during the week we will be serving. The sign-up sheet is posted in the Communications Center.

The Salvation Army Emergency Assistance Fund provides for a variety of needs throughout the year, including rent assistance, transportation, temporary lodging, disaster relief (such as in the event of a fire), groceries, meals and medical needs. Most of the funds used to provide these services are collected during the holiday season, so this is a perfect opportunity for you and/or your family to help others.



Divine Diners Winter Kick-Off: Sunday, December 2

It's time to sign up for a new Divine Diners group! Divine Diners is a great way to get to know the St. Mark's family. Groups usually meet monthly for dinner in the home (or other location) of a group member. Groups forming now will meet January through May of 2008. We will gather for a kick-off potluck at the church on Sunday, December 2 following the 10:30 service and announce the groups at that time. Call Luri Owen at 884-0444 for more information.

Please fill in the form below and return it to the church by November 18.

Name(s) _____

Telephone: _____

Residence address: _____

We live (circle one): north east south west of Durango.

We usually attend the (circle one): 8:00 a.m. service 10:30 a.m. service

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**Lion's
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Deadline for the next issue is November 21, 2007.
