

Parish Council 2025 Annual Report

Dear sisters and brothers of Saint Mark,

It is our privilege to share with you the Pastoral Council Annual Report for 2025. On behalf of Fr. Eric, Deacon John, the staff, ministry leadership, the pastoral and finance councils, we wish to extend our sincerest thanks for your many gifts of time, talent and treasure given this past year. Without your generosity, much of what is shared in this report would not be possible. Once again, our ministries have impacted the lives of so many within and beyond our walls. We are indeed a community rooted in the Word, nourished by the sacraments, seeking to bring about the kingdom by imaging Jesus Christ.

Many projects continued the building refurbishments begun in 2024 including the long-awaited opening of the renovated restrooms. The flooring in the great hall and the carpet in daily chapel was replaced, and the two new TV monitors were installed in the commons early in the year. In summer, lighting in the great hall and commons was upgraded with more efficient dimmable LED panels and light strips providing greater security and enhanced versatility. Lighting in the altar area of the daily chapel, the upper portions in the sanctuary and in the columbarium was also upgraded later in the year.

In the area of ministry, many of our fellow parishioners volunteer as altar servers, lectors, eucharistic ministers, ushers and information ministers as we gather for Mass. Our Music Ministers, musicians and choir spend many hours in rehearsal so that the excellent music they share each week enhances our worship experience. Many others also go unseen taking care of linens, decorating, taking care of the plants and cleaning.

Our many catechists have the most important task of handing down our faith to our children, the community and the church of the future. Beyond the classroom, special events such as Vacation Bible School and MARKed Generation youth activities have grown significantly. These gatherings highlight how essential friendship, community, and joyful experiences are to developing a relationship with Christ. Our catechists serve as the team who prepare our young adults for the sacrament for confirmation and facilitate the OCIA process with those inquiring about our Catholic faith. In the special jubilee Year of Hope, groups from St. Mark visited the Museum of the Bible, pilgrimage sites including the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, the Basilica of the Immaculate Conception in Norfolk, and the Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham in Williamsburg as well as a special pilgrimage to the Basilica of St. Andrew in Roanoke.

Parish Life supported many recurring annual events including Lenten Suppers, the Easter Vigil Reception, the Easter Egg Hunt, Funeral Receptions supported by our Heavenly Chefs, Samaritan Meals, Mother's Day and Father's Day activities, Wisdom Seeker gatherings, and the Parish Picnic. Additional events such as the Wine and Cheese Social, the Marriage Celebration Dinner, and the four Year of Hope Pilgrimages, which drew in a total of over 500 Pilgrims. During the 2025-year, Parish Life brought together over 4,000 St. Mark parishioners for community events!

For those who have a green thumb, our landscape gardeners weed, mulch, put in seasonal plants while others assist with the maintenance, aesthetics and improvement of the parish's buildings, grounds and gardens.

Within Justice & Peace Ministry, there are 16 sub-ministries. While these are too many details to discuss individually, the numbers which represented a marked increase in 2025 speak for themselves:

-Food Pantry 3,509 Adults 1,899 Children 1,567 Families 1,975 Food Bags

2,225 Snack Bags

-Holiday Giving Thanksgiving 405 gift cards Christmas 925 all time record food\gift cards plus over 400 toys.

-CAST 2025: 55 parishioners donated 136 food items, and 88 parishioners filled 244 time slot positions with a total 942.75 hours for a total of 143 volunteers who fed a total 394 guests three meals over the seven-day period.

Finally, while not a formal parish ministry, we must include our Knights of Columbus Council 10515. Their membership works behind the scenes supporting nearly every ministry mentioned and in direct support of projects for Fr Eric. They are the organizers and supporters of the pumpkin patch that has grown into a meaningful community tradition. Through this effort, we were able to help support over 600 Navajo farmers while bringing together more than 100 volunteers including children and grandchildren. In the spirit of service our Christmas tree lot brings together community and proceeds support our food pantry.

For everyone in ministry, we offer our sincere thanks for all you do. If you have been thinking about ministry but have not joined, we extend an invitation from the heart to prayerfully consider anew where you might be called to serve. Remember, it is truly about the community we build in the serving of one another. For each of us has already been called to be a Pilgrim of Hope and a Builder of Community.

God bless you.