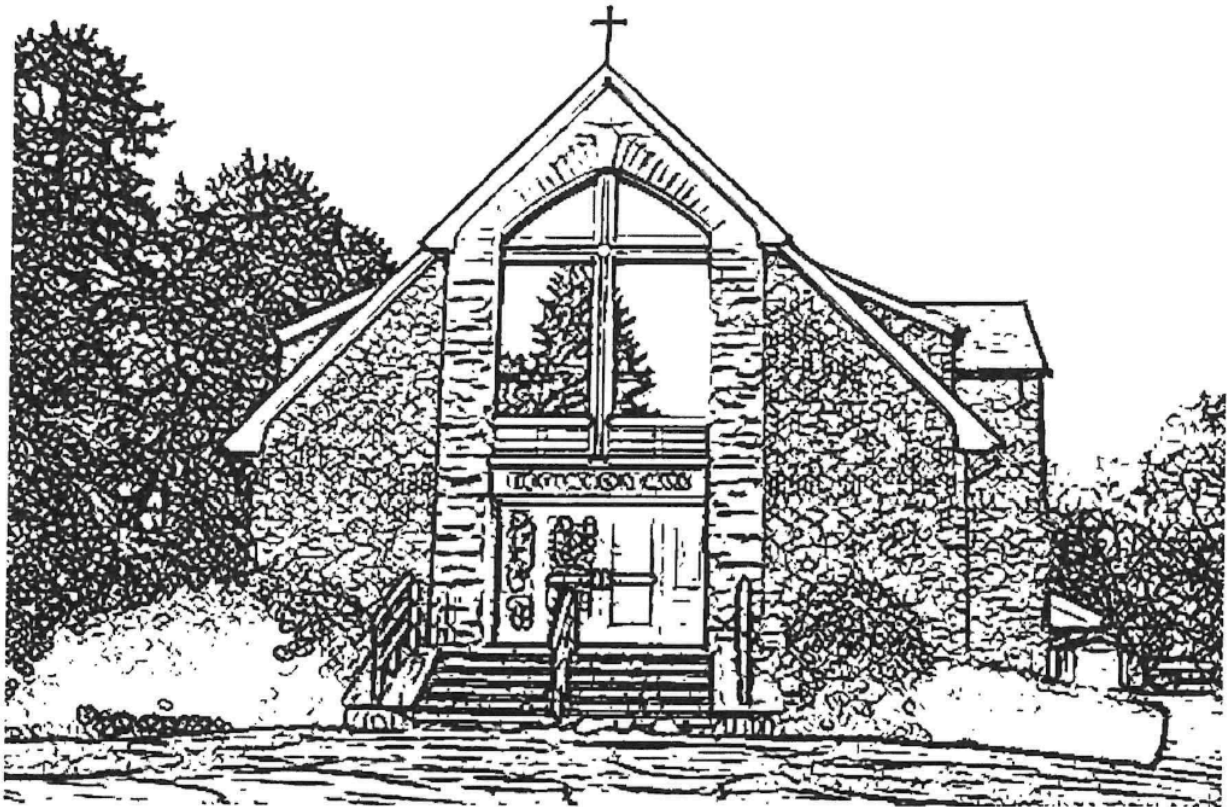


# **St. Mark's Episcopal Church**

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**Annual Report 2025**

**For the 79th Annual Meeting**

**January 25, 2026**

**10:15am**

*Come for a visit. Stay for the journey.*

# 79<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of St. Mark's Episcopal Church

January 25, 2026  
10:15 am

## Agenda

1. Call to Order, Opening Prayer
2. Determination of quorum
3. Appointment of Clerk for the Annual Meeting
4. Approval of the Minutes of the 77th Annual Meeting
5. Annual Reports: comments and questions as needed
6. Treasurer's Report for 2025  
Presentation of Parish Budget for 2026 Shirley K.
7. Report of the Nominating Committee  
Election of Vestry members, Convention/Deanery Delegates
8. Rector's Time Rev Julia Matallana Freedman
9. Parking Lot Raffle
10. Adjournment and Closing Prayer

**January 26, 2025**

**Minutes of St. Mark's 78th Annual Meeting**

Meeting convened at 11:32 am

A quorum was declared and the meeting was called to order. Deb opened with a prayer.

Tammy C. was appointed clerk for the meeting

A motion to accept the minutes of the 2024 annual meeting was made by Chris C. and seconded by Jeff K. All approved.

The following reports were reviewed

- Interim priest
- Altar Guild
- Coffee Hour
- Food Pantry
- Activities Committee
- Music director
- Prayer Shawl
- Treasurer's Report was presented by Shirley K.
- Budget Report for 2025 was presented Shirley K.
  - Estimated salary and benefits for a priest has been factored into 2025 budget
- Property Team
  - Savings on rectory have already been seen since conversion to electric heat (even with no one living there!)
- Senior Warden time:
  - Deb is trying to assemble a group, she has asked some people to volunteer on a church service team. They would discuss liturgical nuances such as using Rite I or II, singing all lines of hymns or not, moving to one 9:00 service.
    - Most parishioners expressed favor of changing to one 9:00 service instead of the current 8:00 and 10:00 services
  - A lengthy discussion was had regarding the increasingly diminished availability of supply priests
  - The search for a consistent priest is slow. One candidate looked promising, but had to back out for family reasons. There are not enough available candidates.
  - A special thanks and round of applause was given to Barbra for her work in the office
- Nominating Team
  - Vestry appointments as follows:
    - Adam C., Ellen B. and Karen O. will each start a three year term.
    - Neil T. offered to complete the one year term that very recently opened.

- Deb B. will complete another 3 year term as senior warden
- Delegates to Diocesan Convention are Jeanne S. and Sandy H.
- The clerk cast a vote for the slate of officers. All approved.

Motion to adjourn was made by Jeanne S., second by Chris Cs.  
Tom S. read a closing prayer.

Meeting adjourned at 12:48 pm.

## **Priest-In-Charge Report**

January 2026

The Rev. Julia Matallana Freedman

As your new Priest-In-Charge it has been a delight to get to know many of you. I have had the opportunity to visit with a number of folks for Eucharistic visits. And hearing some of your life's stories has been invaluable. I have been able to be present with the St. Mark's Food Pantry and it has been such a joy to give back to the wider community. Additionally, I have so enjoyed stepping into this role and delving into the details of your worship. It has been enjoyable for me to shepherd us through our first season of Advent together into the Christmas season.

One strong theme that has continued to surface in our vestry conversations since October is the desire for growth within the St. Mark's Community. While I do not think "numbers" are always the full story, I do believe that we count the "things" that matter, and in this work, people matter! We had a little over 60 folks at the 5 p.m. service on Christmas Eve, it was a lively, prayerful, and encouraging service that included all ages.

With parish growth in mind, behind the scenes, Adam and Kaitrin have been working hard to update our website particularly as this is a great tool to bring in new visitors. One thing you will notice about the new website theme is that our worship times are extremely easy to find on the homepage, the first page you see. I continue to have new visitors in mind as we continue our website update, especially as we want to make a visit to St. Mark's as easy as possible for new folks. I also spend time each week updating our constant contact weekly email. I hope you have found the devotional content meaningful and I strongly urge you to read my emails each week. It's a great way to stay connected during the week.

I am deeply grateful for the 12 hours of administrative staff hours each week, Jeanne and I work very closely together and we try to have some fun doing it. I am also deeply grateful to a number of volunteers who help support the administrative needs that come up in our parish life. From helping with bulletins to updating the website to what the ushers and various leaders do for our technology on Sunday mornings to the food pantry volunteers to the administration that is required to update our Altar Guild handbook to keeping our finances in order, honestly the list is lengthy! All of this volunteer support means a great deal to me and my efforts particularly as I am aware that administration is not necessarily my strongest gift. My continued gratitude to those who will find ways to support the administrative needs of the parish in the year ahead.

One thing that is abundantly clear in the few months I've been with you is how well you all run the parish as a community. It is clear to me that so many of you have been extremely faithful in the season you had between Priests. Your vestry is very much a working board which is a huge strength I see in this parish. We aren't talking about abstract things and theory during vestry meetings. We are doing the work of the church together. It feels like an incredible gift to me as a solo priest to enter St. Mark's with such a strong volunteer core! So to every one who gives generously of their time and talents: Thank you!

Liturgy is not rote for me quite yet. As a new priest it still takes a fair amount of mental effort to lead your worship. However, I am confident that it will become more and more familiar in terms of my muscle memory. The liturgical muscle memory of a Priest will come with time. I

always try to position myself in a prayerful frame of mind. And I look forward to the day when the prayers are so familiar that I am deeply praying along with you. I once heard a Priest say that our task is to pray the words of the Eucharist as if they are being prayed for the first time. Even when they are so familiar. This is something I aspire to in my weekly preparation.

I also think it is important for parishioners to know that we see 1-4 families a week seeking assistance for their basic needs to be met. Sometimes we give out extra groceries left over from the St. Mark's food pantry or, when appropriate, I may offer financial assistance through your St. Mark's discretionary fund. I suspect, given what is taking place in our world, we may see an increase in these needs in the year ahead. But of course, I cannot predict that for sure.

Peace and Blessings,  
The Reverend Julia Matallana Freedman

## **Sr. Warden's Report**

The last year was difficult entering our second year without a priest and no interim to guide us. I know it was difficult not always having a priest for Sunday or Saturday services. I appreciate everyone's patience. Life at St Mark's continued, altar servers did morning and evening prayer services, and coffee hour, fundraising activities, food pantry, and everything else that needed to be done to run the church continued. The Bishop came and celebrated Holy Week and Easter with us. Then he came back at Pentecost and baptized three babies. In September we had another baptism adding yet another member to our St Mark's family. The search team continued to interview potential priest for us and in October we welcomed Rev. Julia as deacon-in-charge and now priest-in-charge. I would like to thank Shirley, Barbara and Jeanne for keeping the church running, the vestry for it's hard work and dedication, Robin for keeping up with essential maintenance and always being there when problems arose. I would like to thank Victoria, Paul, Jeff and Robin for their dedication in the search that lead us to Rev. Julia. Most of all I thank all of you, who each in your own way sustained St Mark's through the last two and a half years. You are St Mark's and I am looking forward to this new year with Rev. Julia.

Respectfully submitted,

Debra B., Sr. Warden

## Altar Guild Report

The Altar Guild of St. Mark has “weathered” many changes over the past years serving with different priests, deacons, and lay readers. They have performed their duties cheerfully and efficiently considering there could be some variation in each service. We were so pleased Rev. Julia has met with us to discuss preparations for Advent and the Christmas season and we are looking forward to her direction and guidance for the coming new year.

Currently there are seven members of the Altar Guild who rotate every three weeks preparing for the Saturday Evening service and the one service on Sunday morning. One member graciously takes care of the Altar Linens which is most appreciated. With the coming year, we are pleased a new member will be officially joining us to help with the Saturday evening service (that will make eight!). The goal is to have four teams where one team would serve once a month.

In addition to setting up for Sunday services, our members are also responsible for services that arise during the week such as funerals or Saturday weddings. We spend extra time preparing for the Holy Week/Easter and Advent/Christmas services so that our church will not only look beautiful, but will enhance the meaning of these special services.

St. Mark's is so very fortunate to have such dedicated members. I would like to recognize all of our members, several who volunteer their time to other ministries at Saint Mark's (Memorials, Treasure, Choir Members, Coffee Hour, Food Pantry, Servers, Supplies and Linens to name a few). Thank you, Shirley K., Sandy H., Trish R., Joanne H., Tammy C., Linda R., Sandra P., Kim P., and Barbara L., for your dedication and service. I have been very fortunate to serve with such wonderful friends.

There are numerous ways one can serve on the Altar Guild and we would be happy to find a position to suit your time and talents! The duties are not difficult and I would encourage anyone who is interested in learning more about this special ministry at St. Mark's, speak to Rev. Julia or myself.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen L.

Altar Guild Chair

## Outreach Report

The St. Mark's Food Pantry was busy every month during 2025. We continue to see familiar guests who attend regularly, and every month we meet new neighbors who are dealing with food insecurity. 2025 was a very uncertain and challenging year for many of the guests of the St. Mark's Food Pantry. People were particularly challenged by the anxiety brought by the government shutdown which threatened SNAP benefits. As the fall began, we listened to the fear and concern that this brings to people living with food insecurity.

The St Marks's food pantry tried to respond to the increased need with continuing and expanding support. The number of households that we provided groceries to gradually increased. An average of 75 guests attended the Food Pantry each month during 2025. We distributed 3 bags of groceries to 895 households this year – that's almost 2700 bags of groceries delivered to our neighbors in need! SNAP benefits were set to stop November 1<sup>st</sup>, so we expanded our capacity in October to 100 sets of groceries – of which 91 were distributed, by far a new record for us.

The St. Mark's Food pantry has been providing groceries and household items to members of our community every month since 2012. This is possible thanks to an awesome, dependable and growing group of supporters and volunteers who help with shopping and bagging, delivering groceries on Food Pantry days. Of course, we are so grateful to the vital donors who contribute funds/food items every month.

Our donors and volunteers come not only from St. Mark's church, but also from the Warwick community. This year we were very fortunate to have received grants and donations from Episcopal Charities, the Warwick Grange, the Rotary Club of Warwick, and the Tri-City Elks and National Elks Association. Without these grants we could not fill our shelves each month. We owe a big thank you to the fit and fantastic St. Mark's Team that participated in the 5th Annual No More Hunger Walk in October and raised over \$1400 for the Food Pantry and provided funds to the Westbay Marketplace food bank as well. St. Barnabas Church and the Concordia Center for Spiritual Living also contributed to the St. Mark's Food Pantry. We are grateful to Warwick Girl Scout Troop 86, who donated dozens of boxes of Girl Scout cookies, such a welcome treat for our guests. Finally, a big thank you to a local member of SoapSacks, who donated goods that enable us to provide personal care kits to all our guests.

This year we were able to provide our guests some seasonal and fun items including: Girl Scout cookies, extra items for Easter dinner, Halloween candy, personal care kits, extra items for Thanksgiving dinner and a \$10 Walmart gift card to help with Christmas shopping. Several

times this year we set up additional tables outside the church on Food Pantry days so that our guests could select specialty items.

Every bit of support we receive enables us to continue the St. Mark's Food Pantry each month – thank you all.

Respectfully submitted,

Joanne H. and Rick H.

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## 2025 Annual Report

### Music

This past year during the process of finding a permanent priest, the choir remained steadfast in singing an anthem once a month whether our service was a full liturgy or morning prayer. We continue to do so and practice every Sunday after coffee hour.

An additional commitment for the choir was combining with St. Barnabas and Trinity choirs for an Evensong on November 2<sup>nd</sup>.

We were joined, once again, by Anthony J. on trumpet for our Sunday Easter celebration and 5:00 Christmas Eve liturgy.

A notable change was moving from chanting the psalm or in some cases singing a familiar hymn tune to the psalm, to reciting the psalm. This was decided so that all may fully participate.

Most recently, four children (Mckenzie C., Kyara V.L., Ella F., and Kimberly M.) formed a choir chime ensemble which we would like to continue playing for occasional liturgies. As music is chosen, it may be necessary, from time to time, to add adults to fill in playing some of the parts. No experience is necessary. It is my hope that volunteers will come forward so that we may continue, and perhaps, this ensemble will become inter-generational.

As we continue to plan and develop our music ministry, we do so with our newly formed Worship Committee. I look forward to this coming year in the spirit of collaboration.

Respectfully submitted,  
Joyce B.

**ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE REPORT for 2025  
ANNUAL MEETING JANUARY 25, 2026**

Our Activities Committee is basically a planning committee for fundraising. However, we also plan events for us to gather as a parish for friendly conversations and time together.

These were our 2025 fundraisers:

Cribbage/Game Night	\$ 575.00
Pancake Supper	\$ 96.00
May Breakfast	\$ 941.00
Pasta Supper	\$ 838.00
Penny Social/Lunch	\$ 2,398.75
Paint Party	\$ 160.00
Pumpkins	\$ 5,998.68
Other Parish Activities/Raffle	\$ 620.00

We have scheduled meetings for 10:00 on these Saturdays, please join us:  
2/14, 3/21, 4/18, 5/9, 5/30

Many hands make the work lighter and the outcome more rewarding. If you have questions about how the activities are chosen or have any ideas for new activities, we would be happy to have you join us.

Here are the fundraisers planned for 2026:

Church History Potluck – Saturday, 1/17

Shrove Tuesday pancake supper – Tuesday, 3/3

Ham and Bean Supper - Saturday, 3/8

Chellos night - TBD

May Breakfast – Sunday, 5/3

Summer Fair – Saturday, 6/13, rain date 6/20

Parish Picnic – Sunday, 8/16

Pasta Dinner – Saturday, 9/9

Penny Social – Saturday, 11/14

Many, many thanks to Shirley, Jeanne, Deb, Laurie, Sandy H and Sandy C, Kris, Ellen, Millie, and Sondra for your generous time in support of this committee. We are successful in bringing in funds for our beloved church.

Sincerely submitted,  
Linda R.

## **PROPERTY REPORT FOR 2025**

Presented January 25, 2026

The property committee has had another busy year taking care of the church, and the rectory as well as the grounds of the properties. We do our best to keep up with repairs, maintenance, and projects.

### **In the Rectory:**

In October, a dead tree in the front yard of the rectory was taken down, removed and the stump ground down. Also, some dead limbs on a maple tree in the back yard of the church/rectory were also removed.

The storm door on the front door of the rectory was blown off its frame during a wind storm in December. The door will be fixed or replaced this coming spring and reinstalled at that time.

### **In the Church Building:**

The organ was tuned and some minor repairs were done in January.

The light over the pulpit was replaced, and two new exterior LED flood lights were installed just outside the front doors. A new electrical socket was installed in the Narthex to replace the one that had burned out.

Spring clean-up of the grounds of the church and rectory were done in April. Many thanks to all the volunteers who came out to help.

All carpeting in the church, narthex and offices were steam cleaned as well as the kneelers at the altar.

A new sign was posted by the side entrance to inform any visitors of our new rector and the hours of services, as well as office hours.

To avoid tripping, areas at the side entrance and handicap walkway were painted a bright yellow to alert people of the edge of the step and some unevenness on the paved surfaces in that area.

The parking lot of the church and the driveway of the rectory had the cracks filled by Holscher sealcoating.

In the fall, Jon V.L. and Adam C. scraped all the old peeling paint off the outside walls in the kitchen and repainted them. They did a fantastic job. My sincere thanks to both for donating their time to this large project.

The gutters of the church and the rectory were cleaned out in November by TNP gutter services.

The fall clean up of the grounds of the church and rectory were done by our landscaper, as there were enough funds donated to cover this expense.

The property committee would like to thank everyone who donated so generously to the landscaping fund this past year, so church grounds could be maintained.

As many of you may already know, 2025 ended as it began with major issues with the church's heating system. Many winter days of no heat in the church or the offices and sometimes even the undercroft. Our existing furnace is very old and inefficient. And our hot water heater has corrosion. Our service company has been able to fix individual issues to get us by, but problems keep surfacing. Long term, this is not a solution. We are currently getting quotes for a new heating system and water heater to take St. Marks into the future with a safe, efficient heating system and water heater, just as we have done at the rectory.

I want to especially thank Neil T., Jon V.L. and Deb B. for all their time and efforts over this past year assisting in this regard.

Maintenance of the church, rectory and grounds is just like our own homes, it is an ongoing job. We welcome anyone who would like to help in this work.

Finally, my sincere gratitude, to everyone who helped the property committee in the work to maintain St. Marks this past year.

Respectfully submitted,

Robin M.

## **Prayer Shawl Ministry Report**

This small but mighty group was busy knitting and crocheting throughout the year. They were able to complete the following which were donated to Elizabeth Buffum Chase Center.

12 afghans  
25 scarves  
1 baby blanket  
1 pair of fingerless gloves  
8 hats  
1 lap robe

These items are very appreciated by the people staying at EBCC, who often have very little.

As of now these items are just being made in your own homes on your own time. If you like to knit or crochet and would like to make a few things to donate, please contact Millie or Carolyn for more information.

Respectfully submitted,  
Millie P.