



# Newcomer Guide

**saint mark's**  
episcopal church

600 Colorado Avenue  
Palo Alto, CA 94306

650.326.3800

[saint-marks.com](http://saint-marks.com)

## Newcomer Information Guide

### Welcome to St. Mark's!

This Newcomer Information Guide provides a quick way to familiarize yourself with some of the basic information about St. Mark's, its people, and its programs.

For more detailed information and up-to-the minute updates, we encourage you to refer to our extensive website — [www.saint-marks.com](http://www.saint-marks.com). Here, you will find the most current information about our services and programs. In addition, our weekly e-mail newsletter, the Messenger, is a regular source of parish highlights and upcoming activities. If you haven't already, you can sign up to receive the Messenger at [www.saint-marks.com/contact](http://www.saint-marks.com/contact) (scroll down to “subscribe”).

### Mission Statement

We are a community dedicated to deepening our relationship with God and embodying the Spirit of Christ through faithful expressions of love, service, compassion and justice.



### History and Ministry

Twenty families joined together in 1948 to create the parish of St. Mark's in Palo Alto. St. Mark's Chapel - much larger then than it is now, with a capacity of 200 people - was built in time for St. Mark's first Thanksgiving Day service in November, 1948. Soon thereafter, the rapidly growing parish built the Parish Hall (1952), in which church services and various activities were held. The traditional church sanctuary was completed in

1956, and was equipped with one of the most impressive organs on the west coast.

In the early 1990s, the church was remodeled to reflect a desire to be open and inclusive. Some of the parish property was sold, and the office and new kitchen were built. In 2004, we embarked upon a capital campaign, and as a result were able to update our Parish Hall and add classrooms to accommodate our growing children's ministries.

At St. Mark's, our mission and outreach are to Palo Alto and the surrounding communities. We strive to recognize the spiritual presence of Christ in our lives and to live out our beliefs through our actions. Central to the life of St. Mark's is the worship of God as a faithful Christian community through a variety of liturgical expressions — traditional, contemporary, experimental, active and contemplative. Many value the strong commitment to music and singing at our main service.

We invite you to join in the worship and life of St. Mark's community. This booklet provides descriptions of many aspects of our parish life: worship, education, children and teens ministry teams, and service to the community. All groups welcome newcomers! Please consult our website ([www.saint-marks.com](http://www.saint-marks.com)) for the latest information, or speak to our rector, Rev. Matt McDermott, or our associate rector, Rev. Nikky Wood. Look at the ideas here and offer yours!

Go to [www.saint-marks.com/history](http://www.saint-marks.com/history) to read more about the history of St. Mark's

welcome

## Office Contact Information

### St. Mark's Episcopal Church

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Website: [www.saint-marks.com](http://www.saint-marks.com)

Email: [info@saint-marks.com](mailto:info@saint-marks.com)

## Administration



### LeeAnne McDermott

Business Administrator

Space Use / Financial Matters

Contact: [leeanne@saint-marks.com](mailto:leeanne@saint-marks.com), Ext. 14



### Kate Clover

Administration and Content Manager

Graphics/Website/Most other Office Matters

Contact: [kate@saint-marks.com](mailto:kate@saint-marks.com), Ext. 11

## Clergy



### Rev. Matt McDermott

Rector

Contact: [matt@saint-marks.com](mailto:matt@saint-marks.com), Ext 15



### Rev. Nikky Wood

Associate Rector

Contact: [nikky@saint-marks.com](mailto:nikky@saint-marks.com), Ext 16

## Music Staff



### Matthew Burt

Director of Music

Contact: [matthewburt@saint-marks.com](mailto:matthewburt@saint-marks.com)

## Program Staff



### Debie Thomas

Minister of Lifelong Formation

Contact: [debic@saint-marks.com](mailto:debic@saint-marks.com), Ext 19



### Lily Dodge

Children and Youth Minister

Contact: [lily@saint-marks.com](mailto:lily@saint-marks.com), Ext 22



**Rev. Matthew McDermott**  
Rector

Contact: [matt@saint-marks.com](mailto:matt@saint-marks.com), Ext 15

As Rector of St. Mark's, I oversee the various ministries of the parish. My role is to do my best to see that our work together is faithful and healthy. With the Vestry (the governing board of the parish) and other staff members, I strive to create faithful and meaningful worship services, care for the pastoral needs of the community, develop effective outreach ministries to people in need (locally and globally) and supervise the administration of the parish. All of this work is grounded in my faith in the loving providence of God most clearly seen in the person of Jesus Christ.

My role, therefore, at St. Mark's is to lead and support the people of this faith community in following the teaching and example of Jesus Christ, striving to be both compassionate and just. Together, as we deepen our faith, we grow closer to God and to each other.



I was born in the steel town of Lorain, Ohio. I grew up in a Roman Catholic family of eight children, the fifth son of William and Dorothy McDermott. I went to a Catholic grade school and public high school. After leaving Ohio at twenty years of age for "the great adventure west," I put myself through San Francisco State University graduating with honors and a degree in English Literature. After college, I was introduced to the outreach ministries of the Episcopal Church (a work project in Ireland) and liked what I learned about the Anglican Tradition. I worked as a Youth Minister at Trinity Parish in Menlo Park, California where I met my future wife, also a Youth Minister. Six months after we were married we moved to Berkeley where I completed a Masters of Divinity degree. Since graduation in 1987, I served at parishes in Orinda and Menlo Park. I was called as Rector by the people of St. Mark's, Palo Alto in September of 1995. St. Mark's is a great, vibrant community and I feel blessed to serve here!



**Rev. Nikky Wood**  
Associate Rector

Contact: [nikky@saint-marks.com](mailto:nikky@saint-marks.com), Ext 16

I grew up in central Florida and went to college in Tampa, where I studied Communication and Psychology. I wrote an honors thesis on women, language, God, and the Church that started me on a journey from the Roman Catholic church of my upbringing eventually to the Episcopal church. After graduating, I lived in Quincy, MA (outside of Boston) where my spouse and I became part of a tight-knit house church community, primarily comprised of post-evangelicals who loved to sing together. We moved to Watauga, TX (outside of Fort Worth), where we formally joined the Episcopal church, and where I began seminary at Brite Divinity School. I transferred to Church Divinity School of the Pacific in Berkeley, graduating with my Master of Divinity in 2018. For Clinical Pastoral Education (chaplaincy training), I worked with service members, veterans, and their families at David Grant Medical Center on Travis Air Force Base in northern CA. Most recently I was at All Souls, Berkeley, where I did field education for seminary and served as a transitional deacon before being ordained to the priesthood.



I am passionate about collaborating with a congregation to build deep community, support lay ministry, offer genuine care, and strengthen ongoing faith formation for all ages, and am working to further cultivate the work St. Mark's is already doing. I find particular joy in liturgy that is authentic to the people gathered, open to both profound awe and light-hearted delight, and embodied in tangible sacramental signs, and I can't wait to gather with you around the table.

## Sunday Services

### 8:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist (Rite II) in St. Mark's Chapel

*\*\* Currently on hiatus pending restoration of all services and activities due to Covid-19 \*\**

The 8 a.m. service follows the traditional Rite II Holy Eucharist in the Book of Common Prayer. This quiet and contemplative service features occasional music, and usually lasts under an hour.

### 10:00 a.m. Choral Eucharist (Rite II/EOW)

*\*\* Currently being held outside on the labyrinth patio in front of the main sanctuary \*\**

*\*\* Certain features of this service currently are modified due to Covid-19 protocols \*\**

The 10 a.m. service uses various forms of the Holy Eucharist from the Anglican tradition. When held inside, the congregation gathers around the altar for Communion. Music, typically led by St. Mark's choir, is a vital part of this service. Children currently stay with their parents for the service, and activity boxes are available for young people. As full members of our community, children's participation is welcome and encouraged.

If needed when we worship inside, the narthex at the back of the main sanctuary is a sound-proof area suitable for babies, small children, and others who may need a bit more space and freedom to express themselves. It is equipped with a speaker so one can hear the service as well as with a basket of quiet toys.

The service usually lasts about 70 minutes. Our usual finger-food reception (the "Agape meal"), held in the chancel or outside on the patio after the service, is currently on hiatus due to Covid-19 protocols. However, there is a welcome table with water, and all are welcome to remain after the service to catch up with friends and meet new ones!

## Weekday Prayer

### Wednesdays

**8:25am** Centering Prayer/Meditation - on summer hiatus

**Noon** Noonday prayer using the Book of Common Prayer is hosted by a rotating group of lay leaders. Currently offered via Zoom -- see the St. Mark's website for the link (click on "Worship" and then "Daily Prayers").

### Weekdays

**8:00pm** Compline. This night prayer service is led by a rotating group of lay leaders. When in person, we gather in St. Nicholas Chapel (inside the main sanctuary), and there is time afterward for meditation or quiet conversation. Currently offered via Zoom -- see the St. Mark's website or weekly email for the link.

## Daily Prayer for One Another

Every day, two members of the St. Mark's community are held in prayer. Sign up to receive these names via email.

## Special Services

Throughout the year special services occur seasonally or to support educational and pastoral needs of the parish.

## Teens (Youth Group)

*"Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity." (1 Timothy 4:12).*

St. Mark's Youth Ministries is not defined by the city it is in, the schools that are in the area, or the clothes that are worn. It is a unique and special entity in and of itself. Saint Mark's Youth Group is a supportive, loving, nurturing, inclusive, and positive environment filled with God's love that welcomes all sixth through twelfth graders to question and explore their life and faith. The youth at Saint Mark's are informed, smart, concerned, and have a clear opinion on many matters. They also know how to have fun!

The young people of our parish contribute in many ways. Some assist in regular services as an acolyte, book holder; or in children's programs and/or child care helper. There are also special occasions where the youth can lead services either at St. Mark's or on special trips. Older teens have an opportunity to join a confirmation class leading up to official confirmation in the Episcopal Church usually held at Grace Cathedral in San Francisco.

All friends new and old are invited to come join in on our many adventures.

For more information about Youth Group, please contact Lily Dodge (lily@saint-marks.com).

## Children's Formation

Our dream and goal for children at St. Mark's is to offer them a safe, nourishing, and fun environment in which to learn about faith, experience Christian love and community, and explore the church's rich heritage and traditions.

### Welcome to Worship Services

Please be assured that your child, fidgets and all, are fully welcome in this worshipping community. We invite them to pray with their bodies -- coloring, tracing, working with playdough, using other quiet manipulatives; standing, sitting on the floor, however they come. Over time, they will learn the rhythms of liturgy simply by being present, and will begin to participate in various ways as they grow. By children's presence in worship, adults deepen their understanding of the Body of Christ and learn how to be joyfully embodied.

### Nursery - Currently on hiatus due to Covid 19

Look for an announcement as to when nursery care will be restarted for those who need it. When we hold services inside the main church, parents and caregivers may choose as needed to be in the sound-proofed space with quiet toys, books, and diaper changing facilities in the narthex at the back of the sanctuary. This space is equipped with speakers so that parents and/or caregivers can hear the service.

### Children's Chapel - Currently on hiatus due to Covid 19

We hold a Children's Chapel for children in kindergarten through 5th grade during the first part of the Sunday 10 a.m. service. Children gather for a time of prayer, music, play, and child-friendly Bible teaching in a multi-aged setting. Kids are encouraged not only to learn the great stories of the Christian tradition, but also to wonder together about what the stories still have to teach us, and then consider how and why their faith is relevant to their everyday lives.

## St. Mark's Ministry Teams

We encourage you to become involved with one of our Ministry teams by completing the “Opportunities for Ministry” form (online at <http://bit.ly/OpportunityForMinistry>), or contacting the church office. There are many ways to be involved, and we hope the following list will help you find your niche at St. Mark's.

### Adult Education

Offering programs, events, small groups and gatherings for spiritual growth.

### Altar Guild

Preparing our sacred worship space for all services.

### Buildings and Grounds

Maintaining our physical space for all who gather.

### Children Family Commission

Creating and coordinating opportunities for spiritual growth for children and families.

### Choir and Music

Offering vocal and instrumental music for our services.

### Communications

Keeping everyone informed through our publications, Facebook, and our website

### Compline Prayer Group

Meets weekdays for prayer service led by clergy and/or parishioners.

### Contemplative Prayer

Offering opportunities for prayer and contemplation, especially Centering Prayer.

### Daily Prayer for One Another

Participating in a cycle of daily prayer (at home) for members of the parish.

### Deanery/Diocesan Delegates

Representing the parish in diocesan and national church governance.

### Emergency Preparation

Plan and implement steps to keep the parish safe in emergencies

### Environment Commission

Lead parish efforts to protect and sustain our natural environment.

### Family Choir

Sing simple chants and rounds in an intergenerational choir.

### Finance Commission

Oversees the management of parish finances.

### Flower Guild

Creating floral arrangements for Sunday services.

### Food Closet

Encourage and collection donations for Life Moves' Food Closet

### InReach Ministry

Helping those within the parish in times of special need.

### Jail Ministry

Working with the chaplain at the Elmwood jail to minister to inmates.

### Lay Eucharistic Visitors

Take communion to the home-bound and offer healing prayers on Sunday.

### Liturgical Servers

Serve in services as acolytes, greeters and scripture readers.

### Membership Commission

Inviting, welcoming and encouraging newcomers to participate in our parish life.

### Men's Group

Creating and coordinating opportunities for spiritual growth for men.

### Office Management and Volunteers

Volunteering in the church office.

### Outreach Alliance

Serve and minister to those in special need, locally and globally.

### Planned Giving

Encouraging generosity and coordinating financial gifts for ongoing stability.

### Stewardship Commission

Encouraging gratitude and generosity in sharing our gifts of time, talent and treasure.

### Sunday Roadies

Setting up streaming equipment and seating for Sunday service.

### Techies

Assist technical staff with live streaming of Sunday service.

### Women's Commission

Creating and coordinating opportunities for spiritual growth for women.

### Young and Youngish Adults Group

Creating and coordinating opportunities for spiritual growth for young adults.

### Youth Ministry (Teens)

Creating and coordinating opportunities for spiritual growth for and with teens.

## Small Group Offerings

There are many opportunities to gather with others in small groups. Please see the Messenger, our weekly e-mail, for current groups. Some examples include:

- Tuesday Evening Scripture Study
- St. Mark's Women's Tea
- Good Reads Book Group
- St. Mark's Men's Breakfast
- St. Mark's Book Group
- Centering Prayer
- St. Mark's Women's Group

## Outreach: Service to the Community

St. Mark's outreach efforts most recently have focused on services and ministries for the unhoused. Please visit our website for information for more details on St. Mark's current outreach programs.

## St. Mark's Vestry and Leadership

The Vestry is the governing board of St. Mark's that has 12 members elected by the parish. It has two leaders that are traditionally referred to as "wardens" along with 10 members at large. The Senior Warden and Junior Warden serve with the Rector as a Vestry Executive Committee. The 10 at-large members are assigned to be liaisons with the various ministry teams.

The Vestry oversees the ministry of the parish by supporting the staff and attending to the financial and material needs of the parish, its personnel and its property. Vestry members have been recognized for their devotion and leadership capabilities. Members serve three year terms.

A list of current vestry members can be found on the back of the service bulletins and on St. Mark's website.

## Ideas for participation at St. Mark's

- ✘ Come to worship services
- ✘ Wear a nametag and introduce yourself to someone
- ✘ Stay for the Agape (refreshments) after the 10 am service
- ✘ Give someone a round-trip ride to church (InReach)
- ✘ Take a turn hosting a Sunday morning Agape meal
- ✘ Pair with an experienced greeter to welcome people at the door (Greeters)
- ✘ Help with Sunday morning kids' offerings (Children, Youth and Family)
- ✘ Join the choir
- ✘ Help on a parish workday (Buildings and Grounds)
- ✘ Answer the office phones one morning a week or be a "sub" (Office Volunteers)
- ✘ Help set-up or clean-up for a Christmas or Easter service or a special parish event
- ✘ Attend a discussion forum after the 10 a.m. service -- or suggest a topic or speaker (Adult Education)
- ✘ Join a commission or ministry group - many to choose from!
- ✘ Attend an Inquirer's Class (Membership)
- ✘ Make a financial pledge to support the parish (Stewardship)
- ✘ Volunteer to lead Compline (Evening Prayer), be an acolyte or reader
- ✘ Invite a friend to church
- ✘ Help with children, youth, and/or family programs (Children, Youth and Family)
- ✘ Make a potluck dish for a parish event and come!
- ✘ Make a wreath for Advent, and maybe help with the event
- ✘ Change light bulbs (Buildings and Grounds)
- ✘ Offer a special talent (Stewardship)
- ✘ Share your new ideas

## Parish Communications

### Messenger

Weekly communication is shared via a Thursday e-newsletter, the Messenger, which highlights the upcoming events, group and community news posted on our website. It is an important way of staying connected to our community.

To receive it, visit [www.saint-marks.com/contact](http://www.saint-marks.com/contact) (scroll down to “subscribe”). This will also allow the church to send other special announcements. Please call the office to make other arrangements if you do not have access to email.

### Breeze

Breeze is our online resource to connect our community. This platform allows church members who create an account to access a church directory and calendar and send emails. Each ministry commission and group has its own space on Breeze, allowing easy communication between participants to help everyone stay up-to-date. In addition, members have access to their personal pledge and contribution history.

Rated as one of the most user-friendly church database systems, Breeze is easy for members to join and use to stay connected and informed.

To learn more about Breeze, how to get an account and join, go to: [www.saint-marks.com/Breeze](http://www.saint-marks.com/Breeze)

## Calendar of Major Events

Mark your calendar so you can be sure to participate in these annual parish events!.

<b>August</b>	Blessing of the Backpacks Program Year begins Community Faire
<b>October</b>	Blessing of the Animals Parish Retreat
<b>November</b>	Stewardship Brunch and Campaign Advent Dinner
<b>December</b>	Greening of the Church Christmas Pageant Christmas
<b>January</b>	Annual Meeting & Brunch
<b>February</b>	Shrove Tuesday Festival Lenten Series & Program
<b>March</b>	Women’s Retreat
<b>March/April</b>	Holy Week Easter & Easter Breakfast
<b>May</b>	Parish Picnic



