

October 7, 2024

Beloved of God:

Recently I've been thinking about St. Mark's "Why?" Why do we do what we do? One of our members expressed it this way:

We believe that each and every one of us—without exception—is a beloved child of God. We believe in and follow the teachings of Jesus Christ, whose life, death, and resurrection saved the world. Thus, we understand the good we desire cannot be purchased but must be lovingly crafted through relationships.

~ H.H.

I hope this expression of St. Mark's "Why?" resonates with you. I'm looking forward to hearing more ways of expressing the "Why?" of St. Mark's.

This fall we have chosen the theme **Sowing the Seeds of Sanctuary** for our **Annual Giving Campaign 2025**. During this season of considering our financial support for the life and ministry of St. Mark's, we want to explore the many ways that St. Mark's is a place of spiritual growth and belonging for each of us.

QR Code
for online survey



Each week during our Sunday worship, we will be enjoying brief stories (**Seeds**) from St. Mark's members reflecting on the many ways that St. Mark's has become a sanctuary for them. We want to hear how St. Mark's is a place of sanctuary for you as well, so we've enclosed a way for you to share some of your stories (your seeds) about how St. Mark's is a place of growth and belonging. You can place your responses in the offering plate on a Sunday morning, drop it by the church, or find a link in our e-newsletter and respond online. Or you can scan the QR Code to the left which will take you directly to these questions.

Sowing the Seeds of Sanctuary

How is St. Mark's a place of belonging for you?

How is St. Mark's a place of growth for you?

Because of St. Mark's... *(complete this sentence)*



At the end of October, we will have two special events to celebrate our **Sowing the Seeds of Sanctuary 2025** effort.

1. **Oktoberfest and Hymn Sing, October 26th, 5:00 pm – 7:00 pm** (Bring a side or drinks to share, we'll provide the bratwurst)
2. **Pledge and Pie Celebration Sunday, Oct. 27th.** Ingathering and Blessing of Pledges. (bring a pie, sweet or savory to share at this special coffee hour).

I want to conclude this letter with a note from our seminarian Sara Johnson about the impact of our St. Mark's community as both a place of sanctuary and discernment. Sara is currently a first-year student at Virginia Theological Seminary, training to become part of the Episcopal Church's future:

"St. Mark's welcomed me when I was new to Albuquerque and the Episcopal Church. I was quickly folded into a community of love and later discerned a call to the priesthood. St. Mark's is a place where parishioners and clergy order their lives around their baptismal vows in service of Christ and his kingdom. As a seminarian now living in Virginia, I am encouraged knowing that my home parish is praying for me and holding me in love."

In God's Generous Love,



Fr. Christopher McLaren