

Mission and Ministry

Our **mission** is to be a house of worship for all people and to be a faith community that spreads God's healing and caring ministry in the name of Christ to our members, our community and the world.

Our **goals** for the next three to five years are as follows:

To extend our reach to a broader geography as we continue to welcome a diverse community of people seeking a place for worship, study and fellowship

The vestry conducted prayer walks in communities surrounding St. Mark's. Due to the closing of an episcopal church and decline in membership in other churches we see opportunities for growth in towns such as Riverhead, Manorville and Wading River.

To continue our present outreach programs and explore new opportunities

St. Mark's participates in a variety of outreach programs, both local as well as broader programs initiated by the Diocese. These range from a long-standing soup kitchen (*Love in a Dish*) in Riverhead to a recent food bank established to assist families in need due to *Covid-19*. Both of these programs are supplemented by food from a community garden established on the grounds of St. Mark's. Our members have generously supported requests for financial assistance for various global disasters and a group of parishioners traveled to Tanzania as part of the Carpenter's Kids program run by the Diocese of New York. We have helped with neighborhood clean-up after Hurricane Sandy and helped local members of the Coast Guard during a government shutdown. Our pre-school, *Bright Beginnings*, is a special form of outreach for the church as it draws families from many surrounding communities.

Options for additional outreach opportunities include joining with other local churches to focus together on a mutually identified need or exploring outreach opportunities further afield which may help us build a presence in new communities.

To maintain and enhance a strong stewardship program

For years every member of the Vestry has made a pledge commitment prior to the official start of the annual campaign. Vestry members also visibly donate their time and talent, serving on committees and informally pitching in when the grounds are overgrown or snow is deep. It is important to maintain this volunteer commitment, not only among Vestry members but also within the whole Parish.

To pray and study the word of God

Parishioners express the desire for both Bible Study and discussions on social issues. These programs occurred in the past but there is an expressed need for more.

To explore alternative forms of worship, study and fellowship

Working together with the new rector we would like to develop ways for our parish family to network with one another; traditional Sunday morning services are no longer convenient for everyone, especially families with children. We would like to explore services at other times than Sunday morning, bible study, activities for children and parents, confirmation classes - either in-person or virtually.