



Commonwealth of Virginia

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Board Matter
December 5th, 2023
St. Mark's Lutheran Church 70th Anniversary

Mr. Chairman - Tomorrow, December 6th will be the 70th Anniversary of St. Mark's Lutheran Church located in Springfield, Virginia. St. Mark's Lutheran Church has a rich and impressive history. Founded on December 6th, 1953, near the crossroads of Northern Virginia in an old farmhouse on Backlick Road before the Beltway existed. Fifty-two adults and forty-five children became the original members of the church with the first programming consisting of Worship Services and Sunday School. Amidst these humble beginnings initiated by the Board of American Missions of the Augustana Lutheran Church and Reverend Clarence T. Nelson, St. Mark's set the stage for its commitment to community, fellowship, and communion.

In August 1954, St Mark's welcomed Reverend Duane Carlson to be its' first Pastor. Pastor Carlson and his wife Alice led the congregation for thirty-seven years. Under Pastor Carlson's leadership the church

expanded rapidly with many offerings for its' parishioners. With Sunday School, confirmation classes, choirs, St. Mark's Garden Club, Vacation Bible School, and many other programs St. Mark's became a strong hub for spiritual study and life. It is impressive to note that two of St. Mark's outstanding contributions started very early on in the church's history. First, In the early 1960's, St. Mark's had a key role in the founding of ECHO, a coalition of churches organized to distribute food to surrounding areas in need. As you know, ECHO is a valuable Springfield non-profit that is still thriving today and supporting our most vulnerable residents with food, clothing and even computers. Second, also in the early 1960's, the music program at St. Mark's was launched. The music program is vital to the life of the congregation. I have experienced on many occasions the beauty of the concerts, and chorale presentations at the church.

In the fall of 1967, St Mark's broke ground on a new educational wing and expanded their physical presence along with a commitment to emphasizing visual art as part of the religious experience. They commissioned Una Hanbury, a sculptor, to create three impressive pieces that would represent the shared spiritual and community values of the growing congregation. Ms. Hanbury created the statue at the

entrance of the church entitled “Family” and two relief sculptures located in the lounge and the entrance to the education wing.

The 1970’s highlighted the beginning of St. Mark’s philosophy of social involvement and community inclusivity through their church resources and programs for refugees and immigrants. Additionally, St. Mark’s expanded their education program to offer pre-school education. While the accomplishments of St. Mark’s Church are too many to mention their commitment to creating a supportive and spiritually connected community for all residents is evident.

Under the current leadership, Pastor Albert Triolo and Pastor Saul Cardona lead worship services in English and Spanish to over 200 parishioners worshipping each week. The church offered virtual services even before the Covid-19 pandemic began and have continued with the church’s commitment to addressing food insecurity by holding a weekly food distribution. Pastor Triolo is leading the latest building renovation and expansion which will allow for a larger education wing and school as well as a more usable courtyard and additional handicapped parking.

Mr. Chairman and fellow board members, in honor of St. Mark’s Lutheran Church’s 70th anniversary and it’s extraordinary

accomplishments of religious and community support. I move that a proclamation be prepared to be presented to Pastor Triolo at St. Mark's Church at a future date.