



ST. MARK'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

THE REV. R. ALLEN PRUITT
RECTOR



If someone asked you, "What makes St. Mark's really stand out?" What would you say? Maybe *the people*, or *the way we worship*, or...any number of things. I doubt there could ever be one answer to this question. But...if I had to guess a single item that might come up again and again, I would say our stained glass.

There are 36 different windows all around our beautiful church, from the simple glass in the doors to the coat room, all the way to our beautiful Rose Window above the entrance. We are perhaps most familiar with those depicting the life of Christ along the pews. Perhaps you call to mind the image of the Good Shepherd window, greeting you as you come forward for communion. My own favorite is the image of Satan tempting Jesus, with a crown in his hand and the Garden serpent waiting below.


I often find myself in the church, with the lights out, allowing my eyes to rest where they will. Sometimes I see the face of Jesus or his disciples; other times I just see the colors: blues and reds and greens and yellows. Those windows are a burst of color, shining into a dark space and through the power of sacrament, they become something even more! I've heard our church called a "little jewel box." Nothing is more precious than our people, but it is our windows that give this space much of its lustre. Now, after 50-60 years since their installation, our windows are in need of restoration work.

What would happen if our windows weren't here? How might that change your experience of this church? It would still be lovely; the people would still be wonderful, but something precious would most definitely be lost. **The time has come to care for our windows.** No one has fallen down on the job; this is not work long delayed. It is simply time.

Heat and years and weight have done their work to warp our windows. Glass is shaped by heat, and our windows are no exception. **Come to the Annunciation window nearest the pulpit and see how the glass curves and you will instantly recognize the need to move ahead with restoration work.** Fortunately, you and I do not have to be experts in medieval arts. We have a quote from Willet Hauser, a firm recommended by our insurance company.

St. Mark's needs \$115,000 for a complete historic restoration for 28 of our 36 windows. Each window will be carefully removed to an offsite workshop by expert craftsmen, and refitted with new, modern lead and cement to restore our beautiful glass back to its original shape and brilliance, ensuring that these windows will stand for another 50-100 years before the need for further work. Finally, the protective plexiglass/Lexan on the exterior will be replaced. All of this will take upwards of a year from the time work commences. We expect to do this work in at least two stages, in order that we are not completely without our stained glass for the duration of the project.

This work will present logistical challenges to be sure, but I am confident in the generosity and stewardship of the people of St. Mark's to undertake our part in this project: raising the necessary funds. Please return the enclosed commitment card by the middle of August, with plans to pay your pledge as soon as possible. Consider extending your capital campaign pledge for a further year. If you did not participate in the capital campaign, take this opportunity to care for one of the true treasures of LaGrange. This glass is more than color on a wall, it resonates with the warmth of generations of our prayers. May we preserve it with our own prayers and generosity!


The Rev. R. Allen Pruitt
Rector