

Spotlight at St. Mark

THE PARKER FAMILY

“St. Mark is—and always has been—like an extended family to us.”

Background: Val and Brian Parker are Southern California natives. She was born in Pasadena, and she and her two sisters grew up in Anaheim Hills. In high school, her family moved to Springville, CA (a very small town in the Sierra Nevada foothills), where her parents still live. Val missed Orange County, and moved back here right after graduating from high school. Brian was born in Downey and grew up with his four siblings in La Palma, where his parents lived until his mother passed away a few years ago.



Val attended Long Beach State and received a degree in home economics. She says, “I have always worked with volunteer youth programs, including Girl Scouts, 4-H and now, Power 4 Youth in Long Beach. I especially enjoy working with struggling, at-risk kids; I am doing exactly what I planned to do when I went to college!”

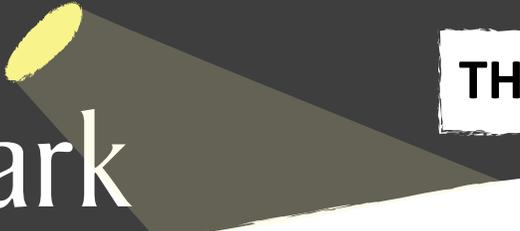
Brian is an architectural project manager, and describes himself as “Detail oriented. I love making designs “work,” and creating great spaces of all sorts.”

Finding St. Mark: Val grew up in the Lutheran Church, and Brian was raised in the Catholic faith. Val says she decided to join the Presbyterian Church while she was in college: She was active in the peace and justice movement, and when the Los Ranchos Presbytery Peace and Justice group held an on-campus event, she realized this was the church for her!

Val says, “When we were getting married and moving to Huntington Beach, we were also looking for a church. Pastor Don Roberts (former pastor at St. Peter’s By the Sea and late husband of St. Mark member Mary Roberts) mentioned that Mary really liked St. Mark and suggested that they check it out. We did, and liked it, too!”

The couple joined in early 1997 and has been very active in the congregation. Val has been mostly involved with the Nicaragua committee over the years, and both she and Brian have taken mission trips to Nicaragua. Brian has served as Deacon and Elder. He is also active in the Ecophilians, is currently on the Facilities Committee, and is always willing to lend a hand wherever needed!

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Family and Fun: Val and Brian have two children, **Sara** and **Johnny**, who have grown up at St. Mark. Sara just graduated from high school and has begun studies at Orange Coast College. She is thinking of being a therapist or photojournalist. Johnny will be a high school sophomore in the fall. Johnny loves all sports, video games, and is a very talented musician. Both of them have been active in St. Mark life—Sara has traveled to Nicaragua twice, and is pondering working as a Presbyterian Young Adult Volunteer there when she is older. Johnny has been active in the Youth Group, and has participated in Youth Sundays and other events.

The whole family is very sports-minded, loves all sports, with their favorites being football and basketball. They also love the outdoors, and enjoy camping and the beach. Val is an avid mountain-biker, while Brian especially enjoys woodworking. Rounding out the family is an interesting combination of a cat and a fabulous aquarium of fish!

St. Mark is blessed to have a family like the Parkers, who continue to grow in faith and mission, and bring those gifts to our congregation and the wider world!