



A Monthly Insight into St. Mark Presbyterian Church

# The Messenger



## Believe in Resurrection

The Lenten Season comes a little early this year. I just took down the Christmas lights on our home and was surprised to see Ash Wednesday is less than a month away. I love Lent because it gives us a deeper vision of the truth of both our finite lives and God's infinite love. We begin the journey with the imposition of ashes and are told, "Remember you are dust and to dust you shall return." The modern world tries to shield us from the realities of our own mortality, but the church literally holds this truth up to our face. Lent starts with death, but it concludes with new life. That's a season worth celebrating!

This year's observance will certainly feel a little different, but I believe there is much to be learned in the coming months. A well-spent Lent involves some

level of self-sacrifice. We will once again have our Lenten Water Challenge benefiting the Marion Medical Mission's efforts in bringing clean water wells to Africa. We encourage folks to drink clean tap water and forgo coffee, soda, alcoholic beverages, etc. for 40 days. Last year, we raised \$6,750 providing 15 new wells, and I believe we can top that this year. Over the past decade, St. Mark donated over \$31,000 to this important mission of providing living water to all God's children.

I realize the plea to give things up feels very different this year. The ongoing pandemic forced all of us to refrain from so much over the past 11 months. In many ways, it feels like we are in a never-ending cycle self-denial. There is a huge difference between having something taken away and giving up something voluntarily. One is heart-breaking, but the other is life-giving. Put another way, when we

*intentionally* remove little luxuries, we are able to help out others in need, and we will find ourselves closer to God.

"Then (Jesus) said to them all, 'If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will save it. What does it profit them if they gain the whole world, but lose or forfeit themselves?'" (Luke 9:23-25, NRSV.)

Lent is a hard road, but it is an honest path. We start with a reminder of our mortality, and we conclude the journey standing in front of an empty tomb. Yes, there is death all around us, but we believe in resurrection!

In Hope and Confidence,  
Pastor Dave

## Session Snippets

January 25, 2021 meeting

Session officially welcomed new elders, Joyce Blackwell, Clayton Douglas, Kim Michel and Jason Neal to their first "formal" meeting. Pam Ladley will serve as the Deacon Representative.

There is no change in the ongoing policy in compliance with the Covid 19 guidelines. Doug Anderson, Cay Noble and Loren Polak, along with Pastor Dave will be working on a plan towards reopening for worship and other activities, when appropriate.

Stacey Caplinger will begin February 2 working in the office part-time assisting with communication and publication tasks. Welcome to Stacey.

"Sign Up Genius" is being used to schedule liturgists. If you are interested in assisting, contact Pastor MP.

It was noted that the congregation has been very faithful during 2020 with financial support of St. Mark, leaving the year-end financials with a substantial positive balance.

### December 2020 Financial Update

	<u>December</u>	<u>Year to date</u>
Revenue	\$115,834	\$1,051,204
Expenses	\$120,985	\$915,032
<b>Revenue vs. Expenses</b>	<b>Surplus (Deficit)</b>	
	(\$5,150)	\$136,172

Any questions on finances?  
Contact the Financial Committee  
(Glenn Knopf, chair or other members)

## Update on Phone Calling Program

When St. Mark was forced to close because of the pandemic, a group of thirty women began calling almost three hundred families on a weekly basis. Our purpose was to keep in touch with our St. Mark members and friends, to offer assistance if needed, and to share news of our church activities.

Over the months, the lists and the callers changed. Today, nineteen women continue to reach out to ninety-two households. If you wish to be added to our calling lists, either as a recipient or as a caller, please contact Bette Nuzum.

## Mound Ridge Fund Raiser

Mound Ridge Retreat and Mission Center invites you to their annual event. The theme for 2021 is "Diamonds and Denim". The venue is Maison du Lac, a beautiful banquet facility south of Pacific, MO, on Hwy O, with lots of room for social distancing with mask required, on **Saturday, April 10 from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m.** This will be a brunch with many of the same activities as other years, such as the wine wall, silent and live auction items, plus some new activities. Tickets will be \$65 per person. Cash bar will also be available. Tickets can be purchased on the Mound Ridge web site or by contacting Mound Ridge Retreat Center at (573) 265-3098.

### March Messenger Newsletter

Submit articles by Thursday, February 18  
to [Newsletter@discoverstmark.org](mailto:Newsletter@discoverstmark.org)  
Published Friday, February 26

## To St. Mark

Over the past two months we have reviewed giving to St. Mark through traditional ways by writing a check, paying by credit card, direct deposit or gift of stock and investments (December 2020), and in January we provided information about giving through your IRAs.

Another way to plan your giving to St. Mark is through a

### **Donor-Advised Fund**

Established as a separate account, a Donor Advised Fund (**DAF**) allows you to make irrevocable contributions and possibly take an immediate itemized tax deduction from your federal tax return. This can work extremely well should you have investments (outside of retirement accounts) that have increased significantly in value, creating an opportunity for a suitable contribution. Your contribution is then invested in the DAF as you desire and has the potential to grow. Then you can request grants over time to any IRS-qualified public charity. DAFs can be used to support your individual strategic giving, perhaps established in the name of your family, to continue and strengthen a philanthropic legacy, which might include St. Mark.

You can establish a DAF by yourself or through a financial professional with an initial contribution of as little as a few thousand dollars.

Always consult your financial planner or tax professional to confirm that a Donor-Advised Fund is appropriate for you.

The **St. Mark Finance Committee** is happy to answer your questions: Glenn Knopf, chair; Joyce Blackwell, Mark Caplinger, Scott Collier, Cay Noble, Hugh Smith, Bob Snyder, Brian Sprague, and Carl Tenpas.

## **Next Month: Giving from Your Will or Trust Bequests and Beneficiary Designations.**

## **Lenten Water Challenge**

Unsafe water and lack of basic sanitation kills more people annually than all forms of violence, including war. In the world, 663 million people do not have access to clean water. About half of the world's population who lack clean water live in Africa.

Marion Medical Mission has played an active role in the fight against dirty water. Since 1990, they have built over 31,000 wells in Malawi, Tanzania and Zambia providing over four million people with a sustainable source of safe drinking water. Without Christ, that would not have been possible! With Him, all is possible. And by His power, we believe that countless millions of others will receive life-giving water.

For the past 19 years, St. Mark has supported Marion Medical Mission through our Christmas Alternatives Gift Fair. During the past three years, St. Mark member donations have funded the construction of 30 wells.

### **We are beginning our third annual Lenten Challenge on Ash Wednesday.**

Pastor Dave has encouraged his congregations for the past 12 years to drink only clean tap water for the 40 days of Lent. Giving up the morning trip to Starbucks or the evening glass of wine might be a tall task for some, but it will help us comprehend how much money we spend on beverages.

Moreover, we can use the money we save to support more wells in Africa. We are blessed to have clean water in our community, and this challenge helps us to understand the needs of those who have less, and support groups who are working to provide living water for all God's children.

Christine Polak, Mission Committee



## Help Save a Life on Sunday, February 28

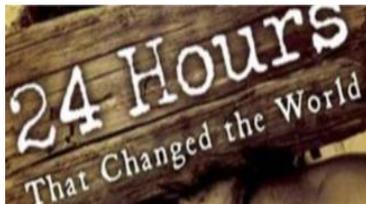
8:30 AM – 1:30 PM St. Mark Church in Gleason Hall

Schedule your blood donation appointment today for St. Mark's first drive of 2021.  
<http://www.redcrossblood.org/Donate/Blood> Enter: Saintmarkpres

The American Red Cross is testing all blood donations for COVID-19 antibodies, providing you with insight into possible past exposure to the coronavirus. The Red Cross follows the highest standards of safety and infection control, and volunteer donors are the only source of blood for those in need.

We urge donors of all blood types to give and support patients fighting cancer, undergoing transplant and other life-saving surgeries and numerous serious illnesses. Now more than ever, we must band together and take care of our community.

## Women's Lenten Bible Study with Pastor MP



Thursdays at 9:00 AM - February 18 through March 25

24 Hours That Changed the World by Adam Hamilton

You can get your book here either paperback or eBook. Scroll down website to see video and read book preview.

<https://www.abingdonpress.com/product/9781501828775/>

## Drive-through Donations On Sunday, February 7, 1-3 pm.

### The Souper Bowl of Caring

is a youth-inspired movement working across the nation to tackle hunger in their local communities. Once again, St. Mark Youth will be collecting in our parking lot for our local mission partners - Circle of Concern and Isaiah 58 Ministries.

#### Most wanted items:

- Rice (1 lb bags, or mega 50 lb bags that will be repackaged at Isaiah 58)
- Canned greens (spinach, collard)
- Peanut butter (under 20 oz, 16-18 oz is common)
- Chili
- Beef stew
- Toothpaste
- Vaseline



## **Claymont Preschool at St. Mark Fall 2021 Registration**

It's time for parents and grandparents of St. Mark preschool aged children to start planning for Fall. St. Mark families are offered priority registration. Half-day classes are available for children who will be 2 years old before October 1, 2021, through pre-kindergarten. Classes meet 9:00 to 12:00 with extended day until 1:30 for older children. Currently, during COVID, there are 37 children attending Claymont Preschool. We expect this number will double before school returns in August. The Preschool enjoys a wonderful reputation for excellent caring teachers and superb kindergarten readiness, causing some classes to fill quickly, so we hope St. Mark members will take advantage of this early registration period.

Please call Lynne Dauve, 636-386-5437 (KIDS) or email [ldauve@Discoverstmark.org](mailto:ldauve@Discoverstmark.org) for more information. Our registration form and other Missouri State required forms are available at [DiscoverStMark.org](http://DiscoverStMark.org).

We have a very limited number of openings in our Pre-K and 3 year old classes currently, so if you have a new neighbor or know of someone looking for a fabulous preschool, please recommend us to them!

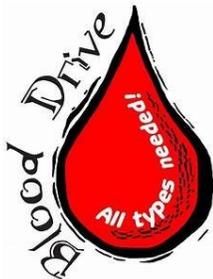


ST. MARK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
601 CLAYMONT DRIVE  
BALLWIN, MO 63011



## St. Mark and Red Cross Blood Drives for Year 2021

For many years St. Mark has participated in this very valuable community service. For those who regularly give blood you're your calendar with these 2021 dates:



- **February 28**
- **April 25**
- **August 15**
- **October 24**

Blood drives are on Sundays from 8:30 am to 1:30 pm in Gleason Hall.

**BE THE ONE WHO BRINGS HOPE AND HEALING TO  
THOSE PATIENTS IN NEED.**