



A Monthly Insight into St. Mark Presbyterian Church

The Messenger

The Leading Light

It's easy to lose our bearings this time of year. It is said that the weather in March comes in like a lion and goes out like a lamb. The truth is it can be 70 degrees and sunny on the first of the month and windy and snowy on the thirty-first. Spring is never boring in the Show-Me State. It's even more difficult to keep track of our progress as we make our way through Lent together.

It brings to mind an old story about two battleships maneuvering in severe weather for several days. One evening as night fell on the foggy sea, the captain decided to stay on the bridge to keep an eye on things. The lookout on the wing of the bridge reported a light bearing on the starboard bow. The

captain asked if it was steady or moving astern. The lookout replied, "Steady, Captain." That meant they were on a collision course.

The captain called to the signalman, "Signal that ship to change its course 20 degrees to the north." Back came this signal: "Change your course 20 degrees to the south."

The captain, much perturbed, said, "Send: I am a captain. Change your course 20 degrees to the north." The reply came back, "I am a Seaman, Second Class.

Change your course 20 degrees south immediately." By this time, the captain was furious. He said, "Send: I am a battleship. Change your course 20 degrees north." Back came the message, "Change your course 20 degrees south. I am a lighthouse."

God's Word is the eternal light which shines in the darkness, and

the darkness cannot overcome it (John 1:5.) It shines forth when the waters are calm and when the sea is stormy. The changing styles of fashion and status are like siren songs trying to crash our ships against the rocks. Just as the lighthouse is constant, God's light in Jesus Christ shows us how far we've come *and* how far we still need to go. It comforts us on the darkest night and leads through dangerous times. I encourage you to continue on the journey of reading through the four gospels during the forty days of Lent. "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever" (Hebrews 13:8, NRSV.)

This light has been with us since the beginning of creation, and this light will see us through this season, this life, and beyond.

In Hope and Confidence,
Pastor Dave

Session Snippets

February 22, 2021 meeting

- The church received a check for \$3,614 as part of the government's COVID19 Air Filtration Reimbursement Program, offsetting part of the expense of installing the new HVAC system in the Preschool wing.
- Plans are being made for early outdoor services on Palm Sunday, Easter, and Pentecost.
- From June-October monthly parking lot/lawn chair services are planned.
- There is ongoing discussion about resuming in-person worship and activities in the building. While the current situation will not allow inside gatherings, we look forward to more outdoor worship services and activities as the weather improves.

One Great Hour of Sharing Lent and Easter

During Lent and especially on Easter, we have the opportunity to participate in the One Great Hour of Sharing, which responds directly to the Isaiah 58 needs God has called us to fulfill. This is one of the Special Offerings during the year, and it provides funding for the

- Presbyterian Hunger Program,
- Presbyterian Disaster Assistance
- Self Development of People.

Total national OGHS funds raised for 2020 were \$3,188,365. Every donation counts! You can use the special yellow envelope that was in your packet for February, or you can write a check to St. Mark and indicate OGHS (One Great Hour of Sharing).

Please participate along with your Lenten Water Challenge donation that benefits Marian Medical Mission, providing clean water wells to communities in Africa.

April Messenger

Publication date Friday, March 26

Prior to Palm Sunday

Submit articles by

Thursday, March 18

Send to newsletter@discoverstmark.org

Best sent as an attachment created in Word so that the editor can reformat.



The publication of Birthdays is discontinued for security and safety concerns. Questions?? Contact Pastor Dave.

GIVING TO ST. MARK

This is fourth in a series of newsletter articles providing ideas of ways to make gifts to St. Mark. In the past we have discussed traditional giving via check, credit card, direct deposit or gift of stock and investments (December 2020); giving through your IRAs (January); and last month utilizing a Donor Advised Fund (DAF). This month we are providing ideas of using your

Wills or Trust Bequests and Beneficiary Designations for giving.

Although these types of gifts may not provide immediate benefit to St. Mark and cannot be used to meet your pledge, they can provide a significant gift to St. Mark. These gifts are made by including a designation in your will or trust documents assigning St. Mark to receive a specific portion of your estate at your passing. You can also include St. Mark as a beneficiary on your IRAs and other retirement plans. St. Mark receives these gifts at your death, at which time your estate or other beneficiaries may benefit from reductions of income and estate taxes.

Always consult your financial planner, estate planning attorney, or tax professional to review the benefits to you and your family for this type of future giving to St. Mark.

The St. Mark Finance Committee will be 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: Charitable Trusts

Souper Bowl of Caring Thanks

Much like most of the year, Souper Bowl of Caring (Super Bowl Football Game - Sunday, Feb. 7) didn't happen as most of us anticipated.

The usual in-person food drop-off was initially changed to a drive-by event with youth greeting people as they arrived and deacons sorting and delivering food. Due to frigid weather that day, the outdoor event was canceled. Yet, people in the congregation still had food to donate so the church announced it would be open two days the week after the "big game" for food drop-off.

The youth committee set up a table in the foyer, decorated for the Souper Bowl of Caring.



The photo here shows just a small amount of the food that was donated by the congregation. Deacons weighed the food, sorted and delivered 137 pounds to Circle of Concern and 144 pounds to Isaiah 58. Both the youth committee and deacons wish to thank the congregation for their generosity and flexibility in contributing to this annual mission

project.

Circle of Concern

This serves as a reminder that the Circle of Concern is accepting curbside drop-off donations at their Headquarters at 112 St. Louis Avenue, Valley Park, MO 63088. Food donations are accepted on Monday and Tuesday from 9 am to 3 pm, and Thursday from 9 am to noon. Cash contributions may be made through St. Mark by designating Circle of Concern on the memo line.

Current needs include:

Cereal	Pasta Sauce
Dinner Helpers	Peanut Butter
Shampoo	Razors
Ibuprofen	

Presbyterian Women News and Events for March 2021

St. Mark Presbyterian Women voted to distribute \$3000 to mission at their February board meeting. The mission work of PW is funded through individual gifts, the annual Christmas Boutique and Angel Street Café, an Easter candy sale, and the Schnucks e-Scrip program.

Sadly, due to COVID-19, we were unable to hold our yearly fundraisers in 2020, but through generous donations from our congregation we will be able to distribute \$750 dollars to each of the following mission partners: Ashley House (PCHAS), Lydia House, Third Presbyterian Church and Arch City Defenders,

PW Board Meeting: Wednesday March 3 at 9:30 am via Zoom

Eve Circle – Time and Place TBA – Contact Laura Adams-Wentling

Martha Circle – 3rd Wednesday 12:30 pm Contact Shirley Weir

Rachel Circle – 3rd Wednesday 9:30 am via Zoom; Horizons Study –
Contact Susan Peters

Ruth Circle – 3rd Thursday 10:30 am via Zoom; independent Bible study –
Contact Diana Johanning

Hannah Circle – 3rd Thursday 7:00 PM via Zoom; Horizons Study –
Contact Carol Weber

Judith Circle – 3rd Thursday 7:00 pm via Zoom; Horizons study–
Contact Lynn Laux

Book Club – Mar 24 9:30 am via Zoom “The Book of Lost Friends” by Lisa Wingate.
Shirley Boeker leads.



March Drive-Through Drop Off March 21, 1-3pm

Donations for Ukirk College Students Spring Sustenance Drive-Through Gifts

- money toward purchasing DoorDash gift cards (\$25 each)
- microwave popcorn
- microwave mac-n-cheese

For any of you who have college students and teenagers, you know their food preferences are quite diverse and they really love selecting their food through DoorDash. Funding these gift cards are our top priority!

This timing is critical as students will not have a spring break this spring to minimize exposure to and transmission of Covid-19. On top of that, mid-terms quickly transition to finals.

Our mission partners are incredibly grateful for St. Mark's ongoing generosity and have been good stewards of your donations.

Update from UKirk Pastor Max on activities:

Ukirk is all virtual this year. This keeps students on all of the campuses we serve safe and healthy, but still allows for connection and fellowship.

We have 2 main events each week: Sunday evening fellowship (via Zoom) and Wednesday Virtual Lunch break. The lunch break is a time for consistent pastoral care. We have also sent personal care packages to students which included items like tea, popcorn and hot cocoa as well as a \$25 DoorDash gift card and a "UkirkSTL" branded face mask. These care packages allow us to keep our commitment to feed students physically, emotionally and spiritually.

Other notable highlights have been our 1-1 [pastor with one student] park walks with students (masked) when the weather is cooperative. I will meet with a student for an outdoor walk to catch up and stay connected. Presbyterian Outlook details other aspects of our ministry this year, particularly in the wake of the Black Lives Matter movement.

<https://pres-outlook.org/2020/08/presbyterian-campus-ministry-finds-new-paths-during-covid-19/>

The St. Mark Mission Committee will continue to coordinate and host drive-through donation drop-offs once a month in the St. Mark parking lot. We will continue to practice COVID-19 safety protocols for these contactless events. Behind our masks we are smiling with the joy of being in service to others and our gloved hands are warmed by your generosity!

PRAYER GROUP

Copies of the church Prayer List are available in the church office in the Prayer Circle mailbox. If you would like prayers for someone or to receive the Prayer List by email, please notify the church office or email Pat Marshall

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 began 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



A Hymn for Church World Service's Blanket Sunday

If we were together in worship, PW would have a Minute for Mission about the importance of a warm blanket to refugees and people suffering from natural disaster. We would tell you that over 5, 800 blankets were distributed in the U.S. alone in the first 6 months of 2020. This year, we will share a hymn written for Blanket Sunday. Enjoy these compassionate words. If you wish to donate to this Presbyterian Women's mission project, you may send a check to St. Mark with the notation Blanket on the memo line. The cost of a blanket is \$10.00. Thank you!

God, You Wrap Your Love Around Us

Carolyn Winfrey Gillette

Tune: C. Crozat Converse, ("What a Friend We Have in Jesus")

Tune: BEECHER, John Zundel, ("Love Divine, All Loves Excelling")

God, you wrap your love around us,
Like a blanket, soft and warm.
You give rest when we are weary,
You protect us from the storm.
May each person who finds shelter
In these blankets that we share
Also feel the joy and comfort
Of your love's protecting care.

Jesus, you were once a baby,
Sought by those who would destroy.
Into Egypt you were carried —
Far from home, a little boy.
Were you wrapped up warm to travel,
Safe from terror, free from harm?
Did you feel God's strong protection,
Snuggled there in Mary's arm?

May the women, men and children
Fleeing danger every day
Know, through us, your living presence;
You walk with them on their way.
Spirit, as you give them comfort,
Teach us here to freely give;
May we blanket this world over
With your love, so all may live.



**Get ready for spring
Boy Scout Troop 631 Lawnmower Tune Up**

TROOP 631



When: Saturday, April 3 9AM—3PM

Where: Parking Lot of Rick's Ace Hardware—
Ellisville

(15870 Clayton Road at the Intersection of
Clayton and Clarkson)

Cost: FREE! (Donations Gladly Accepted)

Services Included: Oil change, spark plug service (cleaning, re-gapping; replacement necessary), air filter service (cleaning, replacement if necessary), blade sharpening, mower deck cleaning. Walk behind mowers only (no riders or zero-turns). Mower must start at the time of check-in.

All proceeds to offset the cost of summer camp.

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 for more information. Our registration form and other Missouri State required forms are available at www.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!

Children's Ministries



An Illustrated Lent for Families

Starting with Ash Wednesday, *An Illustrated Lent for Families: Reflections on the Heart* includes weekly devotions, activities, and coloring pages for families to use during Lent.

Contact lgilliland@discoverstmark.org to request your copy!

Saints & Siblings Bowling

West County Lanes

Sunday, February 28 @ 2pm

Strike! Bring your whole family to the lanes for a great afternoon of fun! \$5/person, \$3/shoes

St. Mark Presbyterian Church

Jerusalem Festival 2021 (Outdoors)

Palm Sunday, March 28

This year's Jerusalem Festival will be fully outdoors. We're excited to offer many things kids love best about the festival, while making it family friendly and socially distanced outdoors from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. - following the Palm Sunday drive in service!

St. Mark Bunny Breakfast (Outdoors)

Saturday, April 3

This year we are having a "Bunny Breakfast Lite" event (10 a.m. - 12 p.m.). We will have a fully outdoor event and have invited Daylight Donuts to come with Easter decorated donuts and box drinks. The Easter Bunny will be there for safe-distance selfies & the long-awaited Easter Egg Hunts (for Preschoolers and Elementary age) will take place. Can't wait to see you there!

Children's Garden Planting!

Saturday, May 1

Schedule your family for a planting session at St. Mark at the Children's Garden! Bring a picnic and enjoy planting flowers and vegetables. You will be making St. Mark Presbyterian Church beautiful and you can watch your garden grow all throughout the growing season.

Due to Covid-19 precautions:

St. Mark Children's Ministry is committed to creating events that promote safe-distancing and we encourage the use of masks whenever and wherever they are required. Signs will be posted for safe-distance practices, hand sanitizing stations and extra masks will be available.