



Issue: May 2023

A Monthly Insight into St. Mark Presbyterian Church

# The Messenger

## What's Next?

May is one of my favorite months with the long sunny days, big leafy trees, and countless celebrations on the calendar. It's the gateway to summer where the living is easy. The month also carries a unique melancholy for many as school wraps up, graduations come and go, and the question of, "What's next?" echoes in our minds. This is also a unique time for us at St. Mark because it is our last full month together before my three-month sabbatical. I understand this upcoming season in the church likely raises many questions, anxieties, and worries among the congregation. I thought I would take this time to address some of the concerns you might have.

Sabbaticals are designed to combat clergy burnout and provide space for spiritual rejuvenation and personal renewal. I am so thankful St. Mark recognizes the need to support pastors, and I believe this will be beneficial to all of us moving forward. I will be away from the church from June 4 to September 5. During this intentional time away

from my pastoral duties, I will spend time traveling with our family, hiking with friends, and writing for personal edification. I am certain I will see some of you at the grocery store or walking through the neighborhood, and it is perfectly fine to have friendly conversations. However, it is important that I separate myself from the daily workings of the church and have time to recharge my batteries.

St. Mark will be in very good hands as Pastor MP steps up to handle many of the head of staff responsibilities in my absence. We are also excited to welcome back Pastor Carol DeV Vaughn for the summer to assist with worship leadership and pastoral care. We are blessed to have both of them with us during this time.

Church leadership experts recommend congregations look at pastoral sabbaticals as a time for personal and collective renewal. To that end, St. Mark is excited to offer summer reading and writing

opportunities. Members and guests are encouraged to gather around one of four books for exploration and discussion. There is more information about this offering in the newsletter, and I hope you will consider participating in this opportunity. Moreover, there is an important writing component available for all who would like to explore finding their spiritual voice. This is not required, but I promise it will be helpful and will run parallel to the personal writing I plan on doing during my time away.

The summer months will provide a wonderful opportunity for all of us to live out our collective CREDO as we seek, discover, and share the good news of Jesus Christ. Please feel free to contact me during the month of May if you have any questions about the sabbatical. May God continue to bless you during the summer months and beyond.

In Hope and Confidence,  
Pastor Dave

## SESSION SNIPPETS

### Notes from the April 17, 2023 Session Meeting:

Session heard information about Pastor Dave's upcoming three month Sabbatical.

- A time of spiritual benefit
- Opportunity to "lie fallow", a time of reflection
- Chances to "see with new eyes"
- Time with family
- Time to write

Additionally, the coming summer will provide the congregation with its own opportunities to explore new paths, personal reflection, and time to write. More information to come!

Our Youth will be traveling to Puerto Rico June 11-17 for their own time of new experiences and growth. We will share in that when they "report" back to us.

Rev. Carol DeVaughn will provide support during this time and the Giddings-Lovejoy Presbytery Leader, Ryan Landino, will lead us in worship on June 4.

## APRIL WORSHIP ATTENDANCE

	Saturday	Sunday	Sunday	Total Attendance
		In Person	Online	
April 1 & 2	19	188	132	339
April 9	15	195	129	339
April 15 & 16	20	120	85	225
April 22 & 23	17	138	74	229
April 29 & 30	16	128	117	261

**Maunder Thursday** in person 75 & online 63 – total 138

**Good Friday** in person 61 & online 73 – total 134

**Holy Saturday** in person 13

## GIVING TO ST. MARK

The Finance Committee wants to continue to provide insights for various ways to provide financial support to St. Mark and the missions of our church.

One often misunderstood way to give is by using your **IRA** (excluding active SEP-IRAs and active SIMPLE-IRAs) for a **Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD's)**. Beginning at the day you turn age 70½ (not the new age 73 for Required Minimum Distribution), you may be able to use your IRA for giving to St. Mark.

Each individual can exclude **up to \$100,000 of QCDs** from their Gross Income each year and avoid taxation on those amounts. This exclusion from gross income may be a tax efficient way for taxpayers who would not itemize deductions. Be sure to have your IRA custodian make the distribution **directly** from your IRA to a qualified charity (i.e.: St. Mark).

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

For further information or questions, please contact the St. Mark Finance Committee: Joyce Blackwell, chair; Brian Sprague, Scott Collier, Carl Tenpas, Mark Caplinger, Hugh Smith, and Cay Noble.

Stay tuned for future topics in the Messenger.

## NOMINATING COMMITTEE SEEKING CANDIDATES!

The Nominating Committee is seeking candidates for the next class of elders, deacons, endowment and next year's Nominating Committee. We have a lot of talent in our church community and what better way is there to join in, make a difference and expand your circle of friends than participating in the work of the church! The forms are available at the Welcome Desk to suggest candidates, even yourself. Please leave at the Welcome Desk or the Nominating Committee mailbox in the church office. Your energy and talents are needed, please prayerfully consider.

Please see the attached nominating form at the back of the Messenger.

## DEACONS IN ACTION

### REMEMBER TO SAVE THE DATES!

It's May and our ABC Sale will be upon us in just a few months! It's time to get into those attics, basements and closets, and clean out those items you want to donate this year.

We'll be accepting drop-offs at St Mark beginning Sunday, July 30<sup>th</sup> after the 10am service until 4pm, and Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, July 31<sup>st</sup>, August 1-2<sup>nd</sup> from 8am to Noon; no drop-offs will be accepted on Thursday, August 3<sup>rd</sup>. The sale days are Friday, August 4<sup>th</sup> and Saturday, August 5<sup>th</sup>. We'll open early on Friday (7am) to those who want to get a jump on the bargains (and are willing to pay \$10); regular sale hours will be 8am to 1pm on Friday, and 8am to Noon on Saturday. We'll accept clothing (all ages and sizes), toys, books, puzzles, small household items, gardening equipment, tools, sports equipment, holiday items, and luggage. As a gentle reminder, we are NOT able to accept electronics, large-scale furniture items, baby cribs, highchairs, car seats, entertainment centers and mattresses. But we will provide information on other options for recycling those items in an upcoming communication.

Events like this need lots of volunteers: set-up, greeters, cashiers, help in each of the departments, clean-up and so forth. More information will be coming out soon, so please consider where you would be willing to help out. You'll be hearing from us again shortly! Joyce Blackwell, Glenn Knopf, Pam Ladley

## ADULT CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AT ST. MARK

### FRIDAY BIBLE STUDY - 9 AM

#### Let's Talk About Sabbath

As we move closer to this summer when Pastor Dave will go on Sabbatical leave, we as a congregation will also begin the journey to seek to live into God's command to observe the Sabbath. In the weeks to come we will learn more about Dave's sabbatical leave in particular. In this Bible study we will talk about Pastor sabbaticals, take a closer look at weekly sabbath, and discuss what sabbath might mean for us. Join us for any or all of the classes. This is a hybrid class happening in person as well as on Zoom. If you wish to be added to the current email communication list, contact Pastor MP. [mpanco@discoverstmark.org](mailto:mpanco@discoverstmark.org).

**Class dates: April 14<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup>, May 12<sup>th</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup>, June 2<sup>nd</sup>.**



## MEMBERSHIP EXPLORATION CLASSES

This is an exciting time in the life and ministry of St. Mark. We encourage all of our guests to learn more about the Christian faith, the Reformed Tradition, and our Presbyterian Church.

Member Exploration Class concludes on May 7 from 8:50 to 9:45 in Room 102.

We are thankful that you have discovered St. Mark, and we believe now is the time to explore the mission and ministry of our congregation. Please contact the St. Mark office or Pastor Dave for more information.

## WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

### CHILDREN'S SUNDAY SCHOOL

Sunday school for children PreK – 5<sup>th</sup> grade takes place during Sunday worship, immediately following the Children's Message.

### NURSERY

Nursery Care, for ages 0 - 2yrs, is available Sunday mornings from 8:30 – 11:00 am.

## CHILDREN'S GARDEN



Bring a plant or two of your own to be planted in our Children's Garden the week of May 7 – 14! You may plant it yourself or drop off for our St. Mark children to plant on May 10 from 5 – 6 pm.

## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES WITH CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES!

Look for our Summer Sundays and VBS Volunteer Table on May 21<sup>st</sup> before and after the morning service! Find out how to simply give of your time one hour/once a month during the summer months AND/OR how to "say YES TO VBS!" and join our team the week of July 17-21 from 9 am - 12:00 pm. Latisha Gilliland will be available to answer any questions you may have - we are so excited about what God is going to do in St. Mark Children's Ministry!

## VBS AT ST. MARK JULY 17-21



Join us for a **full week** of VBS fun as we are all called together to serve God at Hero Hotline! Online Registration is now open for VBS! Go to [discoverstmark.org](http://discoverstmark.org) or use the QR Code to register your family today!!



## VBS LEADER AND VOLUNTEER TRAINING

Training will take place on the following dates in Fellowship Hall immediately following worship: May 28, and June 25. Use the QR code or go to [discoverstmark.org](http://discoverstmark.org) to register as a volunteer!



## WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH YOUTH

# YOUTH



Youth Wednesdays will be taking break for summer. We will meet several times over the summer months for Sunday Youth Hangouts and will be participating in church-wide St. Mark activities such as VBS and the ABC sale. Watch for more information. Also, keep an eye open for rehearsal dates for our brand new youth music ensemble! See you soon Pastor MP.





Join us for worship Sunday May 28th to celebrate and recognize graduating High School and College seniors! All graduates will be issued a Bible as a gift from the St. Mark family as they venture on to the next step of their journeys. Congratulations seniors!



### YOUTH MISSION TRIP, JUNE 11-17

**Pray for our St. Mark youth mission team and for the communities we will encounter! - Pastor MP**

Summer 2023 offers more opportunities than ever for middle and high school youth groups to put their faith into action through challenging and rewarding youth mission trips! Groups will complete projects such as repairing and renovating homes for families in need, building mission and ministry facilities, leading children's outreach programs, working at homeless shelters, responding to natural disasters, and reaching out to individuals and communities through Christian service. The island of Puerto Rico has many opportunities for ministry and service within communities where families struggle with poverty every day. On this overseas mission trip, youth will be able to serve in one of the poorest communities by passing out food and through community outreach ministries in the neighborhood and at the local parks. Groups will also serve through hands-on projects such as home repair and renovation. Your youth will be able to experience a different culture and come to love the children and families of Puerto Rico as they bring Christian service to an area desperately in need of help.

## MISSION AT ST. MARK

### MAY FOOD PANTRY MOST WANTED



- Canned Fruit
- Canned Spinach
- Crackers
- Dish Soap\*
- Adult Depends\*
- Pullups and Baby Wipes\*



All year long, we collect food and hygiene items for Circle of Concern and Isaiah 58 Ministries. Please place your donations on the table in the pastors' hallway. \*Non-food products cannot be purchased with food stamps.

### EQUAL EXCHANGE / FAIRLY TRADED IN NARTHEX ON MAY 21



#### Who grows your tea and spices?

Marginalized Organic Producers' Association (MOPA) is a network of over 800 small-scale farmers, about half of whom are women, in the Uva and Central regions of Sri Lanka. These farmers grow tea and spices and are

committed to organic and biodynamic agriculture.

St. Mark supports this mission to build long-term trade partnerships that are economically just, environmentally sustainable, and to foster mutually beneficial relationships between small farmers and consumers -- that's us! *Credit, Debit, (swipe or tap) accepted.*



You are invited to join a Meal Packaging Experience with St. Mark Presbyterian Church in the movement to end hunger on Saturday, June 24, from 10 am – 12 pm. Come join us as we partner with Rise Against Hunger to pack 10,000 meals that will be sent to feed people around the world. The event is for all ages and abilities. Go to [discoverstmark.org](http://discoverstmark.org) to register to participate and/or to donate to this event.



On Sunday, May 21, we will gather with food and well wishes for the Burgess family as they prepare for their summer sabbatical. Please plan to join us following church on Sunday for a hot dog lunch, cornhole and some fun surprises! (All activities will be onsite at church.) Hope to see you there!!!

### DOES ST. MARK HAVE YOUR CORRECT INFORMATION?

St. Mark is publishing a new church directory and wants to give your family a chance to update information such as address, phone number, email, etc., that may have changed recently. The membership committee will have records for you to check and edit at a table in the Narthex before and after worship starting May 7. Please stop by and review your information to ensure that it is published correctly in the directory.



### How Do We Uncover our Faith Stories?

*Be ready to speak up and tell anyone who asks why you're living the way you are, and always with the utmost courtesy.*

I Peter 3:15 (The Message)

#### Seek

examples of other writers and their faith

#### Discover

how you can write about your faith experience

#### Share

writing for yourself / for people you trust/ for people you don't know.

**Sign up** to read one of these four books (above) and be part of a book group reading to understand and write faith stories that answer “why you're living the way you are.”

See the display of books and sign-up list in the Narthex after church on Sunday. Otherwise sign-up with Bill Tucker. The groups will start meeting in June, but you can start reading now!

### WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN



PW Book Club meets May 24 @ 9:30 am virtually and in Room 102. Pat Eisenberg will present Remarkably Bright Creatures by Shelby Van Pelt. Please contact Judy Richardson if you wish to receive a Zoom invitation.



THANK YOU to all the members and friends of St. Mark who volunteered and attended the Jerusalem Festival! It was a great success!



## Jerusalem Festival 2023

## Nomination Form

The St. Mark Congregational Nominating Committee invites your suggestions of names of persons to serve as Elder, Deacon, member of the Congregational Nominating Committee, or member of the Endowment Committee.

We seek names of persons who:

- 1) actively participate in and show commitment to the church and its missions
- 2) exemplify Christian maturity in faith in daily life
- 3) are willing to lead and to express their own ideas and
- 4) show an ability to listen, learn and work cooperatively

Please write your suggestions and comments regarding their qualifications below and return this form to the Congregational Nominating Committee box in the church office or send it electronically to email address: [Nominations@discoverstmark.org](mailto:Nominations@discoverstmark.org).

Thank you for your prayerful consideration,  
St. Mark Nominating Committee

<p><u>Constitutional Requirements for Elders:</u> Presbyterian Church USA Book of Order: Those persons who will hold this office ought to be sound in their faith...persons of wisdom and discretion...pray with and for the people...oversee the spiritual interest of the church. (Paraphrased)</p> <p><u>Responsibilities of St. Mark Session Elders</u> include regular attendance at stated meetings (usually the third Monday of the month) and any specially called meetings, serving as a chairperson or active member of a Session standing committee, and assisting with the Lord's Supper. Three year term*.</p> <p>For Elder, I suggest:</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
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<p><u>Constitutional Requirements for Deacons:</u> Presbyterian Church USA Book of Order: The office of Deacon is one of sympathy, witness, and service...their duties should be to minister to those who are in need, to the sick, to the friendless and to any who may be in distress. (Paraphrased)</p> <p><u>Responsibilities of St. Mark Board of Deacons</u> include regular attendance at stated meetings (first Monday of the month) and any specially called meetings, serving as chairperson or active member of a Deacons committee, visitation and delivery of altar flowers, and assisting with the Lord's Supper. Three year term*.</p> <p>For Deacon, I suggest:</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
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Constitutional Requirements for Congregational Nominating Committee: Presbyterian Church USA Book of Order: This committee should be representative of the congregation and include two members from the Session; one from the Board of Deacons; and a majority chosen from the congregation-at-large (five At St. Mark). (Paraphrased)

Responsibilities of St. Mark Congregational Nominating Committee includes regular attendance at called meetings (3-4 per year), appreciation for the demands of the respective offices, and a wide knowledge of the St. Mark membership and a willingness to increase this knowledge. One year term\*.

For the Congregational Nominating Committee, I suggest:

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\*St. Mark bylaws also provide one, one-year term for an active member who is under 25 years of age, for each of the following: Elder, Deacon, and Congregational Nominating Committee.

Constitutional Requirements for the Endowment Committee

Persons should be active members of the congregation.

Responsibilities of St. Mark Endowment Committee include keeping the congregation apprised of the possibilities for deferred giving, provide assistance to members with how this may be done and management of the endowment fund. Four year term.

For the Endowment Committee, I suggest:

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