



Issue: November 2023

A Monthly Insight into St. Mark Presbyterian Church

The Messenger

Moving from Grievance to Gratitude

It is hard to believe we are nearing the end of 2023, but I am thankful for all the activities still to come before we change calendars. There are Thanksgiving dinners, Christmas traditions, and opportunities to connect with friends, family, and loved ones. We celebrate special events as a congregation like All Saint's Sunday, Stewardship Sunday, Giving Thanks, Jingle Mingle, and so many more. It is a time where we need to be grateful, but that's easier said than done.

I don't watch much network television anymore, and, if someone asks about my favorite shows, I generally talk about programs from the 1980s and 1990s. I still love the comedy series, Seinfeld, and my favorite episode is about a made-up holiday called Festivus. One of the families doesn't recognize historic celebrations, and they gather for this odd observance. I know I am not

doing the episode justice in this description, so you will probably need to (re)watch it on your own. When you do, you'll see the family patriarch sitting at the head of the table saying, "The tradition of Festivus begins with the airing of grievances." It's a wonderfully silly episode, but, as with a lot of comedy, it provides a prophetic word for our day. We are called to live lives of gratitude, but, too often, we slip into the morass of grievance.

Gratitude feels like a difficult task when we hear so much negativity in the news and experience cruelty in our daily lives. I have good news for you. Nobody can ever take it away from you; the only way to lose it is to forfeit it willingly. William Faulkner writes, "Gratitude is a quality similar to electricity: It must be produced and discharged and used up in order to exist at all." We cannot keep it for ourselves or to ourselves. Perhaps, a better way of understanding what this

means is to look at the root word of gratitude in Latin; it's gratia. It's grace. If we want to see more gratitude in ourselves and in the world, we need to start with accepting God's grace and sharing it with our neighbors. The modern world's currency is grievance, but God's eternal word for us is grace, and this requires a response. The Apostle Paul reminds us, "You will be enriched in every way for your great generosity, which will produce thanksgiving to God through us" (2 Corinthians 9:11, NRSV.)

I look forward to worshipping, learning, and celebrating with you over the next two months as we celebrate God's grace and share God's love through our gratitude.

In Hope and Confidence,
Pastor Dave

SESSION SNIPPETS

October 16 Meeting of Session:

What's happening at St. Mark?

Look at the Sunday Bulletin. It's full of activities and growth opportunities for Youth, adult Bible study, Confirmation, kids of different ages, mission projects, etc. It takes a lot of people to make all these things happen. St. Mark is blessed.

And as Pastor Dave mentioned in a recent sermon, do we thank God for the incessant good things in our lives? The cooler weather, the food on our tables, family and friends, and the community of St. Mark.

Session talked about how we are a friendly and welcoming congregation. Incoming members tell us that was/is a reason they are here. Offering that welcome is Christ's command to go out and be the church.

Plans are being made for the Giving Thanks Dinner, the Children's Choir Concert with Jingle Mingle, and the events preparing for the Advent and Christmas season. Those are plans for now.

What are our plans and objectives for the future? For five years from now? Or ten years? Those are some questions that Session and the Deacons are asking.

Stay tuned...

GIVING TO ST. MARK

For further information or questions on church finances or giving, please contact a member of the St. Mark Finance Committee: Joyce Blackwell, Barry Boeker, Scott Collier, Glenn Knopf, Cay Noble, Hugh Smith, Brian Sprague, Carl Tenpas.

OCTOBER WORSHIP ATTENDANCE

	Saturday	Sunday	Sunday	Total Attendance
		In Person	Online	
Sept. 30 & Oct 1	12	126	75	213
Oct. 7 & 8	13	143	91	247
Oct. 14 & 15	12	173	69	254
Oct. 21-22	17	157	68	242
Oct. 28-29	11	169	69	249



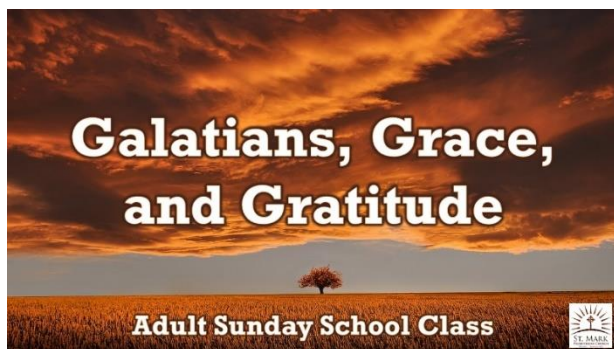
Stewardship Season began on Reformation Sunday, October 29 at St. Mark. This is an exciting season in the life of our congregation, and we encourage everyone to consider how they have kept the faith in the past, grown their faith in the present, and will share their faith in the future. This three-week season will conclude on Celebration Sunday, November 12. Pledge cards will be available at the Welcome Center starting next week. Please contact Pastor Dave or Scott Collier with any questions.



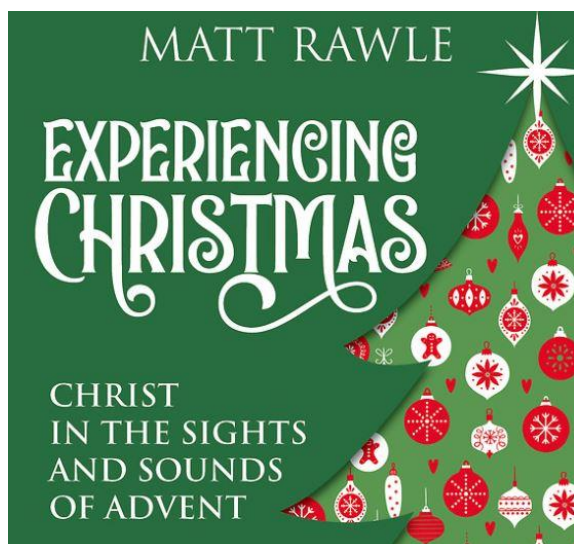
YOU ARE INVITED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE CHRISTMAS CANTATA

Starting Wednesday, November 1, the invitation is extended to join the choir in preparing for this year's Christmas Cantata. The choir will rehearse Cantata music Wednesdays at 7pm. The first section of rehearsal will be dedicated to Cantata music, before moving on to weekly anthem music. The Cantata will take place Sunday, December 10.

ADULT CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AT ST. MARK



It's time to gather once again for our adult Sunday school class at St. Mark. "Galatians, Grace, and Gratitude" will meet from Oct. 29 to December 3 at 8:50 AM in Room 102. Please spread the word about this new educational opportunity, and we hope to see you on Sunday. Let Pastor Dave know if you have any thoughts, questions, or if you need the ZOOM link for remote participation.



Friday Bible Study

Join us Friday mornings from 9:00 am - 10:00 am on December 1st, 8th, 15th, and 22nd, either in person or on Zoom. You can buy the book if you desire but it is not necessary though we will be drawing from parts of it for the discussion. If you have any questions or want the Zoom link, contact pastor MP mpanco@discoverstmark.org.

ST. MARK MEN'S BIBLE STUDY

The men's bible study meets in room 102 every Tuesday at 7:30 am. We are currently studying the Lord's Prayer using Adam Hamilton's book, "The Lord's Prayer, The Meaning and Prayer Jesus Taught". All men are welcome! You may contact Bruce Cranston for more information.

WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

CHILDREN'S SUNDAY SCHOOL

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

NURSERY

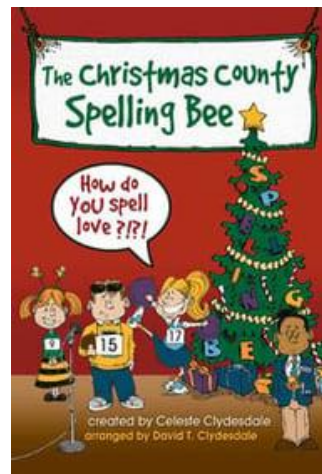
Nursery Care, for ages 0 - 2yrs, is available Sunday mornings from 8:30 – 11:00 am.

SUNDAY SCHOOL SIGN IN!

Please be sure to sign in your student(s) for Sunday School! Parents will receive a card after Time With Children with a QR code for access to the sign in. We ask that you have your student(s) registered so that we can contact you via text in the event that you are needed.

WEDNESDAY CHILDREN'S CHOIR!

Join us for Pre-K choir (5:00 -5:25 pm) and Elementary choir (5:30-6:30 pm)! Every week is filled with curriculum-based, music, drama, lessons, choreography, games and snack time! Our Musical this year is called "Christmas County Spelling Bee" and will be presented on December 3 @ 4 pm. For more information, contact lgilliland@discoverstmark.org.



WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH YOUTH



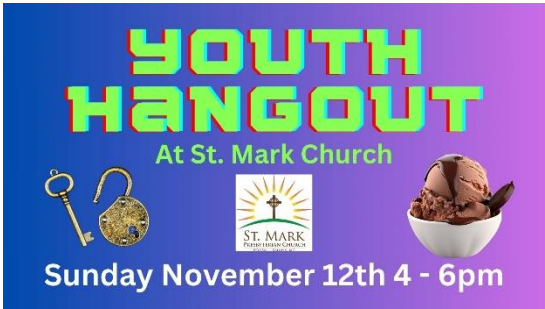
Youth 6th grade and up meet Wednesdays from 6:00 – 7:00 pm for food, fun, fellowship, and faith! If you have any questions, contact pastor MP mpanco@discoverstmark.org or call the church office.

Youth Music Ensemble
Rehearsals Nov. 5th, 12th, 19th
11:15am - 12:15pm
Contact Pastor MP
mpanco@discoverstmark.org



CONFIRMATION
 November Classes 5th, 12th, 19th
 contact pastor M.P.
mpanco@discoverstmark.org

If you have a youth 7th grade or older who would like to explore more about what it means to be a Christian, this is the place! Students will meet weekly along with their mentors and talk about their faith and what they believe about Jesus, religion, the church, and more! Never too late to join in!



YOUTH HANGOUT
 At St. Mark Church
 Sunday November 12th 4 - 6pm

Our November Youth Hangout will take place at the church. Bring your favorite topping for ice cream Sundays. We will have a Biblically based Escape Room activity and much more! Hope to see you there. If you have any questions contact Pastor MP mpanco@discoverstmark.org.

MISSION AT ST. MARK

NOVEMBER FOOD PANTRY

CRITICAL NEEDS



- Hearty Soups
- Canned Vegetables (not green beans)
- Canned Fruit
- Size 6 Baby Diapers, Baby Wipes*
- Adult Incontinence Products *

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



New and gently used clean winter coats and clothing are needed for men, women, and kids, all sizes, and styles.

Our mission partners will ensure someone in need receives your gift of warmth! Place your donations in the foyer outside the office.



EQUAL EXCHANGE / FAIRLY TRADED IN THE NARTHEX

When you choose Equal Exchange, you're supporting a more equitable alternative trade system that empowers local communities and small family farms worldwide.

Let us know if there are any items that you would like to see more of or less of in our offerings.

HONORING FAMILY AND FRIENDS THROUGH ALTERNATIVE GIVING

Finding the perfect gift for someone who has many wonderful possessions is a difficult task! With this in mind, in 2001 the newly formed Mission Committee at St. Mark created "Christmas Alternatives." Purchasing a gift through Christmas Alternatives honors the recipient and also helps deserving people who have so little but need so much.



WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH CLAYMONT PRESCHOOL



In October, Claymont Preschool at St. Mark hosted our annual Open House for parents, grandparents, siblings, and friends! We had a great time

connecting with each other, visiting with teachers in our classrooms, playing on the playground, and painting rocks for a whole school art project. We used these multicolored, painted rocks to create a flower garden! You can see it on the side of the building, by the awning, where students get dropped off for school. Our children are very proud of their work, and our space looks beautiful!



Claymont Preschool at St. Mark
601 Claymont Drive, Ballwin 63011

We are Hiring...

Music and Movement Teacher

Seeking applicants who:

- love children
- have strong vocal singing skills
- play an instrument – piano or guitar preferred
- have knowledge of a wide variety of children's songs
- confidently lead children in learning and performing songs
- have organizational and planning skills

Position Information:

- 9-month (school year) position
- Monday through Friday
- lead 3 to 4 groups of young children
- 2 hours each morning
- begins immediately

Interested? Contact:

Susan Talley, Preschool Director
STalley@DiscoverStMark.org
636-386-5437



GIVING THANKS AND SHARING OUR BLESSINGS!

Giving Thanks Supper for St. Mark friends and family is Sunday, November 19th. Please join us for a traditional feast that includes turkey, stuffing, potatoes, gravy and more! There is no cost for the meal, but you can bring a dessert that serves 6-8 people to share with your church family.

We will also be collecting for Isaiah 58 and Circle of Concern:

CANNED GOODS	BOXED GOODS
Yams	Potatoes (all varieties)
Fruit Cocktail	Rice
Pineapple Chunks	Baking Items
Cranberry Sauce	Meal "Helpers"
Hearty Soups	Instant Oatmeal

Personal Hygiene Products also gratefully accepted.

Go Getters Luncheon

November 14 @ 12 pm

THE OUTING WILL BE AT 12 NOON AT THE MELLOW MUSHROOM (PIZZA) LOCATED AT 15525 OLIVE BLVD, CHESTERFIELD.

PLEASE INVITE A FRIEND AND PLAN TO JOIN US!
LET JAN GRAVES OR JUDY RICHARDSON KNOW OF YOUR PLANS TO ATTEND.

THE DECEMBER LUNCHEON WILL BE HELD AT CHURCH.



Jingle Mingle with your St. Mark family on Sunday, December 3rd from 5 pm to 7 pm! Please bring an appetizer or dessert to share, Fellowship will provide a delicious punch! If you are attending the Children's Musical at 4 pm, we hope that you will join us for a mingle after the performance! There will be plenty of food and treats for children and adults!



The Holidays are fast approaching, and the hustle and bustle of this happy season will soon begin. For some people, however, this time of year is anything but happy. The holidays have a completely different feeling when you have lost a loved one. Going out to parties, being with people is not what you want to do. Join us for Surviving the Holidays. It is a one-time two-hour session that will try to help you find the tools to get through the holidays. If you have any questions, contact Pastor MP at mpanco@discoverstmark.org.



Blue Christmas service provides a quiet and contemplative worship space as an alternative to the more traditional Christmas gatherings. This service is in honor of those who are experiencing grief and struggling with loss and is a holiday tradition in the U.S. dating back to 1990.

Join us here at St. Mark Presbyterian Church for a service of hope and healing where you will have an opportunity to honor your loved one as you are invited to light a candle in their name. As you depart, you will be handed a small keepsake in remembrance of the service.

The service will be led by Pastor MP and is sponsored by the St. Mark Stephen's Ministry Team.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Pastor MP mpanco@discoverstmark.org.

CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS



St Mark will continue our tradition of beautifying our sanctuary with poinsettias for our Christmas Eve services.

Please consider ordering one or more to bring home after the Christmas Eve Service or to be delivered to a homebound member. Order forms can be found by the flower chart on the easel. Please make your check payable to *St. Mark Presbyterian Church* and place the order form and check in the "Drop Box" in the Pastor's Hallway. The deadline for ordering is Sunday, November 19th. The cost is \$7 per plant. Plants are sourced from a locally owned greenhouse. If you have questions, please contact Carolyn McBee.