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Issue: January 2024

A Monthly Insight into St. Mark Presbyterian Church

The Messenger

Common Lies and Better Truths

My heart is full of thanks as I sit down to write this message to you all on a cloudy and grey Wednesday afternoon. I am grateful for our time together through our seasons of stewardship, Advent, and Christmas. I am also excited about all the exciting things happening at St. Mark as we begin 2024 together. We will begin an all-church book read of **“Lies My Preacher Told Me”** this Sunday during our education hour. This 11-week journey will conclude right before Holy Week begins and each chapter is easy to read and digest.

I saw this book in one of the reading rooms at Montreat Conference Center in North Carolina this summer during my sabbatical, and the title caught my eye. It explores common misconceptions about the Old Testament and provides ways we can engage the text faithfully. I think it is important to note most pastors are not intentionally lying to their congregations, and the author

Too often, clergy (and other well-meaning Christians) pass along information they are certain is in scripture but it's a mistruth they picked up along the way. Mark Twain writes, “History is strewn thick with evidence that a truth is not hard to kill, but a lie, well told, is immortal.”

Many scholars consider this a “Post Truth” era in the American political, economic, and social arenas. Some use alternative facts to make their points while others use moral relativism to justify all kinds of actions. Public confidence is at an all-time low in many of our institutions like government and journalism. The Christian church is not immune to this (and it shouldn't be) as the rise of the religiously unaffiliated, often called “the nones”, continues. I believe our best response to this is to return to God's Word. Dr. Thomas Gillespie was the president of Princeton Theological Seminary during my time there, and he said one thing I'll never forget. “I want you to know the scriptures as well as the Bible College students, but

better.” Some might reduce this to to memorizing chapter and verse, but I believe there's a whole lot more to what Dr. Gillespie shared. We need to know the Word, the original context, and, most importantly, ways we can put it into practice faithfully.

I encourage you to join us on Sunday mornings at 8:50 AM in Room 102 and online as we explore this book together. We'll cover a lot of it during worship, but this class allows for a healthy give-and-take as we discuss each one of the author's claims. There are books available for purchase in the office or you can purchase it online. I am excited about this new journey together, and I cannot wait to be in the Word with you all in 2024.

In Hope and Confidence,

Pastor Dave

SESSION SNIPPETS

December 11 Meeting of Session:

Session and Deacons met together to “examine” the incoming officers, having conversation and talking about their commitment and choices to serve. The Session voted unanimously to move forward January 7, 2024, to Ordain and Install those elected.

The officers completing their terms were thanked for their dedication and commitment: elders Joyce Blackwell, Clay Douglas, Kim Michel, Jason Neal, and Jame Wild (Y); deacons Jan Boehme, Alex Lambie, Ryan Melter, Michelle Rochow, and Declan Phipps (Y).

Considering the current surge in illnesses and Covid and the time of the year, four free-standing hand sanitizers will be placed in the Narthex. Look for them, and use them, for the benefit of everyone.

The Personnel Policy Manual Draft to include the required 12 week Family and Medical Leave Policy was approved.

Rev. Dr. Dave Burgess is serving GLPBY as Vice-Moderator during 2024 and Pastor MP has joined the GLPBY Committee on Preparation for Ministry and is also serving as the chairperson on the GLPBY Administrative Commission for Dardenne Presbyterian Church.

ANNUAL MEETING JANUARY 28

The Annual Congregational meeting will take place immediately following worship on January 28. Virtual participation through Zoom will be available. A Zoom invite will be sent out the week of the meeting.

DECEMBER WORSHIP ATTENDANCE

	Saturday	Sunday	Sunday	Total Attendance
		In Person	Online	
Dec. 2 & 3	9	174	72	255
Dec. 9 & 10	10	277	142	429
Dec. 16 & 17	11	158	94	263
Dec. 24	-	100	74	174
Dec. 24 5 pm	-	190	-	190
Dec. 24 7 pm	-	200	81	281
Dec. 31	-	123	81	204

DEACONS IN ACTION AT ST. MARK

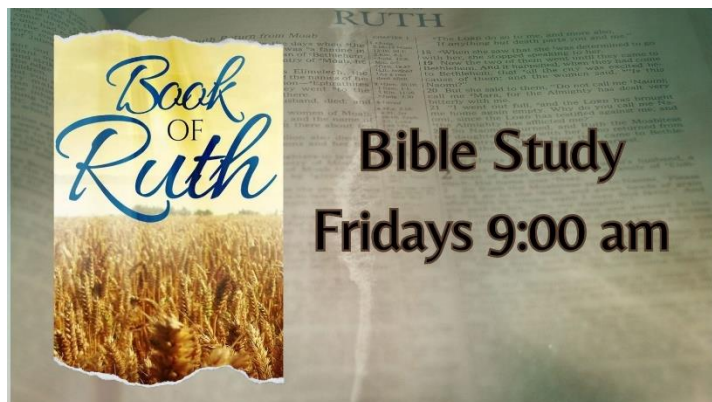
The donation of sanctuary flowers is a wonderful way for our members to honor loved ones and commemorate special events during the year, while, at the same time, helping to beautify our church. During our most holy seasons, Easter and Christmas, members can purchase Easter Lilies and Poinsettias. Provided as a donation, these flowers and plants also serve to bring joy to a church member who cannot attend church. This often includes a visit by one of our deacons, allowing homebound members and members in senior living to stay in touch with our church family and to know that they are thought of, appreciated, and loved. All plants purchased can also be designated to be taken home or delivered personally to whomever the member chooses. During 2023:

- A total of 46 sanctuary bouquets were ordered from a local florist of which 27 of these were donated and were delivered by the deacons to homebound members and 19 were taken home by the donors.
- For the Easter season, 28 families donated a total of 58 Easter lilies which were ordered from a local greenhouse for our sanctuary on Easter Sunday. After the Easter service 47 were delivered by deacons to homebound members and 14 were taken home by the donors.
- For the Christmas season, 26 families donated a total of 74 poinsettia plants which were ordered from a local greenhouse for our sanctuary during the Christmas Eve services. Afterwards 59 plants were delivered to homebound members and two residential care facilities, and 15 plants were taken home by the donor.

ADULT CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AT ST. MARK

ST. MARK MEN'S BIBLE STUDY

The men's bible study meets in room 102 every Tuesday at 7:30 am. We are reading, What's So Amazing About Grace by Philip Yancy. All men are welcome! You may contact Bruce Cranston or Glen Corlett for more information.

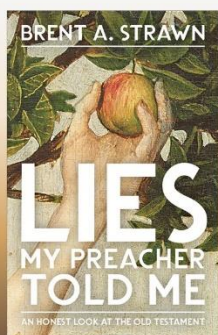


Friday Bible Study

Join us Friday mornings from 9:00 - 10:00 am on January 5th, 12th, 19th, and 26th either in person or on Zoom. There is no book to buy. If you have any questions or want the Zoom link, contact pastor MP.

All-Church Book Study Arriving in January 2024

Pick up your copy today!



Everyone is welcome to join our Adult Sunday School Class in 2024 as we work through the book, "Lies My Preacher Told Me" together. We gather at 8:50 AM in Room 102, and it's a wonderful opportunity to ask questions, discuss God's Word, and deepen our faith. The class will explore common misconceptions about the Old Testament and ways we can (re)engage the text faithfully. There are a limited number of books available for purchase, but there are several options online. Please let Pastor Dave know if you have any questions.

WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

CHILDREN'S SUNDAY SCHOOL

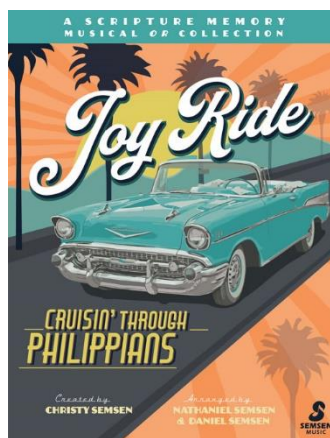
Sunday school for children PreK – 5th grade takes place during Sunday worship, immediately following the Children's Message.

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.



THE KICKOFF FOR THE MUSICAL, JOY RIDE

Join us for a cruisin' good time as we take a JOY RIDE through the book of Philippians!

We are so excited about Joy Ride which will kick off on Wednesday, January 17 (with a beach party!). This is a Journey through the

book of Philippians with easy scripture memorization through songs and drama, games and weekly lessons. What fun!!!! It is my hope that Joy Ride will help us to hide God's word in our hearts through these fantastic verses in Philippians!!! Then, we will share our journey with you on April 21st at 4:00 pm followed by a beach "hang-out" reception for all. Come sign up to join the St. Mark Children's choirs each week - Pre-K (ages 3-4) choir meets from 5-5:25 pm & Elem. SMP choir is for grades K-5 (5:30-6:30 pm) in Fellowship Hall. Contact Latisha Gilliland for more information.



January 21st immediately following the worship service 11:15 - 12:15 (luncheon). We will be continuing our training through Ozark Christian College and January's topic is Session 4 Classroom Management by Dr. Teresa Roberts. This series of five training sessions has been so encouraging as we continue to construct the bridge between church and family in the spiritual development of our children. Please plan to join us - maybe this is your year to give of your time and gifts to the next generation!

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 or call the church office.



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! It's never too late to join in!



YOUTH & FAMILY OUTING!



Youth Hangout and family Polar Plunge Tubing Event! January 28th 2:30 – 4:30 pm at Hidden Valley, 17409 Hidden Valley Dr. Wildwood MO. 63025. For 2 hours of tubing the discounted rate per person is \$17. You must be at least 42” tall and be able to sit upright on an inner tube buy yourself. RSVP to Pastor MP ASAP! We will meet at Hidden Valley BUT if you need to coordinate a ride for anyone please let Pastor MP know and we will make arrangements for transportation.



Saturday, January 13th 4:00 pm - 11:00 pm. Join us for food, fun, faith, and fellowship! Not sure exactly what this is going to look like but we will be going out to eat at Mi Lupita's for our meal and plan to have some fun games including hide and Seek 😊 Let Pastor MP know if you will be coming and please feel free to invite a friend!

MISSION AT ST. MARK

JANUARY FOOD PANTRY MOST WANTED

- Chili
- Spinach/Greens
- Beans
- Fruit
- Multi-purpose Cleaner*
- Dish Soap*



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.



COLLECTION WILL CONTINUE THROUGH END OF JANUARY

New and gently used clean winter coats and clothing are

needed for men, women, and kids, all sizes, and styles. Many people in our region lack enough warm clothing to stay protected throughout winter. Please place your donations in the foyer outside the church office.

EQUAL EXCHANGE / FAIRLY TRADED

January 14 in the Narthex

Through fair trade, small-scale farmers are better able to support their families and stay on their land with better income and support from their co-operatives. St. Mark supports this mission to build long-term trade partnerships that are economically just and environmentally sustainable, and to foster mutually beneficial relationships between small farmers and consumers (that's us!).
Credit and Debit cards accepted.



SAVE THE DATE! DISCOVER MISSION SUNDAY



February 11, 2024

WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

St. Mark Presbyterian Women invites you to join us for a time of learning about and tasting the foods of the *Feasts of the Bible* Wednesday, January 24, 2024 1:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. Reservations may be made at the PW Table in the Narthex. **This event is NOT for women only.**

27th Annual St. Mark Women's Retreat
Amazing Grace for a Woman's Heart
It is the Gift of God. Ephesians 2:8
February 9-10, 2024
Reverend MP Panco, Retreat Leader

Please join us as we grow in our understanding
of God's amazing grace!
Registration forms will be available
at the PW Table in the Narthex January 1.

Go Getters Luncheon
January 9 @ 12 pm

The luncheon will be held at
Spiro's Restaurant
1054 North Woods Mill Road
Please invite a friend and join us for food,
fun, and fellowship.
Please let Jan Graves or Judy Richardson
know of your plans to attend.

BOOK CLUB

Book club will meet Wednesday, January 24, at 9:30 am. The book for this month's discussion is *A Pearl in the Storm* by Tori Murden McClure. There is an option to participate virtually as well as in person. Please contact Judy Richardson for a Zoom invite to participate virtually.

TRIVIA NIGHT

SAVE THE DATE!
FEBRUARY 24, 2024

THE PROPERTY COMMITTEE IS SEEKING VOLUNTEERS!

St. Mark's Property Committee is actively seeking new members to help us with maintenance of the building, preschool and grounds! We need your time and talents.



Would you be interested in gardening, painting, electrical or minor construction?

Feel free to reach out to Keith Monteith, David Sutch, Mike Vroman, Jean Steward or any other Property Committee members to understand how you can help.



Grief is a journey we are never prepared to take. Have you lost a spouse, family member, or close friend? Are you finding it difficult to talk about your loss? Do you feel nobody understands? GriefShare is a place you can come with caring compassionate people to walk with you on your grief journey. Be with people who are experiencing similar feelings. Let us help you. GriefShare meets weekly for 13 weeks. It is very helpful, but not required to attend all the sessions. Our next session starts Tuesday February 13, 6:30 – 8:30 pm. The book fee is \$20. For information, contact Debbie Hames

WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH CLAYMONT PRESCHOOL

THANK YOU, ST. MARK!

This past month, a new playground was installed for our youngest preschool children! We are enjoying it immensely! We are so thankful to all of St. Mark, and the Endowment Committee, for supporting our children and school!



On our last day of school before winter break, 47 of our preschoolers performed at our annual Holiday Concert, to a full house of parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles. Two different age groups did a wonderful job of singing songs like “Frosty the Snowman”, “Little Snowflake”, “This Little Light of Mine” and 12 other songs! Special appreciation goes out to Latisha Gilliland for being our piano accompanist for our program!



CLAYMONT PRESCHOOL AT ST. MARK 2024-25 REGISTRATION

It's preschool registration time! Parents and grandparents of St. Mark preschool aged children are offered priority registration from Friday, January 12th to January 16th.

Claymont Preschool enjoys a wonderful reputation for excellent, caring teachers and Kindergarten readiness. Our reputation does cause some classes to fill quickly, so we hope St. Mark members will take advantage of this early registration period.

Our preschool here at St. Mark has classrooms for 3 different age groups: 2-year olds, 3-year olds, and Pre-Kindergarten children. Our school hours are 9:00 to 12:00 with an extended day option until 1:30 for the older children.

Community registration will begin Monday, January 22nd. If you have a neighbor with a preschool aged child, we hope you will pass our name along to them!

Please call or email Susan Talley at 636-386-5437 or STalley@DiscoverStMark.org for more information. Our registration form and other Missouri State required forms are available at DiscoverStMark.org.



JANUARY POTLUCK

The midweek potluck meal resumes on Wednesday, January 17 at 5pm. Bring your favorite potluck dish and join us for food, fellowship, and an informative program.



CHILI COOK OFF

The chili cook off will be Sunday, January 28th immediately following the 10 am church service. If you are interested in competing in the cook off:

1. Please sign up at the Welcome Center or send an email to Judy Richardson.
2. Prepare a crock pot of your famous chili for others to sample!
3. On the 28th please be at your table to give out sample sizes to the tasters and possibly with the "prized" trophy that has been handed down for several years. Please bring extension cords.

If you would like to be a taster just show up with a hankering for some chili! We will have lots of chili to sample, hot dogs, cookies and drinks for everyone! We will be voting with our dollar bills, so bring a few ones to cast your vote with. The chef with the most \$\$\$ in their container after the voting concludes will be the winner! The proceeds will go to Claymont Elementary to help pay school lunch accounts. Hope to see you at this event!

NURSERY WORKER POSITION

We are looking for energetic person or persons to provide childcare for children ages 2 months to 3 years on Sunday mornings from 8:30 – 11:15 am and Wednesday evenings from 6 – 8 pm. Please contact Latisha Gilliland for more information.

