



Issue: November 2024



A Monthly Insight into St. Mark Presbyterian Church

The Messenger

Think and Thank

With Halloween in the rearview mirror, we've once again arrived at the holiday season. The next two months are a time to reflect on our many blessings and look for ways to respond in gratitude. Did you know the words, "Thank" and "Think" hail from the same root, reminding us thanksgiving comes from thinking about our gifts. Helen Keller once said, "I have often thought it would be a blessing if every human being were stricken blind and deaf for a few days at some time during his early adult life. It would make him more appreciative of sight and the joys of sound."

It's easy to take everyday blessings for granted. Do we give thanks for our first breath in the morning? Do we rejoice in the gentle autumn breeze or the warm afternoon sun? Are we grateful for the routine calls from friends or the unexpected kindness from strangers? I will be honest, I don't think about this as much as I should. I hate to call myself thoughtless, but, upon reflection, this is how many of my hours

pass. My best moments occur when I slow down and take note of all the beauty around me. Taking time to think inevitably moves me from being thankless to thankful.

I understand there are times where thanksgiving comes easier, and there are seasons where it's hard to utter a single word of blessing. During these difficult periods, Scripture calls on us to remember God's faithfulness in the past and look forward to fulfillment of God's promise. The Apostle Paul reminds us, "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you" (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, NRSV.) When we take the time to think, we will begin to see our cup is once again running over.

As I think about everything going on at St. Mark, my heart grows with gratitude. I hope we continue to share our many blessings with a world so desperate for this good news. I am thank-FULL for all of you.

In Hope and Confidence,

Pastor Dave

SESSION SNIPPETS

October 21 Session Meeting:

St. Mark's calendar is very busy this time of the year—Discover Sunday, Fall Festival, Voting Site, GLPBY November 2 Gathering Hosts, Giving Thanks Dinner, and then all the holiday events. That takes everyone's efforts--lots of volunteers, and lots of participation. Our congregation is blessed.

On October 21, Session took the following actions:

- Approved Endowment Funds to replace/repair of 90 feet of the retaining wall opposite the kitchen and for the purchase of new technology equipment to assist with our live-streaming capabilities.
- Designated that the St. Mark portion of the offering taken during the GLPBY Worship go to the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance Fund.
- Discussed recent and upcoming various events, and the involvement and participation beyond St. Mark members.

OCTOBER WORSHIP ATTENDANCE

	Sunday In Person	Sunday Online	Total Attendance
October 6	140	79	219
October 13	129	85	214
October 20	165	71	236
October 27	131	75	206

DEACONS IN ACTION AT ST. MARK

The Communion Committee:

Since the decision was made to stop handing out "Communion Kits" at the door of the sanctuary on Communion Sundays, we are now "passing the trays." We chose gluten-free crackers so that we did not have to distinguish between parishioners. It allowed us to fully embrace everyone partaking of this solemn ritual. We were also concerned that some servers were having issues climbing and descending the chancel steps. By placing two tables in front of the steps, no one has to climb the stairs except the pastors. We have received positive feedback about the passing of the trays plan to continue it for the foreseeable future.



Stewardship season begins on Sunday, November 3 in worship. We will explore the story of Ruth and examine ways we can move **ONWARD** in faith, hope, and love. Please use this time to pray and consider what the LORD is calling you to give to support the congregation's mission in 2025. The church will receive financial pledges on Celebration Sunday, November 17. Thank you for your continued faithfulness!



St. Mark is gearing up for a Capital Campaign in 2025 and we want your input! What are the projects you would like the Capital Campaign Committee to explore? Use the QR Code above to complete a brief online survey.



YOU ARE INVITED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE CHRISTMAS CANTATA

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 Cantata will take place Sunday, December 15.

ADULT CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AT ST. MARK



Faithful Conversations in a Hot-Button World

Sunday Mornings at 8:50

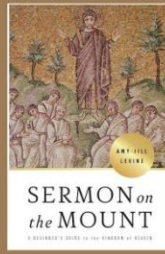



MEN'S BIBLE STUDY

St. Mark Men meet in Room 102 every Tuesday at 7:30 am. We are continuing study on "What's So Amazing About Grace" by Philip Yancy. All Men are welcome and can contact Bruce Cranston for more information.

Friday Morning Bible Study

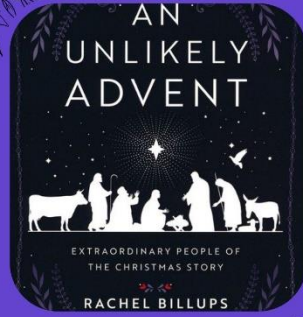
Starting September 20th
9:00am-10:00am
in room 102 @SMPC

Amy-Jill Levine

mpanco@discoverstmark.org

Friday morning Bible on "Sermon on the Mount" will conclude with our final two study dates November 1st and 8th from 9:00 am-10:00 am in room 102 @ St. Mark. If you want to get the book that would be helpful, but it is not necessary to attend the study. Questions should be directed to Pastor MP mpanco@discoverstmark.org.



Bible Study

Fr Fridays

9:00 am

Friday morning Advent Bible study 9:00 am-10:00 am four Fridays, November 22, December 6, 13, and 20 in room 102 @ St. Mark. We will be reading through "An Unlikely Advent" by Rachel Billups. If you want to get the book that would be helpful, but it is not necessary to attend the study. Questions should be directed to Pastor MP mpanco@discoverstmark.org.

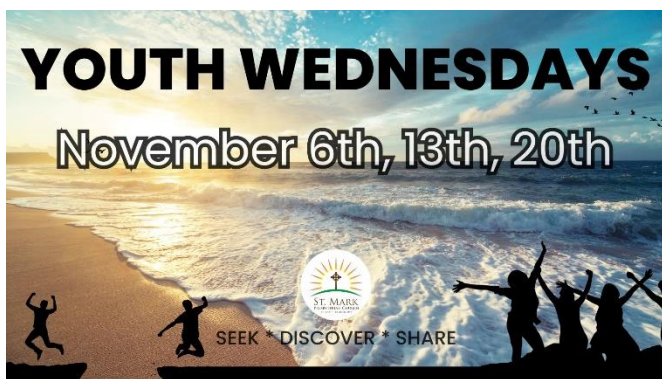
WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH YOUTH

Youth Music Ensemble

Upcoming Rehearsals 11:15-12:15
Oct. 6th, Nov. 3rd & 17th, Dec. 15th

Play at Santa BKFST December 14th
Play in worship December 22nd

Contact Pastor MP
mpanco@discoverstmark.org



Youth 6th grade -12th. Join us for food, fun, faith, and fellowship! If you have any questions, contact pastor MP mpanco@discoverstmark.org or call the church office.



Sunday December 15th. Garden Glow at the Botanical Gardens. We have a private fire pit reserved from 5 pm-7 pm and smore's and hot cocoa for everyone! Contact pastor MP with any questions and to get your tickets.

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.

WEDNESDAY EVENING ACTIVITIES

PreK Choir – 5:00 – 5:25 pm

Elementary Choir – 5:30 – 6:30 pm

FALL FESTIVAL 2024

The St. Mark Fall Festival was again a huge success! Over 350 hot dogs were grilled, cotton candy, snow cones, popcorn and a beer garden (root beer floats) were provided for enthusiastic St Mark members and the Claymont Community. All was possible because of approximately 80 volunteers, which included St.



Mark adults and youth as well as scouts, their leaders and parents. It was a wonderful Fall Festival!



Kids and Youth Christmas Program, 4:00pm

Join us on Sunday, at 4:00pm for the Children & Youth Christmas Celebration. We will kick off Advent with a special celebration of Jesus's birth, including a carol sing-along! Immediately following the show, please join us for the Jingle Mingle in the Narthex from 5 pm to 7pm.



Return once again to Candy Cane Lane and join the Merry Music Makers at St. Mark for breakfast with Santa on December 14, 9:30 – 11:30 am. Festivities include music from the St. Mark Youth Ensemble, Jingle Bell Sing along, crafts, cake walk, photo opportunities, & storytime with Santa at 10:30 am. The breakfast menu includes scrambled eggs, biscuits and gravy, sausage, pancakes, fruit, coffee, and hot chocolate. All are welcome!



EQUAL EXCHANGE – NOVEMBER 10 & AT THE PW BOUTIQUE

Equal Exchange's extra virgin olive oil is made from organic Nabali olives, an indigenous Palestinian variety that produces one of the highest quality oils in the world. Cold-pressed with a rich, peppery flavor, this olive oil can be used for cooking, baking, and dipping.

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!). Cash, Credit, Debit, Digital Wallet Payments Accepted.

MISSION AT ST. MARK

NOVEMBER FOOD PANTRY NEEDS

- Canned Pasta with Meat
- Canned Vegetables (no green beans please)
- Canned Chicken & Sardines
- Canned Fruit
- Shampoo and Deodorant*



All year long, we collect food and hygiene items for Circle of Concern and Isaiah 58 Ministries. Please place your donations on the mission table outside the church office.

*Non-food products such as shampoo and deodorant cannot be purchased with food stamps.



Many people in our region lack enough warm clothing to stay protected throughout winter.

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!



LET'S RECYCLE TOGETHER ... plastic caps and lids **STILL** wanted!

This summer, St. Mark donated another ADA picnic table to Mound Ridge made from the plastic lids you donated. Plastic in our world is not going away anytime soon, so let's keep it out of the landfill and turn it into something with another useful purpose! Please drop off your caps and lids in the collection bin near the Youth table in the Narthex.

Here are the types of lids we need to collect:

- in general: caps/lids from food grade containers and household items 8" in diameter or smaller
- snap-on lids from butter tubs, coffee cans, yogurt, cottage cheese, ice cream, whipped topping,
- small twist-off caps: medicine, soda, water, sports drinks, milk
- large twist-off caps: detergent caps, peanut butter
- flip-top caps: ketchup, condiments, dressing
- 6 pack beverage holders – the ones with the solid tops (not the old open ring design)
- to go container lids with recycle number of 2, 4, or 5
- other caps and lids with the recycle symbol and recycle number of 2, 4, or 5.



THE TRADITION CONTINUES ...

The Angel Tree will once again be making an appearance in the Narthex. Please select an angel or two to help provide a Merry Christmas for one or more children. This year, Children's Ministries has selected Isaiah 58 as the recipient, and they have provided a wish list for our

Angel Tree. Especially needed are gifts for teens. Please return your gift (\$20-25 range) and place it under the tree with the angel attached by December 15th.

HONORING FAMILY AND FRIENDS THROUGH ALTERNATIVE GIVING

Finding the perfect, meaningful gift for someone who has many wonderful possessions is a difficult task! With this in mind, the newly formed Mission Committee at St. Mark created "Christmas Alternatives" in 2001.



Purchasing a gift through Christmas Alternatives honors the recipient and will help lift a family out of poverty. That family will in turn help another community member. Every gift is another word in an ongoing story of hope that will help create a cycle of change for generations to come.

A copy of the "shopping list" is available in this month's Messenger and on the welcome desk. Displays will be in the Narthex on December 8, 15, & 22

WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED! How you can help with the Christmas Boutique and the Angel Street Café,

November 12 & 13!

*Make chicken salad, bean soup, or broccoli soup.

*Bake specialty desserts or bake a pie or cake for the dessert table.

*Create a yummy treat for the bake sale.

*Help with set up after church on Sunday, Nov. 10.

*Work a shift on Tuesday and/or Wednesday.

*Help with take down on Wednesday afternoon.

*Shop 'til you drop!

*Bring your friends to lunch!

*Come back for supper!



**Benefiting the USO
November 1-10**

THE ANNUAL USO HALLOWEEN CANDY DRIVE IS COMING!

Once again, St. Mark will collect leftover Halloween candy to give to our troops. All collected candy will go to the James S. McDonnell USO right here at Lambert Airport. The candy will be put to good use since the McDonnell USO is one of the busiest facilities in the world and they are especially busy with young troops, and their families, traveling during the holidays. The collection box will be in the office until Nov 9th. This is a great way to get that load of excess calories out of your pantry and give it to where it will be appreciated!

FELLOWSHIP NEEDS YOUR HELP!

In our continuing efforts to reach out and be a good neighbor in our community, we are planning to offer coffee and cookies to the voters waiting in line at the General Election on Tuesday, November 5. Would you be willing to help us in this endeavor by providing some cookies? A sign-up sheet for cookie donations will be at our coffee station over the next few weeks. For more information, please contact Lisa Marsh. Many thanks for helping us share some hospitality with one another and our community at large!!



The holidays are fast approaching. Are you dreading them because of the loss of a loved one? Do you need help surviving the holidays? Join us on Thursday, December 5th at 6:30 pm. This one-time event will help you find ways to navigate the holidays in a caring, supportive environment. For more information contact Debbie Hames.



Fall has arrived, there's a crispness in the morning air; the holiday season is upon us! The Fellowship Committee wants everyone to mark their calendars for St. Mark's annual **GIVING THANKS dinner on Sunday, November 24**, immediately after the worship service. Please join us as we all gather together to, share in fellowship, good conversation and laughter while enjoying a traditional Thanksgiving dinner with one another. We invite you to bring your favorite dessert to share...we'll take care of everything else!

Of course, as we reflect on all our blessings, we realize that many of our neighbors are not as fortunate. This year, we are seeking to stock the shelves at Circle of Concern and Isaiah 58 with items that are frequently asked for, but surprisingly rarely donated for holiday meals. The following list of items will give people the opportunity to select ingredients for them to make some of their most treasured dishes: canned yams/sweet potatoes, canned spinach, shortening, baking soda, baking powder, vanilla extract, chocolate chips, cooking/baking spices (chili powder, paprika, black pepper, garlic and onion powders, cinnamon), baking mixes (cookies, cakes, brownies, quick breads). All donations can be placed on the tables located in the lobby outside the church office.

PRAYER REQUESTS



Prayer request slips are available in the entry hall on the table by

the office door.

You can write a request anytime and leave it in the envelope provided or give it to office staff.

On Sunday mornings you can give it to an usher to give to one of the pastors or put it in the offering plate.

CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS



St Mark will continue our tradition of beautifying our sanctuary with poinsettias for our Sunday service on the 22nd and Christmas Eve service. We will begin taking orders on October 20th. Please consider ordering one or more to bring home to your family and friends. The poinsettias may be taken home after the Sunday service or after the Christmas Eve Service. 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 10th. The cost is \$7 per plant. Plants are sourced from a locally owned greenhouse. If you have questions, please contact Carolyn McBee.

GIDDINGS-LOVEJOY PRESBYTERY FALL GATHERING, NOVEMBER 2

St. Mark is hosting the November 2, 2024, Giddings-Lovejoy Presbytery Gathering. This is a special occasion for St. Mark as Rev. Dr. Dave Burgess will be installed as Presbytery Moderator for 2025, during the meeting, early afternoon. Everyone is welcome to attend, and it would be great to have a strong St. Mark presence.

THE NEXT GO GETTER LUNCHEON IS DECEMBER 10

Go Getters will not meet in November. The annual Christmas lunch will take place on December 10 at 12 pm at church. Please bring a gift (less than \$15) for the gift exchange.

*Dear St. Mark family,
The two words "thank you" are insufficient to express gratitude for the love, acts of care, and prayers for me and my family since the death of my daughter Susan Talley in a car accident May 7, 2024. Many of you have told me that you have no words to convey your sorrow. Yet grieving alongside you has been meaningful. We are doing this together by your just being part of my life.*

In the last Sunday service just before her death, Susan and her sister Sandra were there with me. I was the liturgist. In that role, Pastor Dave had asked me to share a few words of thanks about being a part of the St. Mark community. My remarks that day, May 5, ended:

I belong here, and I belong with all of you, no matter our points of view.

Thanks to God for giving St. Mark to me. Here I discover and strengthen who I am.

These words are even more true today. Thanks be to God.

*With gratitude,
Victoria Sherman*

Honoring Family and Friends Through Alternative Giving

Because we are blessed with many material possessions, when Christmas comes around, we encounter a huge challenge selecting gifts for family and friends. 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.

Thank you for your faithful support during the past 23 years (2001-2023)

Your generosity has transformed lives and had a lasting impact around the world!

Christmas Alternatives 2024 - Our 24th Year!

PLEASE COMPLETE THE INFORMATION BELOW

NAME: _____
ADDRESS: _____
CITY, STATE, ZIP: _____
PHONE: _____

St. Mark Member ? _____ YES _____ NO _____
If Yes, contributions will be included on your annual giving statement.
If No, would you like us to mail you a receipt ? _____ YES _____ NO _____

DEADLINE: December 24th, 2024

Please include payment with form.

Place in Mission Committee Mailbox in Church Office

-- or --

Mail to:

St. Mark Presbyterian Church
ATTN: Christmas Alternatives
601 Claymont Drive
Ballwin, MO 63011

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY
DATE SUBMITTED:
PAID?

Shopping List

2024 Christmas Alternatives

<i>Marion Medical Mission (Africa)</i>	Price	Qty	Total
Build a Well (\$475/well)	\$ 25.00		
	Total		

	Price	Qty	Total
Medical Benevolence Foundation			
Nursing school scholarships: Malawi, Haiti, DR Congo, Kenya	\$ 30.00		
Life Saver Clinics: DR Congo, Malawi, Kenya and Haiti	\$ 25.00		
Share for Greatest Needs (e.g., vaccinations, malaria nets)	\$ 15.00		
	Total		

<i>Presbyterian Childrens Homes and Services</i>	Price	Qty	Total
Support Farmington Service Center community, family, and youth therapeutic programs	\$ 50.00		
	Total		

<i>PCUSA International Food and Income Security Missions</i>	Price	Qty	Total
Farming Tools (ie. machetes, shovels, etc...)	\$ 10.00		
Family of Chickens (\$25/family)	\$ 25.00		
Share of Cow (\$450/dairy cow)	\$ 50.00		
Share of Goat (\$178/pair)	\$ 30.00		
Piglet (\$40/piglet)	\$ 40.00		
Share of Bee Hive (\$240/hive)	\$ 20.00		
Share of Moringa Seeds (food for humans - \$40/bag)	\$ 20.00		
Share of Rainwater Catchment (\$75/system)	\$ 25.00		
Share of Sewing Machine (\$50 each)	\$ 25.00		
	Total		

PCUSA Mission Co-Workers		Price	Qty	Total
Rev. Jed and Jenny Koball, Peru		\$ 50.00		
Chenoa Stock, Peru		\$ 50.00		
		Total		

<i>Rise Against Hunger</i>	Price	Qty	Total
Support annual meal packaging event at St. Mark (\$25 for 50 meals)	\$ 25.00		
	Total		

<i>General Gift to Christmas Alternatives</i>		Price	Qty	Total
St. Mark Mission Committee to Designate Recipients		\$ 50.00		
		Total		

SHOPPING LIST GRAND TOTAL		Total
Checks to: St. Mark Presbyterian Church Memo Line: Christmas Alternatives		\$