



Issue: October 2025



A Monthly Insight into St. Mark Presbyterian Church

# *The Messenger*

## **The Light of the World**



In Saint Paul's Cathedral in London hangs Holman Hunt's artistic masterpiece, "The Light of the World." It shows a run-down cottage with bushes and briars all around it. The walkway is covered with weeds and grass, and the door hinges are rusty. Standing at the door, Jesus holds a lantern in one hand which gives off light to every part of the picture. The other hand is knocking on the weathered door. Many people refer to the artwork as "Christ Waiting at the Door," or "Christ Knocking at the Door," but the artist himself named it, "The Light of the World."

After Hunt completed the painting, a discerning critic said to him, "Mr. Hunt, you made a mistake. There is no handle on the door!" The artist gently replied, "No, my friend, I didn't make a mistake for there *is* a handle. The handle is on the inside."

I recently preached a sermon titled, "Locked from the Inside." I argued most personal hells we experience stem from being shut off from our community and our Creator. The gates of Hades are not sealed from the outside, they are locked from the inside. The hells of selfishness, pride, and an unwillingness to accept or give forgiveness keep us in chains and stop up our ears. This is something everyone will struggle with at some time in their lives. Perhaps, you are going through something similar right now.

The good news is Christ stands outside our door knocking. He's not going away, and he's not going to stop. The door handle is on the inside; what are we going to do? The familiar comfortable misery wants to hold us back, but there is life and light just on the other side. "Listen! I am standing at the door, knocking; if you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to you and eat with you, and you with me" (Revelation 3:20, NRSV.) May our ears, hearts, and doors be open to this eternal invitation.

In Hope and Confidence,  
Pastor Dave

## SESSION SNIPPETS

September 15 Session Meeting:

The last St. Mark Mission Study is over 10 years old, and the Session is considering adopting a policy of updating it every 10 years to make sure our programs remain aligned with our mission.

The Boy Scout Mum Sale was a success, and the Session voted to allow it to be hosted at St. Mark annually.

The Membership Committee will host a Wednesday Pot Luck meal and program on October 15. The next pot luck will be hosted by the Finance Committee on January 21.

The new Mound Ridge Board has requested the use of St. Mark facilities to host a family-friendly Trivia Contest. Session approved the event for the afternoon of Saturday, November 8.

## PEACE AND GLOBAL WITNESS OFFERING

“A Season of Peace” begins September 7 and concludes October 5, World Communion Sunday. The Peace and Global Witness Offering (previously the Peacemaking Offering) will be collected during that time.

Whenever the church gathers for worship, we are assured of Christ’s peace. We celebrate that we are connected, we are loved, and we are not alone. Through participation in the Peace and Global Witness Offering, our congregation is extending Christ’s peace throughout our community and our world. Peace begins with each of us.

Our participation in the Peace and Global Witness Offering provides funds for peacemaking programs locally and in the wider world. Those programs range from working to eliminate all forms of human trafficking to supporting the work of a mission co-worker.

Twenty-five percent of the total St. Mark collects is retained for local use, which goes to the Presbyterian Children’s Home & Services and St. John’s Episcopal Church Peace Meal, served to all who come for Saturday dinner. Use the special envelope in your September packet or simply mark your check for the Peace and Global Witness Offering. Thank you for your generosity.

## SEPTEMBER WORSHIP ATTENDANCE

	Sunday In Person	Sunday Online	Total Attendance
September 7	122	80	202
September 14	93	68	161
September 21	142	67	209
September 28	158	52	210

## DEACONS IN ACTION AT ST. MARK

The Caregiving Committee oversees and cares for St. Mark members and friends in times of need and grief. Laurie Dolson started chairing this committee 4 years ago in September. The caregiving team reaches out to members in many ways:

- Sending cards to many homebound or ill members, as well as families with loss.
- Delivering various gifts to homebound members including flowering plants, mums, cookies and 24 advent bags.
- Offering refreshments for visitations and funerals.
- Preparing a “we care meal” and delivering to members twice a year as well as making/delivering desserts and plants to senior living residents.





**The Volunteer Accelerator  
Program is Coming Soon**

## ADULT CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AT ST. MARK

### FRIDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY

Starting Friday, October 3, 2025, the Friday Bible Study Group, led by Donna Schiro, will be changing their meeting time to 9:30 - 10:30 am (in Room 102 and via Zoom). On this date we will also begin a new 8-week study book called "Angels" by Vinita Hampton Wright. PLEASE JOIN US!

*"What - or who - are angels? Where did they come from, and what is their purpose? What is their relationship to us as human beings? This study will explore numerous Bible passages that reveal the services these heavenly beings perform, the part they play in spirituality, and how they differ from other beings in God's created order."*



**SUNDAYS AT 8:50 AM**

### MEN'S BIBLE STUDY

Men's Tuesday Bible Study is reading Max Lucado's book, "You Are Never Alone". It uses the Gospel of John as a source of God's active presence in our lives. All men are welcome to join us for Bible study every Tuesday morning at 7:30 am! If you have questions call or email Bruce Cranston.

## WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH YOUTH



Youth 6<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grade. Join us for food, fun, faith, and fellowship! If you have any questions, call the church office.



## WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

### CHILDREN'S SUNDAYSCHOOL

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.

### WEDNESDAY EVENING ACTIVITIES

Midweek Praise Club, 5:30 – 6:30 pm



Join us from 11:15 am – 1:30 pm for food, root beer garden, Good Turn Daily Band, bounce house, pumpkin decorating, balloon artists, and more!



## MISSION AT ST. MARK

### OCTOBER FOOD PANTRY CRITICAL NEEDS

- Pasta & Pasta Sauce
- Dinner Helpers & Canned Chicken
- Cereal/Oatmeal
- Snacks
- Canned Tomatoes



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 cannot be purchased with food stamps.

### EQUAL EXCHANGE

In the Narthex on October 12  
Hot Cocoa Season is Almost Here!



EE supports “regenerative” agriculture, a shift beyond sustainability or resilience: interconnecting a better quality of life with a healthy planet, rejecting massive profits and unfettered growth as the ultimate goals. Regenerative Ag emphasizes restoring ecosystems, building equitable systems, and fostering long-term well-being.

If you'd like to learn how you can be part of the Citizen-Community, check out EE resources or sign up to keep informed of webinars, events, etc. at <https://shop.equalexchange.coop/pages/join>  
Cash, Credit, Debit, Digital Wallet Payments Accepted.

### 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 Sunday, November 30th.

This year's annual luncheon in support of Presbyterian Children's Home and Services will be held on Wednesday, October 30th at the Sheraton Westport Chalet. If you'd like to attend with other St. Mark members, please contact Pam Ladley.

### WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

**GLPW Fall Gathering**  
**October 25, 2025**  
**9:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.**  
**at St. Mark**

St. Mark PW will host women from throughout the Giddings-Lovejoy Presbytery for the 2025 GLPW Fall Gathering on Saturday, October 25.

Pastor MP Panco is returning to be our keynote speaker as we focus on keeping our light burning brightly as we share the spirit and mission of Presbyterian Women. Indeed, it is the **Fire of our Foremothers** that we **pass on** in our daily lives. It will be a time to broaden our horizons about Presbyterian Women beyond St. Mark.

Since we are the hostesses for this event, we are seeking volunteers who will serve in a variety of ways. Please check the opportunities at the PW Table in the Narthex. We will need volunteers to help at the Gathering. We also need nut breads, coffee cakes, fruit etc. for the welcoming coffee time.

Plan now to take part in the Gathering! You can sign-up at the PW Table in the Narthex. The cost is \$15.00 which includes lunch and Gathering resources. Please sign-up by Sunday, October 12. You may also contact the Church Office, Judy Richardson or Mary Beth Powell for further information.

# BOOKCLUB

The Presbyterian Women's Book Club will meet on October 29 at 9:30 am to discuss "The Briar Club" by Kate Quinn. You may contact Judy Richardson for the option to meet virtually.



## ST. MARK BLOOD DRIVE

Please mark your calendar for the next Red Cross Blood drive being held on Sunday, October 26 from 8:30 am – 1:30 pm in Gleason Hall. Register at <https://www.redcrossblood.org/give.html/find-drive>. Enter code: Saintmarkpres.

**Save the Date!**

**St. Mark Presbyterian Women**

**Christmas Boutique**

Christmas Decorations and Ornaments  
Handmade Holiday Items Children's Items Jewelry  
Embroidered Items Original Artwork and Crafts  
Doll Clothes Floral Arrangements  
Herbal Products Personalized Items Jams & Jellies  
Fresh-Baked Delicacies Many More Unique Gift Ideas

**Angel Street Café**

Join us for lunch or dinner!  
Enjoy St. Mark's Famous Chicken Salad, homemade soups and heavenly cakes and pies.  
It's a great way to launch the holiday season with family and friends.

Tuesday - November 11, 2025 10:30 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.  
Wednesday, November 12, 2025 10:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

St. Mark Presbyterian Church 601 Claymont Drive Ballwin, MO 63011



## PIPES AND PIES

Fall has arrived, and that means our annual "Pipes and Pies" celebration is just

around the corner! On **Reformation Sunday, October 26**, the sanctuary will be filled with the sound of bagpipes as we celebrate the tradition and heritage that grounds our faith. It's also the time for us to celebrate Dave's anniversary with St. Mark with slices of pie! The Fellowship Committee invites you to join us by bringing in your favorite pies to share with one another after the worship service. It's sure to be a wonderful (and tasty) celebration for all!



## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED! How you can help with the Christmas Boutique and the Angel Street Café, November 11 & 12!

- \*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!





## SAVE THE DATE FOR GIVING THANKS MEAL!

Mark your calendars now! **St. Mark's annual GIVING THANKS dinner will be held on Sunday, November 23**, 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!!

As we enter into the busy holiday season, we often reflect on all the blessings that have been bestowed upon us, while realizing that many of our neighbors are in need. This year we are seeking items that are the most requested by, yet rarely donated, for holiday meals. The next time that you are at the grocery store, please consider helping Circle of Concern and Isaiah 58 stock their shelves with ingredients that their clients can use to cook and bake favorite recipes for their friends and families throughout the holidays so they can enjoy some of their most treasured treats. These items include **baking mixes (cookies cakes, brownies, quick breads), baking spices (cinnamon, ginger), baking powder, baking soda, chocolate chips, shortening, sugar, vanilla extract**. All donations can be placed on the tables located in the lobby outside the church office. Many, many thanks for your generosity and willingness to make the holiday season a little brighter for those less fortunate!



For more information about the Mound Ridge Trivia Night, scan the QR code.

