



Issue: November 2025



A Monthly Insight into St. Mark Presbyterian Church

The Messenger

From Your Transitional Parish Associate...

It's hard for me to believe that four months have passed since I accepted the position as Transitional Parish Associate here at St. Mark. Most of my time has been spent re-orienting myself to the internal workings of the church, its technology, and leadership. I am also teaching Friday Bible study and two PW Horizon Bible Studies, as well as assisting in Sunday services when possible. I am very grateful for the opportunity to make myself useful at St. Mark as we take steps towards finding a new Associate Pastor.

This is the season of thankfulness, after all, and I believe there's a beauty and a power to be able to express gratitude in our lives. Thankfulness should not just be a momentary feeling; it's should be a continuous attitude expressed through prayer, worship, and everyday interactions. When we genuinely reflect upon God's great gifts, our minds can shift away from negativity and discontent, leading us to an enriching, joy-filled existence. Whether in trials, in celebrations or in our daily routines, embracing gratitude equips us with powerful tools to be able to strengthen our faith and build bonds of love and positivity with those around us.

Especially in our church life, we can recognize how gratitude enhances our experiences and fosters a thriving community of support and encouragement. In sharing our thankfulness with one another, we can transform our faithful community into one that is even more loving and uplifting. One that demonstrates God's presence in so many ways. So, let's carry this spirit of gratitude into this month and beyond, letting our lives echo thanksgiving to God and those around us. I am thankful for all of you and how you have enriched my life.

Peace be with you, Donna

SESSION SNIPPETS

October 20 Session Meeting:

The Capital Campaign Update shows pledges have reached 96% of the target, and completed donations are over 40% of pledges. The next big project will be the Sanctuary lighting.

Training for new Deacons and Elders will be held in October and November.

Committees were asked to start putting together their budget requests for the Finance Committee to consider for the 2026 budget.

Thanks and great appreciation were expressed for the outstanding efforts of staff and volunteers to move the Fall Festival inside and provide a wonderful experience for the congregation and our neighbors.

OCTOBER WORSHIP ATTENDANCE

	Sunday In Person	Sunday Online	Total Attendance
October 5	137	90	227
October 12	120	62	182
October 19	144	65	209
October 26	122	77	199



YOU ARE INVITED TO JOIN THE PRAYER CIRCLE

The Prayer Circle would love to have you join them. We meet on Monday morning at 9:30 in Room 104. Meetings only last forty-five minutes to one hour. We pray for fellow members, our friends and situations near and around the world who need prayers. You don't have to pray out loud if that's not comfortable for you, just add your silent prayers to our spoken ones. Give it a try! Everyone is welcome! If you would like more information, contact Pat Marshall.



ADULT CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AT ST. MARK

FRIDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY

Join us for a study of the books called "Angels" by Vinita Hampton Wright.

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



SAVE THE DATE!

WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

CHILDREN'S SUNDAYSCHOOL

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

Midweek Praise Club, 5:30 – 6:30 pm

SUNDAY SCHOOL SIGN IN!

Use this QR code to sign in for Sunday School. Scan the code to access the attendance form and enter the required information. We ask that you have your student registered before Time With Children so that we can contact you via text in the event that you are needed.



THANK YOU TO ALL OF OUR VOLUNTEERS

A huge "thank you" to all our church family and friends who came out for Fall Festival! We so appreciate all of the volunteers and support we had from all of you who signed up to help set up, break down and be a part of the Festival itself. It was a great time of fellowship for our church and community! Thank you all so much – Latisha Gilliland and Children's Ministry Committee.

MISSION AT ST. MARK

NOVEMBER FOOD PANTRY

CRITICAL NEEDS

- Canned Chicken & Rice
- Coffee, Hot Chocolate
- Toothpaste
- Snacks
- Dish Soap



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 NOVEMBER 9 & AT THE PW CHRISTMAS BOUTIQUE

Kirsten from Equal Exchange followed up on questions from the chocolate tasting potluck:

1. What happens to the white pulp (mucilage) that surrounds the cacao bean?

The white mucilage is used up in the fermentation process. It surrounds the cacao, and its sugars are fermented by the natural yeasts and bacteria in the air to contribute to a high-quality cacao flavor. The mucilage slowly dries around the beans during the fermentation process and is completely dried in the drying process, so there is not any left over.

2. Who arranges the transportation of the cacao beans from the country where the beans are grown to Switzerland (for manufacturing)?

Equal Exchange and our cacao processing partner in Switzerland arrange for transporting the beans from the country of origin to Switzerland.

3. What are the timeframes for cacao beans to go through the fermentation and drying processes?

The fermentation process takes about 5 days. The drying process depends on the weather but generally takes about 5-7 days.

4. Who purchases EE products?

Churches of many different denominations and synagogues offer Equal Exchange products. Retailers that sell Equal Exchange products include natural food stores, food cooperatives, and family-owned stores.



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!

Dog and cat coats are appreciated. Most shelters don't allow animals, so let's give the furry family members some love and warmth, too.

Please place your donations in the bins in the office foyer.



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.

WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

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

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





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!



THE ANNUAL USO HALLOWEEN CANDY DRIVE IS UNDERWAY

Once again, leftover Halloween candy will be collected 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!



GIVING THANKS MEAL **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!



CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS

St. Mark will continue our tradition of beautifying our sanctuary with poinsettias for our Sunday service on the 21st and Christmas Eve service.



We will begin taking orders on October 19th. 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 16th. The cost is \$7 per plant. Plants are sourced from a locally owned greenhouse. If you have questions, please contact Mickey McKnight.



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, Tuesday December 2, that will try to help you find the tools to get through the holidays. Please join us. For more information contact Debbie Hames.



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 January 13, 6:00 – 8:00 pm. For information, contact Debbie Hames.