



Issue: May 2026



A Monthly Insight into St. Mark Presbyterian Church

The Messenger

A few weeks ago I proposed a new study to the Friday Bible Study class. But I made one big mistake in my introduction; I introduced it as a new PCUSA study on APATHY. No sooner did I say this than I looked around the room and people's mouths opened and their eyebrows rose. "I think you mean EMPATHY", one person said. Indeed I did! APATHY (lack of feeling or emotion, impassiveness, indifference) is not something a Christian should even consider, let alone do a Bible Study on!

EMPATHY is one of the most sacred yet often overlooked expressions of faith. It is more than kindness, more than sympathy—it is the deliberate act of entering into another person's experience, seeing the world through their eyes, and allowing their joys and sorrows to touch our own hearts. In a world that moves quickly and judges easily, empathy slows us down and calls us to something deeper, something holier.

At its core, empathy reflects the very nature of divine love. Throughout scripture, we see a God who does not remain distant from human suffering but instead draws near. God hears the cries of the oppressed, walks alongside the brokenhearted, and responds not with indifference but with compassion. This divine pattern sets the standard for how we are meant to live with one another.

In religious communities, empathy is essential. Without it, faith can become rigid, judgmental, and disconnected from real human experience. But with empathy, faith becomes

alive and transformative. It builds bridges where there were once walls. It fosters unity where there was division. It reminds us that we are not isolated individuals, but members of one body, deeply connected and interdependent.

Empathy also challenges us. It is not always comfortable to sit with another's pain or to confront perspectives different from our own. It stretches us beyond our preferences and pushes us toward compassion even when it is inconvenient. Yet this stretching is part of spiritual growth. It shapes our hearts to be more patient, more gracious, and more reflective of divine love.

Ultimately, empathy calls us to remember a simple truth: every person we encounter is worthy of dignity, understanding, and care. When we choose empathy, we honor that truth. We become instruments of peace in a fractured world, which we really could use right now.

Please consider joining the Friday morning Bible study for its next session. The new study "On the road to empathy" <https://pres-outlook.org/product/fresh-outlook-bible-studies-on-the-road-to-empathy/> will begin Friday, May 29 at 9:30am in Room 102 or via Zoom (contact dschiro@discoverstmark for the link).

Let us not lean towards apathy, because to live with empathy is to live faithfully. It is to walk in step with a love that does not turn away, but leans in—again and again—until healing and understanding can begin.

-Donna Schiro, Parish Associate

SESSION SNIPPETS

April 20 Session Meeting:

Pastor Dave gave the Session homework to look at the St. Mark web presence with “new eyes”, the way a visitor might see it. We are asked to come back with suggestions for improvements that would help make the information more accessible and useful.

The new lighting should be ready to start installation in mid-May, and is projected to be complete well before VBS. The next major Capital Campaign project will be the coffee bar and ADA bathroom, which will be scheduled after VBS and ABC Sale.

Session approved the proposal to hire Emily Ulmer as the new Director of the Pre-School, welcomes her that job full time starting 1 June.

APRIL WORSHIP ATTENDANCE

	Sunday In Person	Sunday Online	Total Attendance
April 2 Maundy Th.	142	134	276
April 3 Good Friday	43	25	68
April 5	250	112	362
April 12	133	90	223
April 19	130	107	237
April 26	132	68	200

NOMINATING COMMITTEE SEEKING CANDIDATES

The Nominating Committee is seeking candidates for the next class of Elders, Deacons, Endowment, and next year's Nominating Committee. Forms are available at the welcome desk or by using the QR code. Please prayerfully consider and suggest candidates for leadership as St. Mark continues to fulfill its Mission in the future.



WELCOME TO EMILY ULMER, CPSM DIRECTOR BEGINNING JUNE 1

I am thrilled to serve as the new Claymont Preschool Director at St. Mark. I have worked the past 9 years as a lead teacher in the 2-year-old preschool classroom at Chesterfield Presbyterian Church Preschool, where I am a member. I have a Master of Education (Curriculum and Instruction) and Bachelor of Science in Education (Early Childhood & Elementary Education) from the University of Missouri-Columbia. I began my career as a first and second grade teacher before staying home to raise my four children in their younger years. My husband, Travis, and I live in the Claymont neighborhood with our four children – Owen (a graduating senior who is going to Mizzou next fall), Molly (junior), Jack (7th) and Lucy (6th), all at Parkway West. I know so many people who have loved Claymont Preschool, and I understand the powerful impact it has made on the lives of staff and families for generations. I am grateful for this privilege and look forward to meeting more of the St. Mark family!

UPDATE MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Here is your chance to update YOUR record for our annual Guide Book & Directory. Have you changed your phone number? Have you moved? Are you preparing to move soon? Are all of your children still at home and are they all included in your membership record? Do you want your record published? If you have not already informed the Church Office about changes to your record, please let us know now so that the information in the Guide Book & Directory is correct. Please email your changes to Patty at the Church Office pgingrich@discoverstmark.org or call the church office.

ADULT CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AT ST. MARK



SUNDAYS AT 8:50 AM

MEN'S BIBLE STUDY

Men's Bible Study will begin a new study exploring the Holy Spirit. We will be using *The Promise of The Holy Spirit* by Paul Barius. We meet in rm 102 every Tuesday at 7:30. All are welcome!

FRIDAY BIBLE STUDY

Every Friday at 9:30am in Room 102 or via Zoom.

We will conclude our study by Adam Hamilton titled "Why did Jesus have to die?" on Friday, May 8. The next week (May 15) we will relax a bit and play Bible Trivia! We're all going to bring white elephant gifts from home to use for prizes. We will not meet on May 22 because of the holiday weekend. We will begin a new study about Christian Empathy on May 29. No book purchase required. Plan now to join us for our Summer Session!

WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH YOUTH



Join us Sunday May 24th to celebrate and recognize graduating high school and college seniors! All graduates will receive a Bible as a gift from the St. Mark family as they venture on to the next step of their journeys. If you have a child that is graduating, please contact the church office to ensure that we recognize all of our seniors.

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.



THE CHILDREN'S GARDEN PLANTING PARTY

is on May 6 at 5 pm!

Everyone and anyone is invited to join us – just bring your own favorite drive-thru meal and a couple of plants. We'll do

the rest! Join us as we celebrate Springtime at St. Mark!



**Online registration is open!
Go to discoverstmark.org to register!**



Here's a great visual of our VBS egg carton igloo! One of the VBS fun activities will be building this egg carton igloo – please donate all of your egg cartons (it doesn't matter what material or color). If you can, please take off any labels. This is a

great way to recycle as the Easter egg coloring comes closer. Please leave cartons in the Narthex under the Children and Youth table.



**MEAL PACKING
EVENT – JUNE 20
AT 10 AM**

Let's fight hunger together. Individuals, families, kids, everyone can do this. Can't stand long or need to sit? There is a place for you! Over the last 3 years we have packaged 15,000 nutritious meals each year. This year our stretch goal is to package 17,000 meals and we can do it with your help. Donate for meals delivered where they are most needed. Each meal cost about 45 cents each, you can donate \$50 and pay for over 100 meals!



Sign up to volunteer or donate using the QR code. Your support is greatly appreciated.

MISSION AT ST. MARK DAY FOOD PANTRY CRITICAL NEEDS

- Canned chicken
 - Rice
 - Sugar, 1lb bags
 - Toothpaste
 - Laundry Detergent, no larger than 50 oz.
- We collect food and hygiene items for Circle of Concern & 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 & FAIRLY TRADED

In the Narthex on May 10

Several Equal Exchange products can be used in baking treats for your mother this Mother's Day. Visit our table and stock up! All products are fair trade and organic, supporting regenerative agriculture and small farmers. Thank you for your support.

Cash, Credit, Debit, Mobile Payments Accepted

WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

BOOK CLUB

The Presbyterian Women's Book Club will meet May 27 to discuss the book, ***The Book Club for Troublesome Women*** by Marie Bostwick. There is a virtual option for meeting as well. Please contact Judy Richardson for more information.

NEWBORNS IN NEED



In March, PW collected newborn clothing, blankets, diapers, and hygiene products to donate to NIN. The collection is valued at \$1,400. Thank you for your generous contributions.

Pictured above are crocheted and knitted hats and blankets plus cotton receiving blankets and quilts. Below are pictures of diapers, hygiene products, and clothing. NIN provides for the needs of premature and newborn babies who are sick or in crisis within the St. Louis area. Contact Shirley Boeker if any questions.

Go Getter Luncheon May 12 at 12 pm

Join us for Lunch at Spiro's!

Please let Judy know of your plans to attend and bring a friend!



Circle of Concern Golf Tournament May 18, 2026



Spots are still available!

Email circle@circleofconcern.org for more information!

Nothing is black and white in this world!

Blue and white? That's another story!

Come hear this story and explore the vision for the St. Mark Fall Mission trip!

You are invited for just desserts at 6:30 pm on Tuesday, May 19, in Room 102!




Adult Mission Trip
October 12-16, 2026
The DAC at Ferncliff
Disaster Assistance Center
Near Little Rock

Before PDA can act on this mission, there must be **preparation!** This is the **mission** of our St. Mark Fall work trip to the Disaster Assistance Center at Ferncliff near Little Rock, Arkansas.



Mark your calendars! **Sunday, May 17**, our St. Mark community will be worshipping outdoors at Wildwood Community Park, with our annual PICNIC occurring right after the service. We'll provide the hot dogs, brats, burgers and drinks, and we invite you to bring your favorite side dishes and desserts to share with one another. **Because there won't be electrical outlets available, please refrain from bringing anything that needs to be heated up.** It's been quite some time since we've held a worship service or picnic offsite, and we look forward to this opportunity for faith, fun and fellowship with one another!



Meet Us on the Playground

*In Memory of
Susan Talley*

**Thursday,
May 7, 6:00
– 7:00 pm**

Please join us for a joyful community

gathering to remember our dear friend, Susan. This is a family friendly get together to visit and play in one of Susan's happy places – the preschool playground. Children are welcome to bring bikes and scooters to decorate. All are welcome.