



Issue: August 2026



A Monthly Insight into St. Mark Presbyterian Church

The Messenger



Hope in the Middle

Several years ago, during a family dinner, one of our daughters lamented we were a museum family. It was an odd statement to make, but there is a lot of truth in these words. We don't plan our vacations around weeks at the beach or days at the amusement park. If there is something to learn, we seek it

out. This is why I was excited when our son, Samuel, asked if we could do a father-son Civil War trip this summer. I immediately started planning our journey with stops in Mississippi, Georgia, and Tennessee.

We went to several visitor centers, watched countless videos, and strolled through many museums, but the highlight of each stop was touring the battlefields. While the whole trip was amazing, one spot continues to hold my attention. During our drive around the Vicksburg National Military Park, we saw countless state monuments dedicated to soldiers who fought on both sides of Civil War. On one side, there are memorials to states like Illinois, Iowa, and Michigan. On the opposing side, there are sites for Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas, and many others. It is truly something to behold.

In the middle of the park, between the Union and Confederacy memorials, there is one monument that

stands tall and honors soldiers from Missouri. It is the only place in the park remembering the dead who fought on both sides of America's bloodiest war. On the center pylon, a winged figure named, the "Spirit of the Republic" stands. On her left, there is a relief of the Missouri Union soldiers attacking, and, on her right, there are Show Me State Confederate defenders. It displays, in incredible detail, what it means for brothers to fight brothers.

I think there is good news at this place where so many bad things happened. I believe it has much to say to all of us during this contentious time in our nation. There are countless forces trying to confuse, fracture, and divide. These entities profit by stoking fear and hatred. I know you feel it too; how can you not? The quest to divide is as old as human history, and, as the Good Book says, "There is nothing new under the sun" (Ecclesiastes 1:9.)

So, where do we go from here? What is the faithful way forward as Christians? The answer the Apostle Paul delivered 2,000 years ago is still true today. "Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them.... 'if your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to drink, for by doing this you will heap burning coals on their heads.' Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good" (Romans 12:14, 20-21.) There is always hope out there, but it's best found in the middle.

In Hope and Confidence,

Pastor Dave

SESSION SNIPPETS

The Session did not meet in July.

JULY WORSHIP ATTENDANCE

	Sunday In Person	Sunday Online	Total Attendance
July 5	81	199	280
July 12	125	77	202
July 19	135	84	219
July 26	131	112	243

ADULT CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AT ST. MARK



SUNDAYS AT 8:50 AM

FRIDAY BIBLE STUDY

The Friday Bible Study group led by Donna Schiro, Parish Associate, will begin a new study by David Helm called "Daniel - Staying Strong in a Hostile World". This new study will begin on Friday, August 7, at 9:30 am in Room 102, or via Zoom. This will be a great time to join the group! This seven-week study will teach us that how Daniel lived and what Daniel saw speaks to us still today. How much can we expect from this life? How can we have the courage to remain faithful in our world today? Come hear the answers to these questions and more!

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.

THANK YOU TO OUR VBS VOLUNTEERS

We want to extend our highest praise to God once again for such a successful Vacation Bible School and for providing volunteers before, during and after Snowball Mountain Challenge! We had 122 registrants, 20 youth volunteers (see picture) and 40+ adult volunteers. We ask that you continue to pray that the seeds that were sown during our week together would take root and grow in the hearts of all who participated in this event. Thank you!



MISSION AT ST. MARK

AUGUST FOOD PANTRY CRITICAL NEEDS

- Pasta sauce
- Canned chicken
- Canned corn & mixed vegetables
- Boxed potatoes & rice
- Baby wipes



All year 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.



THANK YOU, ST. MARK!

The 2026 Rise Against Hunger food packaging event was a huge success thanks to your generosity. We packaged over 22,200 meals, an increase of nearly 50%! Your financial contributions and the volunteering of your time and hard work made this a tremendous success, bringing together our congregation and community. Thank you again St. Mark, and we look forward to the 2027 Rise Against Hunger event!

Sincerely,

Your Rise Against Hunger Team



EQUAL EXCHANGE IN THE NARTHEX ON AUGUST 9

Cash, Credit, Debit, Mobile Payments Accepted.

WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

BOOK CLUB

Presbyterian Women's Book Club will meet August 26 to discuss the book, **Code Name Helene** by **Ariel Lawhon**. There is a virtual option for meeting as well. Please contact Judy Richardson for more information.

SEAMSTRESSES NEEDED!

Fabric school bags and school supplies will be collected and donated to the Ferncliff Conference, Camp, and Disaster Center in October. Volunteers are needed to sew fabric school bags. Kits for the school bags are on the PWV table. As of July, 61 bags are completed! For more information, contact Shirley Boeker.



WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH CLAYMONT PRESCHOOL



Summer has been a lot of fun at Claymont Preschool at St. Mark! We enjoyed three fun-filled weeks in June of summer preschool where the children played outside, made messy crafts, had read aloud visits from the St. Louis County librarian, and enjoyed time with

their preschool friends.

We are still actively enrolling for the upcoming school year and are excited to welcome many new families to our preschool for the new school year. We can't wait to have the children back in the building for the 2026-2027 school year starting on August 31!



FIRST AID CLASS WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 12 AT 9 AM

This free Stop the Bleed and CPR training is organized by Claymont Preschool at St. Mark and open to members of the congregation. The class will be held in rooms 17, 18, and 19 and will last approximately 45 minutes. Please contact Emily Ulmer @ preschooldirector@discoverstmark.org for more information.

2ND ANNUAL
MOUND RIDGE
TRIVIA?
Night!
SATURDAY 9/26/26
ST. MARK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
601 Claymont Dr, Ballwin, MO 63011
DOORS OPEN AT 3:00 PM
TRIVIA 4-7 PM
Family-friendly
CHILDREN WELCOME
REGISTER HERE!

Light refreshments PROVIDED
Outside food and drink welcome. (no alcohol)
Bring your KNOWLEDGE, FRIENDS & TEAM SPIRIT!