



Issue: September 2026



A Monthly Insight into St. Mark Presbyterian Church

The Messenger

Celebrating the Third Place

Growing up, my family had one color television with five broadcast stations. We either watched a program together, or we went outside to play. I cannot count the number of screens we have currently in our home. There are multiple televisions, cellphones, tablets, laptops, and other smart devices. We're surrounded by screens, but we're less connected than ever. When I arrived at St. Mark in 2017, I saw the potential and possibilities of (re)creating a "Village Green" in the center of Claymont.

The sociologist, Ray Oldenburg coined the phrase, "The Third Place" in his 1989 book, The Great Good Place. He argues there are three places vital for everyone to live a healthy and balanced life. The first is the home, the second is work, and the third is someplace else where folks find and build community. These spots are neutral ground for all people to come and go as they please. They are accessible and welcoming to both long-time regulars and first-time visitors. These places allow for free conversation and deeper connections. Oldenburg argues these places have largely disappeared over the past 75 years with the suburban spread and the rise of technology. People have a deep emotional and spiritual hunger for these kinds of communities.

For centuries, the local church served as the third place for many Americans. Often, they were centered in the middle of neighborhoods. In this way, St. Mark is a throwback to a different age. Our church's location is our biggest challenge, and it is also our greatest opportunity. While we are hidden in the middle of Claymont neighborhood, we shine forth as a very neighborly congregation.

The third place is on my mind for two reasons. First, we are nearing the completion of the third stage of our UPWARD capital campaign. Soon, we will have a brand-new single use ADA accessible bathroom available for anyone who needs it. There will also be a coffee bar for members and guests to gather, converse, and connect. Second, we will have our annual Discover Sunday on September 13. This is more than an activity fair or a rally day event. It's an opportunity to learn about the many ministries St. Mark supports and find ways to get further involved. Moreover, it's an excellent time to invite a friend, neighbor, or family member to discover ways to connect. In a disjointed world, let us work to reclaim this third place for ourselves and others.

In Hope and Confidence,

Pastor Dave

SESSION SNIPPETS

August 17 Session Meeting:

- The Capital Campaign update celebrated that the first two phases of work – the roof repairs and the Narthex/Sanctuary lighting - have been completed under budget. The third phase – ADA restroom and coffee bar – has started, earlier than scheduled.
- Mound Ridge has been working on a strategic plan, and was able to host one week of summer camp, with St. Mark as one of the sponsors.
- Discover Sunday will be held in the Narthex 13 September.
- A Membership Exploration class will start on 20 September.
- It's almost Fall, so Pot Luck Wednesdays are back, starting September 16, then October 21.

*I'd like to thank everyone for the many prayers, get well cards and calls I've received as I've dealt with health issues over the past year. It truly made a difference to know how much people cared and were concerned about me and were praying for my recovery. Thank you all,
Dale Weir*

DEACONS IN ACTION

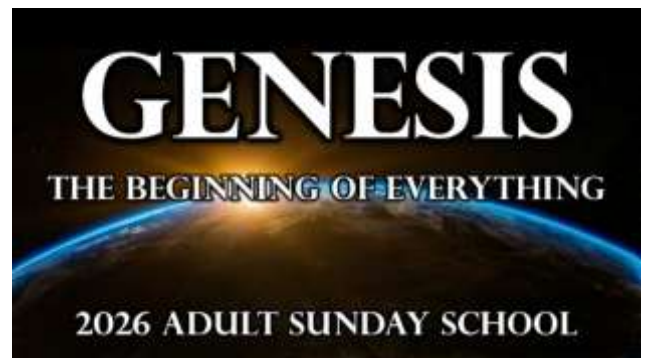
It is easy to see Deacons and other members of St. Mark in action. In the last few months many have participated in Rise Against Hunger, ABC Sale, Bible Study, VBS just to name a few. So many volunteers help to keep all the programs going. All of these activities taking place, while St. Mark was getting a makeover! The new lights are amazing and bring new energy, the roof keeps us dry and the handicap accessible restroom lets everyone feel welcome.

Thank you to everyone for making St. Mark a great place to be.

AUGUST WORSHIP ATTENDANCE

	Sunday In Person	Sunday Online	Total Attendance
Aug 2	122	79	201
Aug 9	117	70	187
Aug 16	118	109	227
Aug 23	140	94	234
Aug 30	114	93	207

ADULT CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AT ST. MARK



FRIDAY BIBLE STUDY

The Friday Bible Study group led by Donna Schiro, Parish Associate, is using a study by David Helm called "Daniel - Staying Strong in a Hostile World". The Bible study will temporarily meet at 9:30 am in rooms 17, 18, 19 in the lower level, or via Zoom. 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!



MEN'S BIBLE STUDY

We have a New Year and a New Book coming for Men's Tuesday Bible Study. We will use NT Wright's, Mark for Everyone. It uses the Gospel of Mark as a source of God's active presence in our lives. We will start our study beginning September 15th at 7:30am. All men are welcome! You can purchase the book on Amazon. If you have questions call or email Bruce Cranston.

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.



KID WEDNESDAYS AT ST MARK!

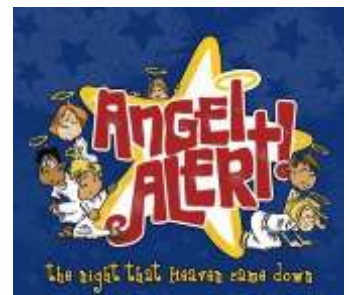
Coming September 9th! You're invited to our Kick-off party for **ALL IN** with DUDE PERFECT!

Help kids move from hearing about faith to

living it. From Abraham to Timothy, every week combines Bible-centered teaching with Dude Perfect energy—helping kids trust God, follow Jesus, and discover what it means to go all in for (5 weeks), Wednesday, September 9th through October 14th.

THEN.....! Beginning on Wednesday, October 28 through December 2nd we will rehearse for our Christmas

Program based on the Celeste Clydesdale musical **ANGEL ALERT!** This will be a Children/Youth Christmas program with choir, bells, narration, youth orchestra and instrumental music all centered around the manger. Our presentation will be held on Sunday, December 6th at 4:00 p.m. followed by a "cookies & punch" reception!



Both of these excellent programs are available for K-5th graders. Friends and neighbors are welcome! We will provide pizza every Weds. at 5pm for a cost of \$5/student – Wednesday activity night runs from 5:30pm – 6:30pm in the Fellowship Hall (room 211 – Preschool entrance).



MISSION AT ST. MARK EQUAL EXCHANGE IN THE NARTHEX ON SEPTEMBER 13

Cash, Credit, Debit, Mobile Payments Accepted.

Spotlight on Walnuts:

NEW! These wholesome walnuts are delicious, organic, and raw—great for snacking and baking! They are harvested from Burroughs Family Farms, a certified Regenerative Organic and fifth generation family farm located in the northern San Joaquin Valley. These walnuts are cultivated with care to nourish both people and the planet, using organic farming practices to ensure healthy soils, thriving ecosystems, and nutrient-dense food. *Cash, Credit, Debit, Mobile Payments Accepted*



Please note that price on coffee has increased due to impacts from tariffs, increased shipping costs, increased input costs (like fertilizers), and increased climate-related problems—like rains and droughts—during times that, for generations in these farming communities, have not been the norm. Thank you for your continued support.

SEPTEMBER FOOD PANTRY CRITICAL NEEDS

- Sardines,
- Chili
- Cooking Oil, 48 oz or less
- Shampoo, razors, shaving cream
- Laundry detergent, 50 oz or less



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 for your donations of school supplies.

St. Mark collected 269 boxes of colored pencils as the mission project during VBS. Isaiah 58 received 150 boxes; PCHAS received 53; and the remaining 66 boxes may be donated to Ferncliff Conference Camp. General school supplies were also collected and donated to PCHAS with Pam Ladley as the St. Mark liaison. You all rock!!!



WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN



PW is collecting for Newborns in Need during the month of September.

Newborns In Need is a charity that specializes in the needs of babies facing health or economic crisis in St. Louis. It is a local and national nonprofit organization.

New and gently used baby items such as bibs, booties, burp cloths, hats, onesies, socks, sweaters, and undershirts, sleepers, blankets, baby wash, wipes and diapers are accepted and may be placed in the playpen by the PW table.

Monetary donations are greatly appreciated. Make checks out to Newborns In Need and ask for a tax receipt. Mail to: **Newborns In Need** c/o Judy Giovanoni, 310 Oxford Ridge Ct., Ellisville, MO 63021. For more information, call Shirley Boeker.

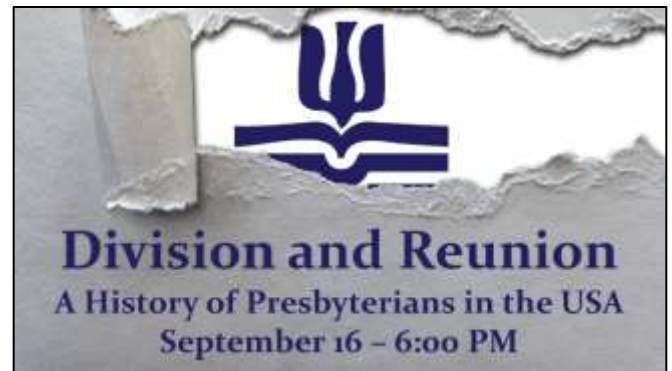


BOOK CLUB

Presbyterian Women's Book Club will meet September 23 to select books for the coming year. Please come with your suggestions. There is a virtual option for meeting as well. Please contact Judy Richardson for more information.



Practice is on Wednesdays at 7 pm!



PCHAS ANNUAL LUNCHEON – October 22nd -- Please join us for this year's Annual Luncheon! This year's annual luncheon in support of Presbyterian Children's Home and Services will be held on Thursday, October 22nd from 12 – 1pm at the Sheraton Westport Chalet. If you'd like to attend with other St. Mark members, please contact Pam Ladley. We'd love to see you there!





LOCATION OF **PORTABLE & STATIONARY FIRST AID KITS** **STATIONARY FIRST AID KITS***

- 1st Floor: Across from Room 102; Above AED Box
- 1st Floor: Office Annex Work Room 115; On wall near door to Main Office
- 1st Floor: Nursery Room 301; On wall above left side of sink
- Basement: Above water fountain

PORTABLE FIRST AID KITS

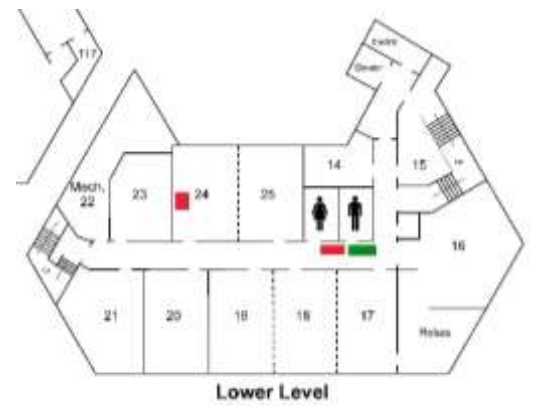
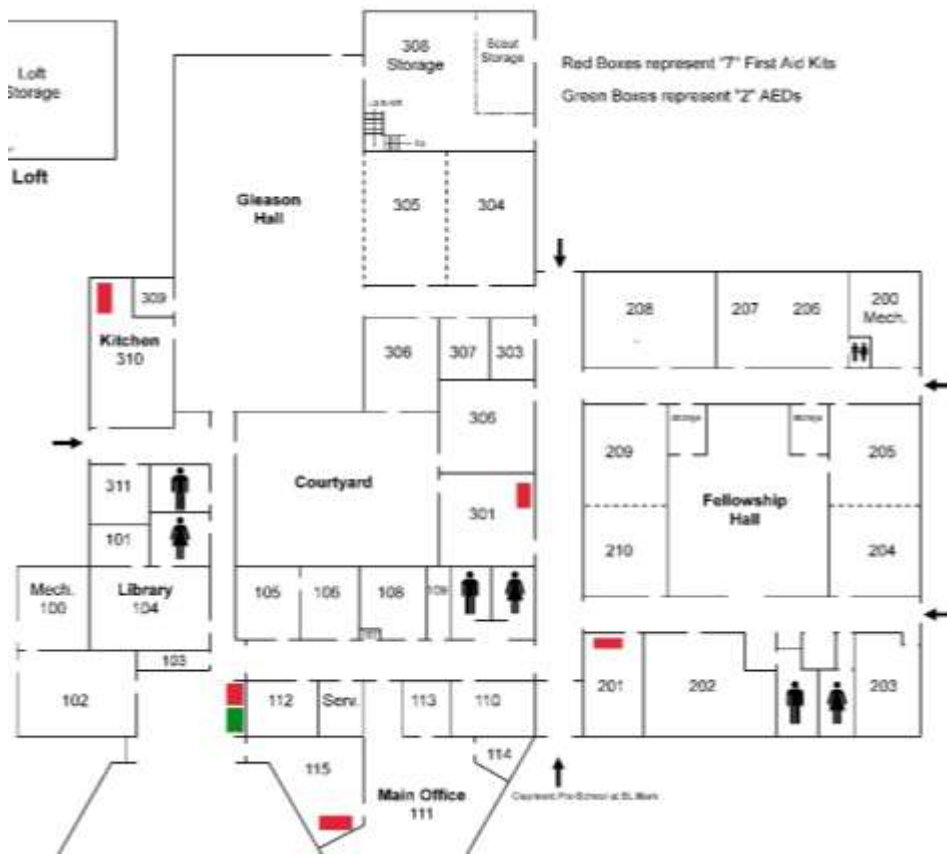
- 1st Floor: Room 201; Director – Christian Education office
- 1st Floor: Room 310 Kitchen; On shelf above back sinks
- Basement: Rooms 24-25 Youth Lounge; On shelf at left side of room

Each kit contains supplies the church needs for most common first aid emergencies. Our list of supplies follows the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) for “Class A Category First Aid Kits”. More information can be found at ansi.org. **If you find that one of our First Aid Kits needs supplies or an item has reached its expiration date, please inform the Church Office of its location and need.**

***See maps on next page.**

AED ACCESS AT ST. MARK

There are two AEDs (Automated External Defibrillator) machines here at the church that can be accessed in the event of a cardiac emergency. There is one located in the lower level on the wall across from room 17. The AED on the main level is temporarily located in the office on the bookshelf. It will remain there throughout the construction of the ADA bathroom and coffee bar.



St. Mark Presbyterian Church
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