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Issue: November 2026

A Monthly Insight into St. Mark Presbyterian Church

The Messenger

Remember. Recognize. Respond.

We live in anxious times. Recent mental health polls point out that around two in five Americans say they feel more anxiety than they did the previous years. The American Psychological Association reports approximately 75% of us view stress as an unavoidable part of life. There are a number of reasons given, but experts point to economic pressures, political division, and digital connectivity as driving factors.

November is the beginning of the holiday season, but it contains its own unique stressors. The month begins with midterm elections and concludes with the Christmas buying frenzy. There will be plenty of triggers along the way.

While there is no antidote to cure this worry completely, there are things that help to alleviate it. Going on daily walks, spending time with friends, and getting a healthy amount of sleep all contribute to feeling a greater sense of contentment. The Pew Research Center highlights one other helpful practice. Actively religious Americans (defined as those who attend services at least once a month) consistently report higher levels of happiness and lower daily stress than "inactive" believers or the religiously unaffiliated.

We will wrap up our yearlong journey through the Heidelberg Catechism with several weeks studying "The Lord's Prayer." We can pray it anytime, but many of us only think to speak it on Sunday mornings. This is one of my favorite parts of the service as each of us recites these holy words together. A beautiful cadence fills the sanctuary as we lift our hearts in unison.

Coming together, gathering around the Word, and praying this prayer puts us into a right frame of mind and softens our hearts. It helps us to **remember** and give thanks for God's faithfulness in our lives and congregation. It pushes us to **recognize** the gifts, people, and ordinary moments we sometimes overlook. It compels us to **respond** as we turn our gratitude into acts of generosity, hospitality, justice, and service.

St. Mark's CREDO is SEEK. DISCOVER. SHARE. For the month of November, I would like us to focus on **REMEMBERING. RECOGNIZING. RESPONDING.** I believe this will provide hope in these anxious times.

In Hope and Confidence,

Pastor Dave

SESSION SNIPPETS

October 4 Session Meeting:

- Session reviewed the last few steps needed to finish Phase 3 of the Capital Improvement Project, including installation of the faucet in the ADA restroom.
- The revised Personnel Policy Manual, with updated staff job descriptions, was approved.
- The Finance Committee has sent budget worksheets to Committee chairs, and needs input back before the end of November.
- The Property Committee is working numerous issues, assessing the scope and budget needed to repair various parts of the roof, and several sewage issues. They have decided to postpone planned sewer repairs until more information can be gathered, and to use available 2026 budget to replace HVAC systems serving the lower level.
- The Claymont neighborhood Pet Waste Station at St. Mark has been installed.

OCTOBER WORSHIP ATTENDANCE

	Sunday In Person	Sunday Online	Total Attendance
October 4	124	97	221
October 11	148	100	248
October 18	156	108	264
October 25	178	100	278



STEWARDSHIP 2027

DEACONS IN ACTION

The Worship Committee consists of 4 groups of helpers to organize the sign-up sheets and to help St. Mark runs smoothly.

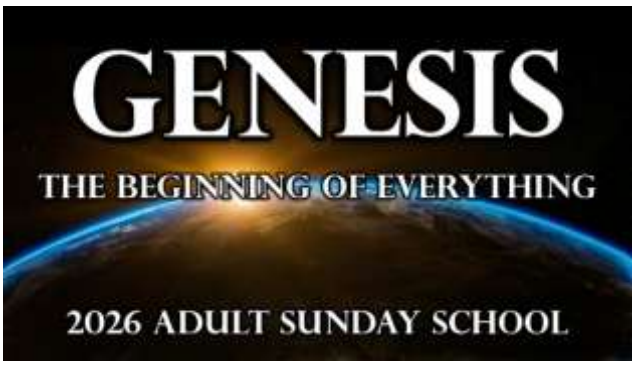
The Communion Group sets up Communion trays with the elements and passes the trays in the pews during the service. Gluten free elements are used for Communion. St. Mark celebrates Communion on the first Sunday of each month.

The Greeter Group organizes the sign up sheet for volunteers who stand at the Narthex doors greeting people and making them feel welcome.

The Sanctuary Group decorates the Sanctuary for Easter and Christmas. They also refill the pages in the Friendship pads in the pews.

The Ushers Group hands out bulletins and welcomes us before the worship service begins They work in teams. There is a need for more usher volunteers. Please contact Roy McBee if you would like to join an usher team.

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 is in room 102, 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 are reading NT Wright's, Mark for Everyone. It uses the Gospel of Mark as a source of God's active presence in our lives. We meet every Tuesday 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 YOUTH



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!

Wednesday night activities for grades K – 5th will meet once a month from 5:30 – 6:30 pm. Students will enjoy games and activities based on "Family Night Tool Chest – Christian Character Qualities" on the following dates: November 18, and December 2.



Come join us on Candy Cane Lane as we journey to the North Pole for breakfast with Santa and his friends on Saturday, December 12 from 9:30 – 11:00 am. Breakfast includes pancakes, scrambled eggs, fruit, juice, coffee and hot chocolate. There will be activities, games, and of course, a story and visit with Santa!

MISSION AT ST. MARK



PCHAS ANNUAL LUNCHEON –

Twenty-one St. Mark Members Attended!!! Thank you for your support!



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. Dog and cat coats are appreciated, too.

Please place donations on the mission table. Isaiah 58 will receive our donations.

APPRECIATION DAY AT LAFAYETTE INDUSTRIES

Lafayette Industries is celebrating 50 years!

Lafayette Industries invites its volunteers to an Appreciation Day on November 13th from 9:00-11:00 with an open house that includes tours and refreshments. Use the QR code to register.



Thank you for your continued support for Equal Exchange. St. Mark was again recognized as a Top 100 Customer in the U.S.



EQUAL EXCHANGE IN THE NARTHEX ON NOVEMBER 8 & CHRISTMAS BOUTIQUE ON NOVEMBER 10

Chocolate is back! Shop our replenished stock of chocolate bars, chocolate chips, and cocoa.

Please note that prices have 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.
Cash, Credit, Debit, Mobile Payments Accepted.

NOVEMBER FOOD PANTRY CRITICAL NEEDS

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

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.



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. The gifts donated will go to Isaiah 58 Ministries. Please return your gift and place it under the tree with the angel attached by December 9.

WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

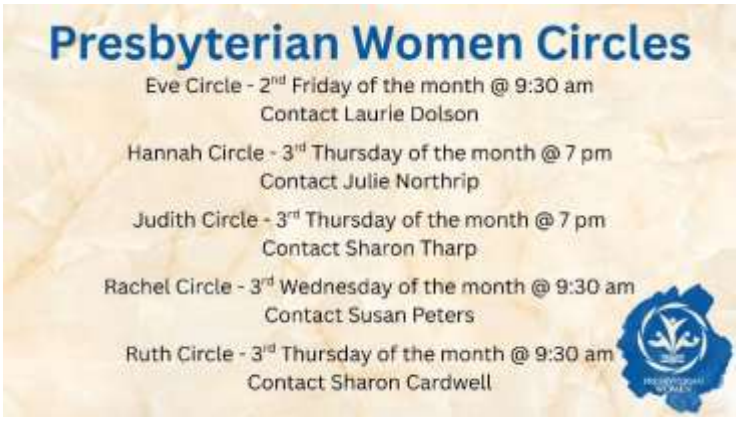




VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

How you can help with the Christmas Boutique and the Angel Street Café, November 10 & 11!

*Make chicken salad, bean soup, or broccoli soup.
*Bake specialty desserts or bake a pie of 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!





YOU ARE INVITED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE CHRISTMAS CANTATA

You are invited to join the choir in preparing for this year's Christmas Cantata. The choir will rehearse Cantata music Wednesdays at 7pm. The Cantata will take place Sunday, December 13.

POT LUCK AND PROGRAM

Wednesday, November 18. The potluck begins at 5 pm and the program begins at 6 pm.





GIVING THANKS MEAL

Our annual Giving Thanks dinner will be held right after the worship service on **Sunday, November 22**. The Fellowship Committee will provide "all the fixings" for a traditional Thanksgiving dinner, including turkey, dressing, green bean casserole, sweet potato casserole, mashed potatoes and a salad. All we ask is that you bring in a dessert to share with one another!

During this season when we take a moment to reflect on all our blessings, we ask that you would consider helping our neighbors in need by donating to Circle of Concern and Isiah 58. We will have an extra table in the Narthex on Giving Thanks Sunday where you can drop off one or more food items that are in critical need. These include: cereals, dinner helpers (Hamburger Helper, Tuna Helper, etc), pasta, pasta sauce and personal care items. Of course, many people have baking traditions during the holiday season, so donations of sugar, flour, baking soda and powder, chocolate chips, and other baking supplies would also be greatly appreciated. Many thanks for all of your generosity throughout the entire year!

MUSIC APPRECIATION SUNDAY



On **Sunday, December 13,** immediately after the Christmas Cantata and worship service, we will celebrate Music Appreciation Sunday**.** We're asking the congregation to bring in their favorite Christmas cookies or treats to share with one another as we take this opportunity to say thank you to everyone who participates in the music program throughout the year, whether it's singing in the choir, playing bells, playing instruments, or providing special music in the summer. We hope you will join us as we celebrate our musicians!



CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS

St. Mark will continue our tradition of beautifying our sanctuary with poinsettias for our Sunday service on December 20 and the Christmas Eve services. Please consider ordering one or more to bring home to your family and friends. The poinsettias may be taken home after the service on the 20th 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 29. he 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, Thursday, November 12, that will try to help you find the tools to get through the holidays. Please join us. For more information contact Debbie Hames.



In an effort to recognize and support those who are experiencing grief and loss during the holiday season, St. Mark gathers for a worship service that provides a contemplative experience that leaves room for finding hope and healing in the Christmas story. Worshippers will be asked to fill out a paper slip with the name of the loved one they are remembering when they arrive. The slips will be gathered and read during worship. As loved one's names are read out loud, candles are lit in their honor. At the conclusion of the service, everyone will receive a small keepsake in remembrance of this experience. If you have any questions, please contact Donna Schiro dschiro@discoverstmark.org.