Lent Begins on Ash Wednesday, March 1

This year, it’s easy to remember when Lent begins – Wednesday, March 1st. Lent is the 40 days (not counting Sundays) leading up to Easter, which is Sunday, April 16. Lent gives us the chance to be part of worship, prayer, studies and service that prepare our hearts to receive the joy of Easter. Our focus this Lent is “Healing Stories.”

Ash Wednesday, March 1 – Healing Stories begins
- 6:00-9:00 a.m. - Our Sanctuary will be open if you would like to receive ashes and a blessing from Pastor Sharon.
- 6:30 p.m. - Worship in the Sanctuary with music, ashes and Holy Communion.

Sundays during Lent, beginning March 5 - Some of the Healing Stories in the Gospels will form our messages during Lent as we continue Good News for Today’s World.

Soul Station during Lent – on Wednesday evenings, beginning March 8, join us for a meal at 5:45 p.m., followed by a study of The Shack by William P. Young.

Studies during Lent – in addition to the studies at Soul Station, opportunities to study Restored…Finding Redemption in our Mess by Rev. Tom Berlin, will be offered at various times. (see info on pg. 3 in this Messenger.)

Easter event for children of all ages – Saturday, April 8. (More info to come.)

Palm and Passion Sunday, April 9 – A cantata offered by our choirs at 8:15 & 9:45 a.m.

For more information, contact the church office at 520-297-2062 or visit our website at umcstmarks.org

The Shack is coming to St. Mark’s - Join the Discussion!

Based on the New York Times bestselling novel with over 20 million copies sold nationwide, THE SHACK, will debut in theaters nationwide on March 3, starring Academy Award winner Octavia Spencer (The Help, Hidden Figures), Sam Worthington (Avatar, Hacksaw Ridge) and the country music sensation Tim McGraw, and is produced by Gil Netter (Life of Pi, The Blindside). THE SHACK brings the abstract of the divine into a vivid experience that is moving, enlightening and inspirational!

We’d like to invite you to share in that experience. St. Mark’s will host a private showing at the Century Theatre at Oro Valley Marketplace on March 7 at 6:30 p.m. We have 90 free tickets for that showing. (Limit 4 per family unit.) This is a great way to invite a friend to a church event. If you’d like to make a donation of $6 to help cover the cost, that’s appreciated, but not required. Tickets will be available in the courtyard between services on Feb. 26 and March 5. Childcare will be provided by reservation.
Calendar Notes

UMW Card Recyclers will not meet this Thursday, Feb. 23. They will resume on Thursday, March 9 at 12:30 p.m. in Rm. 17/18.

The annual Youth Parking Lot Sale will be held this Saturday, Feb. 25 at 7:00 a.m. Donations will be accepted on Friday, Feb. 24, during office hours of 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Prayer Shawl ministry will meet this Saturday, Feb. 25 at 10:00 a.m. in Rm. 17/18.

The Masterpiece Festival Committee will meet this Saturday, Feb. 25 at 10:00 a.m. in Rm. 20.

Open Doors will meet this Sunday, Feb. 26 at 12:30 p.m. in the Conf. Rm.

Dear Church Family...

Thank you for all the prayers, cards, calls, and loving concern while I have been so ill. Without you I would not be improving. My health situation, though not solved, is improving and I will be back in church soon. Until then, please be assured that I appreciate your friendship and all your efforts. Love and blessings.

Ellen Beene

Thank you, St. Mark’s Family, for all the cards and prayers you sent while I went through knee-replacement surgery. I felt surrounded by your love and care, and the beautiful prayer shawl; thanks to the ladies who create these comforting pieces of ministry! A special thanks to the pastors. I’m recovering and grateful to be part of this church family.

Maryann Nuckolls

I marvel at the awesomeness of my God and of my church family and friends I have made here. You all have helped me and continue to do so in many ways. Thank you!

Susan Schaefer

I wish to thank all of you for your prayers, cards, and encouragement during my recent surgery. My special thanks to Pastor Sharon for the prayer shawl and her praying with us the day of surgery. Blessings.

Cara Zermuehlen

Thank you so much for your 2016 contributions. Your congregation’s support is critical to TIHAN’s work in helping people with HIV to live well.

Tom Muller, TIHAN Board of Directors

Thank you again for your tremendous support of Nash Elementary, it is truly appreciated by all of us here and especially the students. I am overwhelmed by your generosity of books for our library, the students love reading and are always thrilled to have new books to read. So thank you, thank you, thank you! Peace be with you,

Jenni Pavelic, Library Assistant

Birthday Gift

Your generous contributions to the Caring for our Campus—A Birthday Gift of Thanks totaled $40,235.

Thanks to all who answered this call!
Lenten Book Study, *Restored: Finding Redemption in Our Mess*

Often we make a mess of our lives and wonder if there is any redemption. In this book, pastor and author Tom Berlin helps us see our mess through the eyes of Christ to find redemption and restoration. Using Scripture, devotional tools, and the writings of Ignatius of Loyola, John of the Cross, St. Augustine, John Wesley, Evelyn Underhill, and others, Berlin encourages reflection and meditation through our own brokenness. Only then can we focus on the cross as the place where we truly surrender control, leave our mess, and find redemption.

This is a six-week book study. Lent begins on March 1. Books will be available between services on Feb. 26 for $10. An e-book is also available. Check the Adult Spiritual Growth board, or online, to see if any additional classes are offered and to sign up.

**Wednesday Morning Bible Study** – Wednesdays from 10:00 – 11:30 a.m. in the Library, facilitated by Marcia Rostad.

**Sharing/Family Life Class** – Sundays from 9:45 – 10:45 a.m. in Room 17, facilitated by Rick Farnsworth, Terry Majewski, and Joyce Hardage.

**Sunday Mornings** from 11:15 a.m. – 12:15 p.m. in the Library, facilitated by Rev. Judy Boroto. Rev. Boroto is a retired United Methodist minister.

**Monday mornings** from 10:30 – 11:30 a.m. upstairs at Mountain View Retirement Village, across the street. (No need to register.) Facilitated by Marge Sogn.

**Monday evenings** at 6:30 p.m. at the Barnes & Noble Coffee House near Ina and LaCholla. Facilitated by Rev. Judy Boroto.

**Restored: Finding Redemption in Our Mess** Twitter Class

Need a tweet-ment this Lenten season? Sign up for our new *Restored* Twitter class. You can meet with your study group without leaving your house. Put the kids to bed, put your jammies on, and go to class. Gena McGill, our facilitator, has been involved in Twitter classes for a few years. She loves them. She will open the class at a specific time on Thursday nights, tweet a question based on the chapter you read that week, and the class members will respond in 140 characters or less. After five minutes or so, she will ask a new question. And just like an “in person” class, if the conversation wanders, Gena will get us back on topic.

What happens if you miss a class? Unlike an “in person” class, all your classmates’ tweets are still there, so you can go back later and read what you missed.

**Handy Hands Update (no project is too small)**

It’s been 15 months since we implemented St. Mark’s Handy Hands Ministry. Our Handy Hands volunteers have completed 220 projects for 100 of those attending St Mark’s. Projects ranged from sticking locks and doors, furnace filters, light bulbs, dripping faucets, hanging pictures, etc.

**How safe is your bathroom?** Just a reminder that falls are the leading cause of home injury. Every year, one in every three Americans 65-and-older suffers a fall that often leads to moderate or severe injuries. Over 95% of hip fractures are caused by falls. Please let us install grab bars in your bathroom and bathtub. As always, we only charge for the parts we use, never the labor.

If you have a problem around your house you’d like to have help in resolving, please fill out the service request form in the back of the church pew, and place it in the collection plate or return it to the church office. Or email maryannbrewer50@gmail.com.

**A Request for Fabric**

HeartWorks Sewing Ministry makes bags for Child Protective Services and is in need of donations of fabric. Washable fabrics which will accommodate dimensions of 23”x33” bags are requested. Contact Gale Wenger with questions (575-8038).
Christian Believers Book Study - Friday, February 24th

Join us at 9:30 a.m., in the Library, to discuss *The Faith Club: A Muslim, a Christian, a Jew; Three Women Searching for Understanding* by Idliby, Oliver and Warner. The study is open to everybody, we just ask that you have read the book and are willing to share your thoughts about it.

Facilitated by Susan Gerstad and Sherri Lennarson. Register at the Adult Spiritual Growth board or online at www.umcstmarks.org. The book is available at local and online bookstores. If you need childcare, contact Greg (greg@umcstmarks.org) and we will try to arrange it.

*The Faith Club* is a groundbreaking book about Americans searching for faith and mutual respect. It weaves the story of three women, their three religions, and their urgent quest to understand one another. A memoir of spiritual reflections in three voices, *The Faith Club* has spawned interfaith discussion groups in churches, temples, mosques, and other community settings. It will make you feel as if you are eavesdropping on the authors’ private thoughts, provocative discussions, and often-controversial opinions and conclusions.

As the authors reveal their deepest beliefs, you watch the blossoming of a profound interfaith friendship and the birth of a new way of relating to others. Pioneering, timely, deeply thoughtful, and full of hope, *The Faith Club*’s caring message will resonate with people of all faiths.

Other books to be studied the last Friday of each month in the church Library at 9:30 a.m. are:

- **March 31, 2017**  
  *Listening Hearts: Discerning Call in Community* by Farnham, Gill, McLean, Ward

- **April 28, 2017**  
  *God was in this Place & I, I did not know* by Rabbi Lawrence Kushner

- **May 26, 2017**  
  *Why Did Jesus, Moses, the Buddha & Mohammed Cross the Road?* by Brian McLaren

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**Last Chance to Claim Lost and Found**

Are you missing a piece of jewelry, a set of keys, a jacket or water bottle (and other items)? Our Lost and Found box has gotten quite full. Please check in the box under the table in the office workroom for your lost items on Sunday mornings or during office hours of 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., Mon. - Fri. (Jewelry items are locked away and will need to be claimed during office hours.) Items not claimed by March 1 will be donated to local thrift shops supported by our church.

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**Calling Golfers**

Swinging@AIDS is a golf tournament and related benefit concert raising funds for the programs and services of TIHAN as well as the Children of Africa Hope Mission School in Kenya. The March 24 benefit concert will feature Diane Van Duerzen, Lisa Otey, Kelly Triplett, and MORE. The March 25 Swinging@AIDS Golf Tournament and Silent Auction will be held at The Views Golf Course (an 18-hole, desert-inspired championship golf course with breathtaking views in a picture perfect setting in Oro Valley). There will be a 50/50 drawing, as well. For more information about all these great ways to have fun while supporting people with HIV both locally and globally, contact Linda Girard. Tickets will be available in the courtyard this Sunday, Feb. 26.

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**The 2017 schedule for altar flowers is now available in the narthex. (Look for Volunteer Opportunities.)**
Now Hiring: Paid Children’s Ministry Assistant Needed

Our Wednesday evening children’s program during Soul Station is in need of an assistant. Join Julie Eblen and work with our elementary and preschool children while the adults are having their program. The time with the children is from 6:20 – 7:05 p.m. The children’s program includes a lesson, crafts, games, or other activities. This is a paid position. Contact Greg for more information (greg@umcstmarks.org or 297-2062). Soul Station starts with a light meal at 5:45 p.m. before the program, and you are welcome to come to that.

Save These Dates...

Youth on Their Own (YOTO) is changing their spring fundraiser from Talk of the Town to a celebration of the student heroes at a luncheon on Thursday, March 30th. It will be an opportunity for those who care about YOTO to gather to learn about the program, hear some incredible stories, and to be inspired by the youth and their stories of success. The “Hope” luncheon is affordable at $35.00, and will be held at the Tucson Marriott University Park (880 E. 2nd St.). Registration starts at 11:30 a.m. - lunch at Noon. Buy tickets online at www.yoto.org or call 520-293-1136. The funds raised will help the homeless youth stay in school and graduate high school. You will be inspired!

The Desert Southwest Conference United Methodist Women’s Spiritual Growth Retreat will be held at Redemptorist Renewal Center, Tucson (Picture Rocks area) from Friday afternoon through Sunday, noon, April 28 - 30. Pastor Tammy Hallam will be the retreat leader. More information and registration forms will be available soon.

Vacation Bible School Hero Central: Discover Your Strength in God! June 5-9. We will have lots of kids, so we will need lots of volunteers. Maybe you’ll even get to wear a cape!
Joy of the Redeemed

Coming home from a long day, it was all I could do just to talk with Jack as we sat in front of the fire. At one point, I breathed in deeply and let out a big sigh and Jack asked, “What was that sigh for?” To sigh: to emit a long, deep, audible breath expressing sadness, relief or tiredness.

Hmmm, let me see. Was it the myriad of emails, phone calls, challenging and sad situations, deadlines, appointments (and many good things) or the ever growing to do list. Or was it the call from my daughter to tell me what her oncologist had said. Or was it the worries about my sister’s health or thinking about certain relationships that I hoped would be healed. Was it my back pain that was reminding me of an old injury that kept me from sleeping, or the sadness in seeing how people sometimes treat each other… (insert your list here). All I could say to Jack was, “I’m just tired.” If I would have had the energy, I would have said, “I’m tired, tired of seeing everything so broken.”

I read about King David’s sighs in Scripture, and then I don’t feel so alone. As he vents to God about all the brokenness around him, we hear him turn his heart to the only One he knows who not only hears him but has promised to redeem that brokenness. You know what I long for Lord, you hear my every sigh… I wait for you; you will answer. Psalm 38:9

As we walk this journey of Lent, no doubt we will first be reminded of our own brokenness as we feel the ashen cross painted across our forehead, and then we will look up and see the same written on the foreheads of our brothers and sisters. And we will sigh. Yet, things are not as they seem. Because we know what is coming as we get closer to the cross. Yes, things will get worse before they get better, but our Redeemer has promised us that he is working to bring life where we only see broken.

In Isaiah 35, we read of the Joy of the Redeemed. That is us. And His promise? ....He will come to save you… Gladness and joy will overtake you and sorrow and sighing will flee away. So when you sigh, know that He hears your every sigh, and during this Lenten journey, bring your broken to Him and wait for His answer. Jesus is your Redeemer, He will answer you.

Peace,
Pastor T

**Sunday Morning Volunteer Opportunity**

Are you looking for a simple way to become involved as a volunteer at St. Marks? Please consider being a greeter at the Red Umbrella before any one of our three Sunday morning services. Volunteers are especially needed prior to The Gathering. It only takes a small amount of your time on a Sunday morning. A big smile and a warm handshake are the biggest job requirements! Your service extends hospitality in a special way to new comers and regular attenders. Every three months, an email is sent out showing the upcoming dates and times that need to be covered. The cart at the Red Umbrella includes a notebook filled with all the information you need to assist people. If you are interested in this important but very simple volunteer job, please email Carol Fouch (carafouch@gmail.com) Thanks and blessings for considering this way to share your time and talents!
60th Anniversary
CELEBRATION!

Tickets
Purchase tickets March 5 & 12, in the courtyard between services or church office for adults & children 13 years or older.

* RSVP for all kids 12 and under.

Menu
BBQ pork or chicken sandwich, chips, baked beans, coleslaw, ice tea, lemonade, dessert.

Gluten-free or vegetarian options available.

Music
Grace Multiplied

Your’re invited to a BBQ with all the Fixin’s

Honoring
St. Mark’s UMC 60th Anniversary

WEST PATIO
Saturday, March 18
3:30 pm to 6:00 pm
Please Keep These People In Your Prayers...

In hospital:
Darrel Frazer

In rehab or care facilities:
Than Brademas, Donald Chester, Caroline Demee, Patricia Keele, Lloyd Mattson, Marla Mutschler, Sue Robinson, Howard Russell, Jim Ward, Yvonne Yare

Undergoing treatment at home:
Jude Anderson, Ellen Beene, Michael Campbell, Judy Drescher, Bill Duryee, Tiffany Guerette, Rich Heilman, Megan Krzmarzick, Karen Linebarier, Dell Long, Judy Mitzimberg, Jim Neessen, Bob Ross, Connie White

Recovering at home:
Kelly Deyoe, Ron Hill, Marjie Hrabe, Susan Kelley, Maryann Nuckolls

Loved Ones In the Military...

Hank Bautzmann, son of Nancy Bautzmann
Jon Chytka, nephew of Roger and Donna Severson
Zachary Dojaquez, grandson of Roger and Donna Severson
Brandonn Eto, close friend of Zirnheld/Compernolle family
Rob Eubank, son of David and Johanna Eubank
Mike Freeman, son of Ken and Ann Freeman
Patrick Harris, grandson of Marilyn Vaughn
Greg Haynes, son of Bob and Melinda Haynes
Matthew Hughey, son of Juliee and Billy Morrison and grandson of Joyce Flick
Rachel Kester, daughter of Don and Ruth Kester
Adam Laurie, son of Ingrid Christensen
Chad Long, grandson of Pat Long
Mark Joseph Maver, son of Seymour and Marcia Maver
Joshua Miller, grandson of Ginny Johnson

Jake Newton, son of Robert and Cheri Newton
John O’Regan, husband of Ashley O’Regan and grandson-in-law of Janet Krug
Brian Osborn, pastor in the Desert Southwest Conference
William Putt, son of Harold and Susan Putt
Joshua Ruth, son-in-law of Marjie Walp
Adam Seia, son of David and Vonda Seia
Jason Smith, grandson of Jerry and Judy Smith
Alex Snow, brother of Shelley Shelton
Clint Staschke, son-in-law of Cliff and June Young
Michael and Karisa Szczegiel, daughter and son-in-law of Joyce Flick
Timothy Trexler, great-nephew of Gail Blevins
Bianna Walker, granddaughter of Barbara Bradenburgh; niece of John Bradenburgh
Jeff Welsh, grandson of Roger and Donna Severson

We Offer Our Christian Love and Sympathy To...

♥ Barbara Witwer and family, upon the recent death of her father.
♥ Joyce Flick and family, upon the recent death of her father.

Volunteers are needed to provide a meal for 60 - 70 people on Wed. Nights

If your group or family is interested in participating in this meal prior to Soul Station, funds are available. Clara Campbell will assist with set up and can answer any of your questions regarding menus and budget. Sign up in the narthex on Sundays on the volunteer board, or contact the church office (297-2062 or info@umcstmarks.org).

The ECC Rummage Sale made a total of $2,600! Thanks to all who donated. We will be using the money towards playground improvements, including new turf in the toddler area.

ECC News

St. Mark's ECC and Mrs. Simmons' class would like to thank Phyllis Dirksen for her most generous donation of six tablets for use in the Kindergarten classroom. The tablets will enhance our reading and math curriculum. Thank you Phyllis!

St. Mark's Early Childhood Center

7 St. Mark’s Messenger
February 21, 2017
Reflections

State of the Church – Part 3 – 2/21/17

“How is our church doing?” “What plans does St. Mark’s have for the future?” In these articles in the first quarter of 2017, I’m addressing these questions. In January, I shared about how we did in 2016, and on 2/7, I talked about our 2017 budget, our main priority, and new leadership. Today, I’m going to outline some of our plans for 2017.

As our church’s main decision-making body, the Covenant Council spent the first part of 2016 prayerfully considering “what’s next” for St. Mark’s. We wanted to continue doing well, so wanted to faithfully follow God into our future. We talked and prayerfully asked, “what things, if we did them, would have the most impact on addressing our priority of reaching new people? Two main emphases emerged to address the “what’s next” question.

Enhancing worship: Our worship is already welcoming and joyful, draws us into Scripture, and sends us to serve as Christ’s disciples in the world. With “what’s next,” we’re hiring a part-time Music Ministries Coordinator to assist us with our music ministries and worship, and lead us into the future. We’re also exploring “other” worship – taking St. Mark’s into the community with worship at other locations. A small group attended a workshop in the fall, and led by me, is beginning to explore a multi-site option for our church, replicating the good work of St. Mark’s in another location in Tucson (not yet identified). If you’d like to be part of that group, let me know.

Fostering mission and service - We already give generously to missions, and have many hands-on opportunities for service. What’s next? First, we’re planning ways of responding more quickly when a need arises in our community or elsewhere. Second, we’re immersing our mission and service in a process that helps us grow as Jesus’ disciples by encouraging three “P’s”. Whenever there’s a mission or service project, we’re asking the group to engage in: Preparation – learn about the people and project; Prayer – begin the project with a devotion, and surround it in prayer; Pondering – after the mission project, talk together about what we’ve learned about ourselves as disciples, about our faith, and about the people with whom we serve.

Our mission is to “change the world through Christ, by caring for all people.” We want to bring good news to a hurting world, in Jesus’ name.

Next time, I’ll talk about ways of measuring our church’s strength.

Blessings, Sharon
UPCOMING YOUTH EVENTS

February 26, 2017—
Rodeo week-end
No Confirmation
9:45 Sunday School
No youth group

March 1, 2017—
Ash Wednesday
Sanctuary open from 6-9 a.m.
Worship at 6:30 p.m.

March 5, 2017—
3:00 to 7-ish
District Event at Vista de la Montaña

March 12, 2017—
3:00 to 4:00
Youth Council
4:00 to 6:00
“Underground Church”
& other cool games with prizes

March 19, 2017—
4:00 to 6:00
St. Patrick’s Party

YOUTH FUN DAY at Vista de la Montaña UMC on Sunday, March 5! There will be a cookout, lots of outdoor and indoor activities, and a chance to gather with youth from all over the district! AND...the event is FREE! Dress to be outside. Closed-toed shoes are recommended (outdoor games, etc.). The fun begins at 3:30. We'll gather at the Wesley House at 3:00.

All youth, especially confirmands, should make an extra effort to be in worship during Lent and Easter. The Confirmation class will attend worship together on Ash Wednesday, Holy Thursday, and Good Friday. Other youth are welcome to join us.
Middle School Moments

Yee-Haw! I love Rodeo Break! It has always seemed like a bonus break to me, since my friends in other cities had to go to school while I stayed home. It was great! I always have enjoyed unexpected moments of rest.

What do you do when you find yourself with that unexpected time? I use that time to talk to God. To check in, let Him know how things are going. Next time you find yourself with a few extra moments, try that! Try having some time chatting with God, before you flip on that TV or open that book.

See you Sunday!

Rachel

Sierra Service Project News

2017 TRIP
Tsaile, AZ on the Navajo Reservation

The Parking Lot Sale is February 25. That’s the Saturday of Rodeo Weekend, which means you’re out of school the 23rd & 24th to help set up.

The second payment of $60 will be due by April 10.

a note from the
YOUTH DIRECTOR

Guess what’s coming in March. If you said March Madness, you’re only partially right. (side note: U of A only has 3 more regularly scheduled games. Go Cats!)

On the church calendar, March 1 is Ash Wednesday and the beginning of Lent. Lent is a time when many Christians prepare for Easter by observing a period spiritual discipline, like giving up something or adding something that helps them grow closer to God.

At St. Mark’s, the sanctuary will be open from 6-9 a.m. for imposition of ashes, a smudged ash cross placed on your forehead or hand. You can participate before school that day. When you arrive at school, people will ask you about the ashes. They may even comment that you’ve got dirt on your face. That’s a great opportunity to explain that, as a Christian, you’re preparing for Easter.

Many people give up something for Lent. I urge you to put some thought into that. Give up something that might be taking time away from your relationship with God. Maybe that’s gossip; maybe it’s Facebook; maybe it’s spending money on Starbucks that you could be using to help someone.

Blessings,
Kim

P.s. You can also receive ashes during worship at 6:30 p.m. March 1st.