Special Opportunity – Communion Each Week During Lent!

Do you long for the chance to have Holy Communion more often during Lent? On Sundays, March 12, 19, and 26, you can do that on Sunday mornings. Come to Fellowship Hall after the 8:15 a.m. service (about 9:15) or the 9:45 a.m. (about 10:45 a.m.) and receive Communion from Pastor Joe Brown or Rev. Judy Boroto. This is a special opportunity to make Lent more meaningful by celebrating Holy Communion each week during March.

Sharon Ragland

A Word of Thanks

We wish to express our sincere appreciation for all those who participated in the celebration of St. Mark’s 60th Anniversary: Caring for our Campus — A Birthday Gift of Thanks.

Thanks to your many donations, we’re happy to report that $64,116 has been received so far, exceeding our goal of $60,000, for much-needed capital resources. These, and additional funds, will be crucial toward our five-phase campus development for upgrades, major repairs and maintenance.

If you haven’t already done so, please consider contributing to the Capital Campaign fund. Doing so will ensure St. Mark’s remains a vital place of worship, serving as a beacon of hope within our community.

You can continue to give to the Capital Campaign in one of the following ways:

1. Going to www.umcstmarks.org, clicking on the Donation/Payment box, and using the "Capital Campaign" designation, or
2. Checking the "Capital Fund" box on an offering envelope, or
3. Designating "Capital Campaign" in the memo line of your check.

Should you have any questions or need assistance, please contact Ruth Kester in our church office (297-2062 or ruthk@umcstmarks.org).

Your gifts have already been put to work as the flooring in the Fellowship Hall has been replaced as of March 4, 2017. Again, thank you for your generous support and prayers for this very important campaign.

Board of Trustees and Finance Committees

It’s a Celebration

Please join St. Mark’s as we celebrate our 60th anniversary on Saturday, March 18th, from 3:30 - 6:00 p.m. with a BBQ dinner and music on the West Patio. Tickets will be sold this Sunday, March 12th, between services in the courtyard and in the church office, 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., Monday - Friday. Tickets are $5 per person for ages 13-and-up. Children 12-and-under are free, but do require a ticket. The celebration will continue on Sunday, March 19th, during all worship services. We look forward to seeing you at the celebration and in worship. Any questions, please contact Ruth Kester (297-2062).

New Moms, Babies, and Babies to Be...

If you have had or will be having a baby between the spring of 2016 and the summer of 2017, we would like to invite you to a “Welcome Baby Luncheon.” We will be having a lunch to honor you in the Fellowship Hall on April 22nd from 11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. This is a chance to meet with other mothers and mothers-to-be from our church. This luncheon is sponsored by the Mark-a-ritas, a group of loving women who would like to welcome you and your new baby to St. Mark’s. If you are interested, please call, text, or Email Linda Hill. Childcare will be available upon request.
Calendar Notes

Food Truck Café will be this Fri., March 10, from 5:00 - 8:00 p.m. At 6:30 p.m., a movie, Moana, will be shown on the West Patio.

There will be a Meditation Gardens workday this Sat., March 11, at 8:00 a.m.

Adult Spiritual Growth will meet this Sat., March 11, at 9:00 a.m. in Rooms 20/23.

Youth Council will meet prior to Youth Group this Sun., March 12, at 3:00 p.m. in the Wesley House.

Membership Care will meet on Mon., March 13, at 1:00 p.m. in the Library.

The Marksmen will meet at Coco’s on Wed., March 15, at 7:30 a.m.

Covenant Council will meet on Tues., March 21, at 6:30 p.m. in Fellowship Hall.

United Methodist Women will meet on Tues., March 14, in the church library. Please come at 9:30 a.m. for light refreshments and fellowship. The program, A Call to Prayer and Self Denial, will begin at 10:00 a.m. All women of the church are invited. You don’t have to be a member of St. Mark’s UMW, St. Mark’s UMC, or any church to attend. Childcare will be available upon reservation (297-2062). If you have questions or need a ride, please contact Virginia Tupper, or leave a message in the church office and someone will get back to you.

There is still time to purchase your tickets for a weekend concert and golf tournament benefitting HIV locally and globally!

The Swinging@AIDS Benefit Concert, March 24 at 6:30 p.m., will be held at First United Methodist Church at Main Gate Square. Tickets are $15.

On March 25, The Swinging@AIDS Golf Tournament will be held at The Views Golf Course in Oro Valley. Registration is $125.

For more information, contact Claudia Svarstad (CSvarstad@aol.com or 303-594-8027).

Dear Church Family...

I would like to express my gratitude for all the cards and calls I have received from the congregation and pastors during my knee replacement surgery and subsequent recovery. It’s been four weeks since the surgery. It’s been nice seeing all the cards on the fireplace mantle showing the love and support of the church.

Thank you so much for the wonderful Prayer Shawl I received during my baptism. It’s beautiful and a nice treat. I also appreciate all the love and prayers that we have received during my husband’s illness. We believe the prayers are helping him do as well as he is doing.

Thank you so much for being so special. I am truly blessed that Sandy Marchese introduced us to St. Mark’s

Ron Hill

Patricia Duryee
**Prayer Bead Workshop**

Do you ever find that your mind wanders or that you do not know what to say when you are praying? There is a tool that might help you with these challenges. On Saturday, April 8, (just in time for Holy Week) you may join me in the Fellowship Hall to assemble prayer beads. We will start at 9:00 a.m. Then, beginning at 10:15 a.m., we will explore different ways to use your beads to enrich your prayer life. We will finish between 11:30 and Noon. If you are interested, please sign up on the Adult Spiritual Growth board in the courtyard. I am requesting that you bring $5.00 to pay for the beading supplies. I would also appreciate it if you are able to bring a square/rectangular container with low sides (like a cookie sheet or a shoe box lid) to hold and organize your beads. *(Note: this last request is not a requirement - it will just make it easier to work with your beads.)*

If you already have beads, but they are just taking up space in a drawer and you would like to practice using them, please feel free to join us at 10:15 a.m. I am going to ask that you also sign up so that we have enough handouts for everyone. I hope to see you then.

_Brenda Hunter_

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**Update on Syria**

Syria is one of St. Mark’s focus countries in which Christian persecution is extreme, and violence has been elevated, particularly in the city of Aleppo. Many Christians were forced to flee Aleppo but some stayed. However, numerous Muslims who had fled the areas where the heaviest fighting occurred went to the areas where Christians lived. The Christians have welcomed these Muslims. The Muslims were surprised to see that the churches offered support and programs for all Syrians and not just Christians.

A growing number of the Muslim children has been attending the children’s activities, where the Bible is read daily, and the mothers of the children have not objected. A number of Muslims have started attending church activities including services. One Christian woman involved in welcoming the Muslims observed, “For the first time in history, Muslims are coming to us. The only thing we have to do is tell them the good news; they are waiting for it.”

Please pray for the Christians of Aleppo, Syria: _Father in Heaven, please bless the Christians of Aleppo, Syria, who in the Spirit of Christ, have welcomed and aided their afflicted Muslim neighbors. Please sustain them in this mission of peace and love._

_For more information contact christianpersecutiontaskforce@gmailcom_

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**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 Poling for more information (297-2062 or greg@umcstmarks.org). Soul Station starts with a light meal at 5:45 p.m. before the program, and you are welcome to come to that.

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**Can You Help with Nash Elementary Snack Packs?**

We are so thankful that St. Mark’s helps to provide 120 snack packs to eligible kids at Nash Elementary to take home every Friday during the school year! The bags are filled with potatoes, cereal, applesauce, snack bars, etc.; and this food helps to supplement a child’s food needs for the weekend. Nash Neighbors coordinates groups of volunteers who pick up the food on Wednesday mornings at the Food Bank, others who fill the bags when the food arrives at the church, and those who deliver the bags loaded with food back to Nash. It’s a wonderful community effort, and we appreciate everyone who helps make this happen!

We currently need more help in November, December, and May for the upcoming school year. If you can help or have a group that you are involved with that can participate and you’re available on Wednesday mornings, we’d love to hear from you. This could be a fun activity for neighbors and families, too. Especially, if you have a larger vehicle that can help us transport food. Call or Email Bonnie Sargent or Nancy Jackson to learn more about this amazing outreach that helps kids in a huge way.
Go for 2 in 2017

This year as we focus on Good News for Today’s World, the Christian Formation Team is encouraging everyone to “Go for 2” as a way to grow, learn, and deepen our faith. There are so many opportunities here at St. Mark’s! Our “Go for 2” theme for March is 2 by 2; just like all those animals marching up to the ark. Wouldn’t it be great for each of us to participate in not only worship, but in service as well? We can learn about the Good News for Today’s World, and then take that Good News out into the world. There are many opportunities for service, but Noah would really love what our Animal Ministry Team is doing here at St. Mark’s. The Animal Ministry Team is a really neat group. In Genesis 1:26, we read God spoke: “Let us make human beings in our image, make them reflecting our nature so they can be responsible for the fish in the sea, the birds in the air, the cattle, and, yes, Earth itself, and every animal that moves on the face of Earth.” This ministry team does just that. They care for all of God’s creatures, through service and prayer. Which 2 will you pick in March?

Christian Formation Team
Greg, Kim, and Rachel

FAIR-TRADE COFFEE SALE, SUNDAY, MARCH 12

St Mark’s Agua Prieta (Mexico) Task Force will sell bags of coffee on Sunday morning, March 12, in the courtyard, between worship Services. (NOTE: This is the last coffee sale until later in the Fall, 2017… and you may be able to sample the Agua Prieta coffee in the Welcome Center on March 12.)

There will be a selection of the following 100% Arabica, fair-trade, organic coffee (from Chiapas or Veracruz) produced by Cafe la Colonia will be available for $10 per one pound bag:

- Medium Roast regular and decaf coffee, ground and whole beans
- Dark Roast regular and decaf coffee, ground and whole beans

You will remember all the proceeds from the sale goes directly to support the Cafe la Colonia, a small business run by members of the Fuente de Vida church in Agua Prieta, Mexico. Fuente de Vida church is a mission project of St Mark’s UMC, and several other churches in the Desert Southwest Conference of the United Methodist Church. If you have questions about the coffee sale, please contact Jay Suchland. If you’d like more information about St. Mark’s Agua Prieta Task Force, please contact Patricia Kittrell.

Christian Believers Book Study - Friday, March 31st

Join us at 9:30 a.m., in the Library, to discuss Listening Hearts: Discerning Call in Community by Farnham, Gill, McLean, Ward. 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.

Listening Hearts: Discerning Call in Community introduces the unique approach of Listening Hearts to the spiritual practice of discernment for a new generation. Written to make the often elusive and usually clergy-centered spiritual practice of discernment accessible to all people, Listening Hearts features simple reflections and exercises drawn from scripture and from Quaker and Ignatian traditions. The seminal work in the Listening Hearts series, this book has been a beloved resource for tens of thousands of individual readers, retreat participants, small groups and church leaders, listening for and responding to God's call in their lives.

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

April 28, 2017 God was in this Place & I, I did not know by Rabbi Lawrence Kushner
May 26, 2107 Why Did Jesus, Moses, the Buddha & Mohammed Cross the Road? by Brian McLaren
Drive-Through Spaghetti Dinner

Proceeds and donations support missions in Tucson, around Arizona, the USA and the world.

You may pre-order your food using the form below, for us to have a preliminary count of meals to prepare. Place your completed form in the offering plate on Sunday morning or in the UMW mailbox in the church office. You may “drive through” for a spaghetti meal, even if you don’t pre-order.

As you enter the church campus, follow the arrows to the order table. Money will be collected when you pick up your meal(s).

$7.00 per meal

Enjoy a complete meal of spaghetti and meatballs, salad, roll and dessert. A vegetarian option is also available when requested in advance. All meals are prepared and packaged in spill-proof containers by St. Mark’s United Methodist Women.

Everything will be ready for you to take home and enjoy, or to take to another family or friends.

Friday, March 31, 2017
4:00—7:00 p.m.

For questions, please contact Virginia Tupper (820-4119 or ginn3636@gmail.com).

Drive-Through Spaghetti Dinner Pre-Order Form

NAME __________________________________________________________

PHONE ______________________________________________________ (home) OR ___________________ (cell)

Number of meat meals I/we want to pick up: ________

Number of vegetarian meals I/we want to pick up: ________
(Money will be collected when you pick up.)

Approximate time I/we will pick up the order: ______________

Place your completed form in the offering plate on Sunday morning or in the UMW mailbox in the church office during the week. No money/check is needed with this pre-order form.
UPCOMING YOUTH EVENTS

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—
3:00 SSP Meeting
4:00 to 6:00
St. Patrick’s Party

March 25, 2017—
Saturday
9:00 a.m.
Confirmation field trip to the
San Xavier Mission

March 26, 2017—
4:00 to 6:00
“Family Feud”
Games

SSP MEETING
MARCH 19

Meet in Room 17 (across from the sanctuary) at 3 p.m. on Sunday, March 19 to discuss the plans for SSP.

Agenda: payments, future fundraisers (including the May 6 Golf Tournament), and the fun trip. Bring dates for your summer activities, like sports, band, family vacations, etc.

Parents are welcome, but not required, to attend. Did we mention, bring your calendar?

COMING FOR MIDDLE SCHOOLERS ONLY

On Sunday, April 1, there will be a district event for grades 6-8. Parts of the event are secret. Hint: you need sunscreen and a party attitude. This is NOT an April Fool’s joke. 😄

Eight weeks later (which means you don’t have much school left), St. Mark’s will host the District Middle School Mission. SAVE THE DATES: MAY 30 THRU JUNE 2
How’s your Lent going? In the last “note from the Youth Director” I urged you to put some thought into Lent, by either giving up something that might be taking time away from your relationship with God, and/or adding something to enhance that relationship. I admit, it took me a while to decide, but I finally decided on a daily Lenten devotional.

Remember, we are Easter people! It’s belief in the resurrection that makes us Christians. Our Lenten journey through forty days, not including Sundays, helps us prepare for Easter. The journey ends with a great celebration. “Alleluia, Christ has risen!”

Blessings,
Kim

Middle School Moments

Have you ever played with Silly Putty? I love that stuff! In March of 1950, an engineer names James Wright was trying to come up with a human-made rubber material and came up with this...stuff...it was gooey and bounced. He tried to find a practical use for it, but with no luck. But when the owner of a toy store saw the bouncy goo, he knew that it would be really fun! They decided to sell it in plastic eggs for $1.

Over 50 years later, my kids still LOVE to play with Silly Putty (and so do I when they aren’t looking!). I like how it stretches, and can be molded so easily.

Kind of how God works with us, right? He stretches and shapes us through our experiences and is transforming us every day. The next time you play with some Silly Putty, imagine the ways that God is stretching and molding YOU! Then share some with me!

Rachel

Sierra Service Project News

2017 TRIP
Tsaile, AZ on the Navajo Reservation

WE MADE $1100 ON THE PARKING LOT SALE! Thanks to everyone who contributed and worked the sale.

Meeting on March 19 at 3 p.m.
Second payment of $60 due by April 10.

LOVE LIFE
LIVE LENT
TRANSFORM YOUR WORLD
Please Keep These People In Your Prayers...

In hospital:
Rich Heilman, Harold Mull

In rehab or care facilities:
Than Brademas, Donald Chester, Caroline Demee, Darrel Frazer, Patricia Keele, Sue Robinson, Howard Russell, Jim Ward, Yvonne Yare

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

Recovering at home:
Kelly Deyoe, Ron Hill, Maryann Nuckolls

Upcoming surgeries:
Susan Kelley, Megan Krzmarzick

We Offer Our Christian Love and Sympathy To...
♥ Family and friends of Lloyd Mattson.
♥ Family and friends of Margaret Curtis.

Loved Ones In the Military...
Please keep these people in your prayers. Email additions or updates to messenger@umcstmarks.org.

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
Travis Kroll, son-in-law of Becky Strain
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 Szczygiel, daughter and son-in-law of Joyce Flick
Timothy Trexler, great-nephew of Gail Blevins
Brianna Walker, granddaughter of Barbara Fradenburgh; niece of John Fradenburgh
Jeff Welsh, grandson of Roger and Donna Severson

YOU can make a HUGE difference!

We are living in a time of uncertainty and worldwide distrust. Yet, despite all this, there are many wonderful young people dreaming of coming to America this fall as a Foreign Exchange Student. These boys and girls (age 15-18) come from 22 different countries and badly need homes for the next school year. They have full insurance and speak fair English. Hosts provide room and board and a loving environment for their student to experience our American culture while they attend your area High School. Hosts can be young or old, single or married, and all make a major impact on these kid’s lives. Please contact me - I’d love to share the details.

Cliff Young
Reflections

State of the Church – Part 4 – 3/6/17

“How is our church doing?” “What plans does St. Mark’s have for the future?” From January-March, 2017, I’m sharing in Messenger articles some information about those questions. January articles focused on summarizing 2016. February’s focus was on our budget, priorities, leadership, and plans for 2017. In this part of the “State of the Church,” I’m talking about membership, worship attendance and strength.

How do we measure the vitality of our church? This is a key question that is discussed throughout the United Methodist Church. Years ago, we measured vitality by the number of people on our membership rolls. We found that not everyone on the rolls attended worship or participated in church. We also found that younger people are not as apt to join a church, even though they actively participate.

So we began to measure vitality by worship attendance. This is still one valid way to measure vitality because worship is still the primary place where people gather to praise and thank God, and grow in faith. In 2016, St. Mark’s average worship attendance was 681, a slight increase over 2015. In fact, worship attendance has been increasing slowly and steadily for a number of years.

However, worship attendance patterns have changed in recent times. This is true for many religious organizations. While people used to attend worship every week, now some consider themselves regular attenders if they come twice a month. There are many reasons for this, including work schedules, family demands, and much more.

We find that now worship attendance is not the only good measure of a church’s vitality. We look at things like participation in mission and service projects, classes, family events, how many new people are in leadership, and how willing we are to embrace new projects and ministries.

Truly, though, I believe that a church’s real strength is best measured by how much joy and hope is experienced, talked about, and infused in everything we do. How excited are we to invite others to join us? What stories do we tell about how God has changed our lives? How do we share our church experiences of care and compassion? How are we involved in making an impact on our community? Those are hard to measure but are, in my view, the true measures of the strength of our church. I’d love to hear your responses to those questions.

In the next Messenger, I’m going to talk about additional plans for 2017.

Blessings,
Sharon