

Messenger

Changing the world through Christ, by caring for all people.

Volume 58, Number 02

January 30, 2018

St. Mark's
United Methodist

Lent Begins Ash Wednesday, February 14

This year, it's easy to remember when Lent begins – Wednesday, February 14, Valentine's Day! Lent is the 40 days (not counting Sundays) leading up to Easter, which is Sunday, April 1. Lent gives us the chance to be part of worship, prayer, studies and service that prepare our hearts to receive the joy of Easter. Watch the weekly bulletin and **Messenger** for more details about activities and upcoming events during Lent including a schedule for Holy Week and Easter worship services.

Ash Wednesday - February 14

6 - 9:00 a.m. – Our Sanctuary will be open to receive ashes and a blessing from Pastor Sharon
5:45 p.m. – Soul Station, join us for a community meal in Fellowship Hall
6:30 p.m. – Worship in the Sanctuary with music, ashes and Holy Communion

Sundays During Lent - Beginning February 18

Our focus this Lent is *The Voice of God Within Us*. This continues our 2018 theme of *Connecting to God and One Another*, and seeks to help us connect more deeply with God. We'll address topics like call, love, conviction, obedience, repentance, return, prayer, looking at ways we draw close to God, move away, and connect again, by God's grace, as God seeks to always be near us.

Soul Station during Lent

On Wednesday evenings, join us for a community meal at 5:45 p.m. in Fellowship Hall followed by our Lenten study at 6:15 p.m. *Embracing the Uncertain*. After the study, we all gather together for Holy Communion at 7:00 p.m. This is a family worship, children are welcome and childcare is available.

Studies during Lent

Embracing the Uncertain: A Lenten Study for Unsteady Times as well as a number of other studies will be offered during Lent to prepare our hearts for Easter (read more on page 4 of the **Messenger**).

Special Activities and Events

Saturday, Feb. 17 – Prayer Beads Workshop
Sunday, Feb. 18 – UA Symphonic Choir Concert
Sunday, March 11 – Volunteer Appreciation Day
Tuesday, March 13 – Seder Meal
Sunday, March 18 – Celebration Singers Concert
Saturday, March 24 – Community Easter Event
Thursday, March 29 – Drama

Sunday, March 25 – Palm & Passion Sunday

A cantata offered by our choirs at 8:15 a.m. and 9:45 a.m.



Pastor Sharon Honored By Scholarship

Pastor Sharon graduated from Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary in 1991. In honor of her twenty-seven years of service, the seminary has announced they are establishing a scholarship in her name. This scholarship will provide financial aid to students attending Garrett-Evangelical in their path toward Christian ministry. A representative will attend services at St. Mark's on Sunday, Feb. 18, to present Pastor Sharon with a certificate recognizing her and acknowledging the scholarship.

There is still time to contribute to this scholarship, by completing the Gift Intention Form that was included with the letter you received about the scholarship or you may give online at www.garrett.edu/giving. Gift Intention Forms are also available from the church office. If you have questions or need assistance regarding the scholarship, contact the Development office, Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary in IL at 847-866-3970.

Just Breathe

Making Peace with Your Body



Brothers and sisters, in light of all I have shared with you about God's mercies, I urge you to offer your bodies as a living and holy sacrifice to God... Romans 12 (NIV)

As far back as I can remember, I have been at odds with my body. If I were to think of my body and I as a relationship, I'd have to say it has been marred by abuse, dissatisfaction, and performance-based love. From starving myself during my teenage years (to try and look like the magazine model) to an obsession with exercise (which now, at age 54, I feel the effects of in just about every joint of my body). For most of my life, my body and I have not been on friendly terms. To add to my distorted views, throughout my life as a Christian, there has been an undercurrent of thought and teaching that our bodies are not as important as our spirit which just caused me to add neglect to this unhealthy mix. From years of being a pastor and spiritual director, sitting with others on their earthly journeys, I know that I am not alone in this war. Tara Owens in her book, **Embracing the Body; Finding God in our Flesh and Bones**, writes, "we refuse to live in the corporeal reality of humanity, we pretend as if we can be human without being incarnate, and we choose, day after day, to live where other than the present reality of the body, the only place where heaven actively meets earth."

Thankfully, through help from the Holy Spirit with transforming my thought life, I am making peace with my body. Like any healthy relationship, I now listen to the needs of my body and through practices such as Holy Yoga, hiking and walking, I am aware of how my mind, spirit, and body are all connected, and valued as being a whole of God's creative genius. Now, it is my intent to be thankful for this body that God created, even my broken parts. Thankful that I can reach out my hand and bring comfort to another, thankful that I can smile at a stranger reassuring them that there is good in this world, and thankful that my arms can hold my loved ones and friends reminding them that they are worthy of love. My wrinkles remind me that I have persevered through some of life's greatest losses and my gray hairs are reminders of the wisdom that I have received as Christ has been my teacher. I am at peace.

Is there a way you may have treated your own body that God wants to touch and redeem? Spend some time journaling your reflections.

Let us pray together, *Loving and ever-present God, help me to meet you daily in my embodied experience of your glory-filled creation, to live into the truth of your redemption of my body, to welcome, serve and love myself and others so that your kingdom may come and your will be done.*

Peace, Pastor T

The INN Project

For a moment, try to imagine what circumstances would occur that would cause you to leave your home, your country, taking only what you could carry. You would leave behind family and friends, and out of fear and desperation, call as little attention to your departure as possible. In December of 2016, I read an article about the Inn Project here in the **Messenger**. For some reason it called to me, and I answered. For more than a year, I've volunteered at the INN, which is housed in the basement of First UMC on Park. This is where Immigration Customs Enforcement (ICE) brings Seekers of Asylum after they have legally crossed the border and have been vetted by our government.

Now, the INN PROJECT takes over, welcoming them into the very humble church basement where we extend hospitality until we can contact their sponsors here in the United States. This enables us to coordinate with our guests and their sponsors to arrange purchase of transportation to the sponsors' homes across the United States. Then we provide transportation to the bus station or airport for individual families. Usually our guests are here overnight, perhaps two days, but have been here as long as a week as hurricanes, floods, and other weather have delayed all transportation.

Our hospitality includes a place to sleep, shower, launder, eat, and... wait. We feed them all three meals, and upon departure, enough food for their family until they arrive at their destination. There is NO CHARGE to our guests. The INN PROJECT is approved by the Desert Southwest Conference, but this project operates solely on donations and grants. It is a humble offering, and I can't describe the joy in helping these individuals.

WE NEED YOUR HELP! Through Nov. 30, 2017, we have hosted nearly 3000 individuals, 600+ in November. ICE processes people at unpredictable rates, so we never know how many to plan for (8, 28, or 50)? They arrive with government-tagged transparent plastic bags containing their personal belongings. Often, they are wearing only a light-weight sweater, and inadequately dressed to travel to their destinations.

Here is a list of IMMEDIATE NEEDS:

- Money donations
- Backpacks (new or gently used)
- Winter coats, hats, gloves
- Children's clothing, shoes,
- Women's clothing (small height)
- Men's clothing

We need an ongoing commitment of volunteers, or groups to prepare and deliver meals (we could freeze these, using portions as the size of the group dictates). We often need individuals who could carry sheets and blankets to their homes to launder, returning them. Sometimes we need repairs.

There is a way for anyone to serve. Please feel free to contact me for more information. I would happily come to speak to your groups, coordinate efforts. Please join me in yet another way to be the hands and feet of Christ.

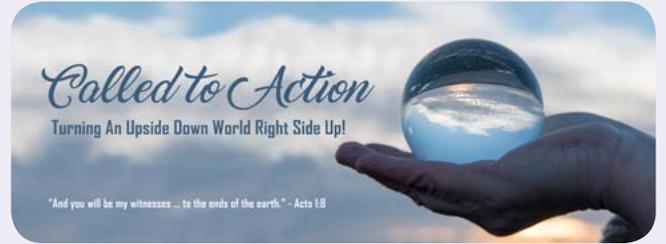
Yours in Christ, Kathie Barrett (see directory)

2017 Financial Summary and Progress Update

During 2017, the generosity of St. Mark's constituents contributed to God's kingdom through Missions, funded all of our ministries and operations, and enabled our Trustees to make Capital investments that enhanced St. Mark's facilities and campus. Summaries for each area are shown below.

Missions

Missions Actual Expense for 2017 was \$119,128 vs. a Budget of \$114,439 (Note: The annual Missions Budget is 10% of St. Mark's annual Income Budget)



St. Mark's Operations

The following represents St. Mark's financial performance for its operations in 2017.

Full Year 2017	Income	Expenses
Budget	\$1,144,395	\$1,144,395
Actual	\$1,191,284	\$1,107,144
Variance to Budget	+\$46,889	(\$37,251)
Variance – Income less Expenses	+\$84,139	

Trustees

The Trustees, with the assistance of the Technology team, are pleased to present the following enhancements to St. Mark's facilities and campus, made possible during 2017 through God's blessings and your continued generosity.

Sanctuary/Narthex Area

- Ceiling repainted
- Carpet replaced
- Hearing assist loop and amplifier*
- Hearing assist receivers (6)*
- Audio/video bridge for live streaming
- Monitor for hospitality room
- Narthex restrooms completely remodeled*

Fellowship Hall/Office

- Carpet replaced in Fellowship Hall (paid balance)
- Drinking fountain replaced in Fellowship Hall*
- St. Mark's new website (deposit)
- Office chairs (2)

Various Buildings

- Roof replaced on Building #1
- Water heater replaced
- Window shades replaced in Prayer Room (Rm 20)
- Air conditioner replaced (new unit) for Choir Room

Campus

- Extended handrail outside the narthex*
- Concrete sidewalk repaired*
- Gates and locks replaced
- LED lights for the parking lot (paid balance)

***In compliance with American Disabilities Act**

Christian Persecution Update

2018 World Watch list of countries with most Christian persecution shows that persecution has risen in most, and women are most vulnerable.



Open Doors USA, an affiliate of the United Methodist Church that works with persecuted Christians around the world has released its 2018 World Watch list which ranks the 50 most dangerous countries in the world for Christians. The 2018 report shows that religious persecution has risen in 30 countries on the list. Open Doors President David Curry states that religious persecution has risen in every region of the world.

St. Mark's Christian Persecution Task Force focuses on six countries which are all on the list with the following rankings (lower numbers represent the most persecution). 11 India, 14 Nigeria, 15 Syria, 17 Egypt, 24 Myanmar, 39 Mexico.

The report states that women are particularly vulnerable to persecution in the 50 countries. According to Kristina Arriaga, vice-chair of the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, "In countries where there is no religious freedom, generally you have very poor protection for the rights of women."

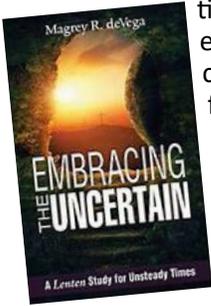
Due to the generosity of the St. Mark's congregation in the Thanksgiving offering, over \$2,000 has been donated to assist women in Egypt, one of the focus countries.

Christian Persecution Task Force Team

Adult Spiritual Growth - Lenten Studies

Lent is a time of preparation for the coming of Easter. It is a time of self-examination and reflection. In the early church, Lent was a time to prepare new converts for baptism. Today, Christians focus on their relationship with God and others. We have several opportunities for you during Lent. Please find one that will help you prepare for a beautiful Easter.

Embracing the Uncertain: A Lenten Study for Unsteady Times. Just turning on the news lets us know that we are living in uncertain times. Economic instabilities, eruptions of violence, and natural catastrophes can alter the lives and landscapes of entire communities. Our individual lives are often just as unsteady. Relationships can break, plans can falter, and confidence can fail. Uncertainty can definitely be uncomfortable. Many of us prefer stability and a predictable future to an unknown fate. We are wired to want to control our destiny. The reality is that in our fast-changing, unpredictable world there are few guarantees in life. It's those who are willing to embrace uncertainty and make the risky decision to follow Jesus despite the many "unknowns" who will reap the greatest rewards.



Embracing the Uncertain invites readers this Lent to engage and wrestle with life's uncertainties, not ignore them. The first six chapters focus on six post-Transfiguration, pre-Passion stories in the Gospels. Each of these stories are signposts in the gospel narrative, pointing down at a world filled with uncertainty, but pointing us forward to a cross that can show us how to follow Jesus with courage, hope, and obedience. You may register online or sign up at the Spiritual Growth bulletin board in the courtyard on Sundays. Books for class will be available starting Sunday, Feb. 4, in the courtyard.

Embracing the Uncertain - Class Schedule

Study Group Name	Class Begins	Time	Location
Wed. Study Group	Wed., Feb. 14	10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.	Library
Sharing/Family Life	Sun., Feb. 18	9:45 a.m.	Rm. 17
Monday Bible Study	Mon., Feb 19	10:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.	Mtn. View Retirement Village
Lenten Study	Mon., Feb. 19	6:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.	Barnes & Noble - Starbucks
Soul Station	Wed., Feb 21	6:15 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.	Fellowship Hall



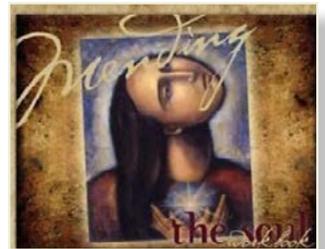
Spiritual Gifts Class

Do you hear God calling? All Christians have spiritual gifts. Come and discover your gifts and how to use them. This four-session class begins Sunday, Feb. 18, at 9:45 a.m. in the conference room. After the class, there is personal, one-on-one spiritual gifts coaching with Pastor Tammy. The class is facilitated by Pastor Tammy and others.

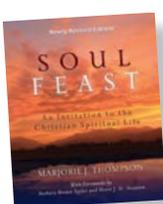
Mending the Soul: A Healing Journey for Abuse Survivors

Mending the Soul is a small, group experience for women who have experienced any type of abuse. The group will consist of four to seven participants who will go through an application and intake process, work through the **Mending the Soul** workbook, then share their journey during the weekly, confidential small group.

Pastor Tammy has been a trainer for **Mending the Soul** and facilitated MTS groups for many years and will partner with Teresa Hillis, from Grace Community Church, to host an eleven-week small group experience for women beginning on Wednesday, Feb. 21, 6:30-8:30 p.m. Rm 23. If you would like to explore whether this journey would be helpful to you, please contact Pastor Tammy (tammy@umcstmarks.org) or call the church office (297-2062) to schedule an appointment. Deadline to register is February 5.



Grounded In Grace: Spiritual Practices for Lent



A one-day retreat at beautiful Picture Rocks will bring together ideas and practices for spiritual growth, focusing on ways to observe the Lenten season. Picture Rocks (The Redemptorist Renewal Center) is located at 7101 W. Picture Rocks Road. Rev. Roger Pierce will lead the event on Saturday, Feb. 24, and will focus on the new edition of Marjorie Thompson's book **Soul Feast: An Invitation to the Christian Spiritual Life**. There will be plenty of time for personal reflection, opportunities to share and learn from others, and a great lunch in the Center's dining room. The retreat will begin at 9:00 a.m. and conclude at 3:00 p.m. Cost is \$35 per person which includes use of all the facilities (trails, bookstore, library, dining room). Sign up today because space is limited to 30 persons. If you have questions, contact Roger Pierce (*see directory*).

FAITH—Imagine That!

What is the color of faith? Are you looking for something to help you approach scripture in a new way? We all carry an artist in us as we know what we like and don't like. We will participate in some simple exercises that will help fire-up our imagination through play and art, and help us to experience God in a different way. This is for everyone — all you need is a willing heart. Bring your favorite Bible verses and or prayers to get you started on your journey. Begins Tuesday, Feb. 20, 6:30 – 7:30 p.m. and is led by Nancy Bautzmann.



Christian Persecution in Today's World

Did you know that Christians experience persecution in more countries than adherents in any other religion? Persecution of Christians around the world is increasing, is caused by different factors, and takes many forms. However, persecuted Christians are not alone and Christians in the U.S. are helping them in various ways. Methodists can learn about the problems and steps to aid the persecuted. St. Mark's is offering a course on Christian persecution so that we can inform ourselves about this phenomena and how we as a church can most effectively assist our Christian brothers and sisters.



This course is a participative exploration of the persecution of Christians as it is occurring in the top 50 persecuting countries. We will discuss what the Bible says about persecution of Christians, its prevalence today, and the potential for Christians in the US to help Christians being persecuted in other countries. Ways in which persecuted Christians can receive encouragement from their Christian brothers and sisters in other countries, how US Christians are making a difference in the lives of persecuted Christians elsewhere, and how different people can support persecuted Christians in various ways will also be covered. Beginning Monday, March 5, (4 sessions) 6:30 - 8:00 p.m., Conference Rm.

Faith on Stage St. Mark's Theater Troupe

We are forming a **St. Mark's Theater Troupe** and will be performing three productions in 2018:

- An Original Holy Thursday Play
- A Mystery Dinner Play
- A Christmas Play
- Bible action skits during worship

We need lots of people for these productions:

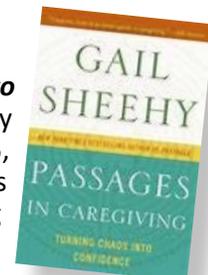
- Actors
- Costume Creators
- Set Designers
- Prop Masters
- Techies—sound and lights
- Marketers and Photographers

Where can you help us? Please contact Evy McDonald at (evy@umcstmarks.org) or Margaret Synhorst (margaret@umcstmarks.org). Please attend an organizational meeting on Sunday, Feb. 4, at 12:30 p.m., Rm 20. A light lunch will be served.

Faith On Stage
St. Mark's Theater Troupe

Caregiving Class

Passages in Caregiving: Turning Chaos into Confidence will be facilitated for six weeks by Mary Lu Kiracofe beginning Thursday, Feb. 15, 12:30-1:30 p.m. in the St Mark's Library. This class is for anyone (men and women) facing the challenges of caregiving of a loved one.



Caregiving is a powerful, emotional journey and this class will examine, explore, and offer ways to care for the difficult emotions and isolation associated with caregiving and the potential creativity, compassion and supportive connections that can emerge from this sacred role.

The class size is limited, so advance registration is suggested. Please contact Mary Lu (*see directory*), if you have questions or are interested in reserving a space for this class. If you would like, you may purchase or borrow the book, **Passages in Caregiving**. There are some copies available in the St. Mark's Library or the public library. There is no charge for the class.

On a Mission...

The children's Sunday School classes, the Sharing/Family Life class, and some of the Advent workshop attendees gathered their coins together for the Heifer Project and collected enough money to donate a llama to a needy family. The llama this family receives will change their lives forever, and then that family will help another family out of poverty. When we join our few coins together, we make a big difference in God's world.



WASS UP?

January 30, 2018

Volume 19, Issue 2

Super Bowl Party

Catalina UMC is hosting the District Youth Super Bowl party, again this year. The football game will be projected on the biggest screen in the district. There will be lots of food, alternative entertainment, and good friends. Meet at the Wesley House at 3:30.

FRIENDS ARE WELCOME!

Youth Council Plans for February 11

On February 11, the Middle Schoolers will play "Minute to Win It" games, and other cool stuff. Rumor has it, that there will be Valentine-themed snacks!

While they're doing that, the High Schoolers will be at Barnes and Noble, playing one of our favorite phone-match games.

Please thank the Youth Council for their great plans.



UPCOMING MIDDLE SCHOOL AND HIGH SCHOOL EVENTS

February 4, 2018—

SOUPER BOWL SUNDAY Souper Bowl collection after worship services

3:00— SSP meeting
3:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
Super Bowl Party
@ Catalina UMC

February 11, 2018—

3:00 Youth Council
4:00 to 6:00
Middle School— *"Minute to Win It" games*
High School— *Phone game at Barnes and Noble*

February 18, 2018—

4:00 to 6:00
"Mad gabs, Mad libs, Mad Science" (Middle School)
Ice cream off campus (High School)



FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

02-01 Dylan McInnis
 02-06 Willow Wernett
 02-16 Lauren Upham
 02-26 Meghan Buckner



Sierra Service Project

Coming in July

MIDDLE SCHOOL MISSION

Coming in May

Middle School Moments

This year, February 14 isn't only Valentine's Day- it's also Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent. Many people choose to give something up for Lent (like soda, chocolate, or maybe Starbucks!) but you don't HAVE to give something up!

The goal we should have during Lent is to grow closer to God. When people give things up, they are giving things up that they think is standing between themselves and God.

I like to add things instead! You can add a daily devotion, or reading a little of the Bible each day, or commit to be in worship AND Sunday School every week!

What do you think will help you grow closer to God? I'd love to hear your ideas!

See you Sunday!
 Rachel

a note from the

YOUTH DIRECTOR

A boy asks his father, "Dad, are bugs good to eat?"

"That's disgusting — don't talk about things like that over dinner," the dad replies.

After dinner the father asks, "Now, son, what did you want to ask me?"

"Oh, nothing," the boy says. "There was a bug in your soup, but now it's gone."

There will be a test later to see who read my dumb joke. Actually, I think we're tested every day. When people know that you attend church/youth group, they begin watching how you act, how you talk, even what you laugh at.

Sometimes, we don't realize that we represent Christianity to others. One of my favorite songs has the line, "they'll know we are Christians by our love."

My prayer for you and me is that we pass the test.

Blessings,
 Kim

PRAYER CORNER

We are a praying community at St. Mark's. Besides Sunday worship, you may submit prayer requests by email to prayerchain@umcstmarks.org or from our website www.umcstmarks.org. Also, visit our Prayer Room on campus and leave a prayer on our prayer wall. Please hold these people in prayer as well as our loved ones in the military:

Ann Martin	David & Floretta Harrington	Jim Stauffacher	Patricia Keele
April DuBoce	Del Long	Jim Ward	Ray Loughney
Barb Osar	Don Chester	Judy Drescher	Rich Hoffman
Betty Myers	Don Watt	Judy Mitzimberg	Ruth Machtley
Breanne Hallam	Ed & Louise Voelker	Karen Linebarrier	Sandy Marchese
Carol Underwood	Gail Blevins	Keith & Mary Ann Glazier	Tom & Linda Walker
Carolyn Hanna	Harmon & Mary Harrison	Lindsey Williams	Tom Spratt
Cathy Simpson	Hazel Roberts	Lori Grimsey	Wayne Stevens
Connie White	Howard & Gina Russell	Marian Shultis	Yvonne Yare
Dave Webster	Jared Bowman	Pam Kytola	

It's Good For What Ails You!

The Chronic Illness/Chronic Pain Support Group will meet **three times** in February, on Wednesday the 14, 21, and 28, 10:30 a.m. to Noon, in the Library. The group is open to all men and women who feel they are struggling with any sort of chronic conditions or pain. Our mission is to help each other cope through prayer, discussion, and the love which Jesus gave to us, and to carry that love and hope to others who are suffering.

CHRONIC PAIN

If you have been thinking of attending, but still are not sure, come to the Valentine's Day meeting. It will be a nice time of prayer, fellowship, goodies (including gluten-free) and fun. It is a perfect opportunity to talk with other members in an informal setting, and find out how the group helps them. Bring what you need to be comfortable (cushions, ice or heat packs, etc.). Feel free to bring a support person or caregiver. This is a safe space and a "no-judgment" zone. If you have questions, contact April DuBoce (see directory).

Meditation Area Work Day

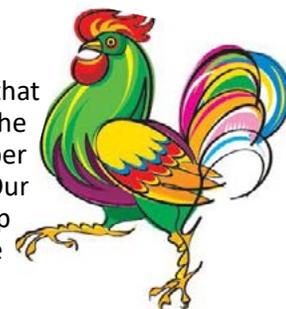
The Meditation board is looking for a few volunteers to help with a spring-cleaning work day. The group will start at 8 a.m. on Saturday, Feb. 10, to remove dead cactus and cut back plants. Bring your work gloves, sun screen, hat and water.

Spend a few hours helping spruce up the Meditation Area for Easter! If you have questions, contact Clay Thompson.



De Colores

De Colores is the Emmaus greeting that invites you to find out more about the ecumenical Emmaus Community. Upper Room is the Methodist sponsor. Our purpose is to strengthen discipleship and support active involvement in the church.



The weekend retreat is a gift of agape love created for you by the Emmaus Community of Arizona. It is a space away, and a time out, so you and God can walk together for a time as Jesus walked with believers on the road to Emmaus.

Through powerful worship, insightful lessons, praying and prayer for you, music, table fellowship and communion supported by your brothers and sisters in Christ, the Holy Spirit can work on your heart. You may come away strengthened, renewed, and healed.

You may have your eyes opened and your ears and mind made more open to God's word. You may find new energy and direction for the ministry and mission that involves you now or The Spirit may take you in a new direction. We urge you to come and find out.

Information Meeting:

Thursday, Feb. 1, 6-7:30 p.m., Rm 23

Application Deadline:

February 15, 2018

Dates & Location:

Mens Walk: April 5-8, 2018

Womens Walk: April 12-15, 2018

Christ Presbyterian Church, 6565 E. Broadway Blvd.

Calendar Notes

Thurs., Feb. 1

6:30 p.m. MOMS Military Support Grp, Library

Sat., Feb. 3

8 a.m. Market On The Move, parking lot



Sun., Feb. 4

Souper Bowl Collection after worship services
Sunday Dinner Sale
4:00 p.m. Preteen and Youth Groups meet

Mon., Feb. 5

9:00 a.m. Holy Yoga, Fellowship Hall

Wed., Feb. 7

Noon - BULLETIN DEADLINE

5:45 p.m. Community Meal, Fellowship Hall
6:15 p.m. Soul Station
6:15 p.m. Common Grounds

Thurs., Feb. 8

Noon - **MESSENGER DEADLINE**
6:00 p.m. Trustees Board, Conference Rm

Fri., Feb. 9

5 - 8 p.m. Car Show & Food Truck Cafe



Sun., Feb. 11

New Members Received
4:00 p.m. Preteen and Youth Groups meet

Mon., Feb. 12

9:00 a.m. Holy Yoga, Fellowship Hall

Tues., Feb. 13

9:00 a.m. Coffee Chat (Old Times Kafe)
4:30 p.m. Meditation Board meeting, Conf. Rm
5:30 p.m. Advisory Board, Library
6:30 p.m. Missions Committee, Fellowship Hall
6:30 p.m. SPRC, Conf. Rm
6:30 p.m. Worship Committee, Rm 20



St. Mark's Messenger

Published bi-weekly

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Website:

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Senior Pastor:

Rev. Sharon Ragland

Associate Pastor:

Rev. Tammy Hallam

Sunday Worship:

8:15, 9:45, 11:15 a.m.

Soul Station

Wednesday Nights:

Community Meal

5:45 p.m.

Music/Programs

6:15-7:15 p.m.

Dear Church Family...



Here's a list of organizations that sent letters of "thanks" acknowledging St. Mark's monetary contributions for their cause: Borderlinks - \$1,000.00; Church World Service - \$1,000.00; Community Food Bank - \$196.00; Primavera - \$220.00; Rise Against Hunger - \$1,797.04; TuNidito - \$500.00; UMCOR Hurricane Fund - \$21,782.13.

Missions Committee

Missions Corner: Are you doing missions work independent of the Missions Committee? We'd like to know about it and get you connected to others in the congregation with similar interests. The Missions Committee is compiling a booklet of all the missions opportunities St. Mark's provides to give out to members and visitors. We want to tell every-one that St. Mark's is a giving, caring church. We want everyone to get involved! Please send the information about your missions work to Patricia Kittrell (*see directory*). Let's get connected!

Vacation Bible School - June 4-8!

It's never too early to talk about Vacation Bible School (VBS)! Last year, we learned about becoming God's Heroes. This year, we will use the curriculum **Peace Lab** and learn about becoming God's peacemakers. We will have a planning meeting on Tuesday, Feb. 6, at 7:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. All are invited to come and help us prepare for the children. We need some creative ideas to supplement the curriculum.



A Note From Our Pastor

I am delighted and humbled by the honor of having a scholarship inaugurated in my name by Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, where I received my preparation for ordained ministry. My hope is that through this scholarship other people will have the chance to be educated and formed to lead God's people into the love of Jesus Christ.

Thank you for giving consideration to supporting this scholarship. I hope to see you in worship on February 18, or sooner!

Sharon Ragland





1431 W. Magee Road, Tucson AZ 85704-2116

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STATE-OF-THE-CHURCH Message from Rev. Sharon Ragland Part 2, January 30, 2018

“Our church seems to be such a vital and strong place. What’s the true ‘state of our church?’” This is a good question, so in the first quarter of 2018 I’m sharing some information and thoughts about our church, as I did in 2017. In the last **Messenger** I talked about staffing changes in 2017. Today, I’m going to share about our financial strength. In the next **Messengers**, I’ll share about our commitments to missions, and how we’re doing with our identified priorities.

Our year-end financial statistics for 2017:

Income: \$1,191,284

Expenses: \$1,107,144

Budget: \$1,144,395

Balance (income less expenses): +\$84,139

You can see that we had an excellent year financially. We go into 2017 with a surplus, some of which has been distributed already for capital and staffing needs. Some is being held in reserve for projects and ministries in 2018.

For our **Called to Action** stewardship campaign, we received commitments from 350 giving units for a total of \$920,278. Besides pledged giving, history tells us that we can anticipate another 22-23% additional in unpledged giving. With that in mind, our Finance Committee recommended a 2018 budget of \$1,173,503, to our Covenant Council. This budget was approved

at the Council’s January 23, 2018 meeting. We expect to be able to fully fund this budget with our giving. If unforeseen circumstances arise and we’re unable to do that, we have the additional amount from 2017.

With increased giving we expect to give more for missions, staff increases, Trustees projects, ministries and programs for children, youth and adults, outreach to the community and the world, and apportionments to the United Methodist Church. You can be assured that your giving is wisely used to bring the good news of Jesus Christ to our community, our church, and the world.

There are two big reasons why St. Mark’s is financially strong. The first is your giving that comes from hearts that want to know Jesus, and want others to know about his love, too. Thank you very much for your commitment. The other reason is the wise care given to our finances by our church’s Finance Committee. They work with joy, wisdom and careful planning to be good stewards, led by the priorities of our church, and our mission statement, “Changing the world through Christ, by caring for all people.” The Committee was led in 2017 by Lezley Barth, who is continuing as the 2018 chairperson. In addition, our Bookkeeper, Ruth Kester, works closely with the Committee, as do Pastor Tammy and I.

With gratitude, Sharon