

Messenger

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

Volume 58, Number 07

April 10, 2018



Food Truck Cafe Returns - Friday, April 13!

Come out for food, fellowship, and music this Friday night - lucky Friday, April 13! Some of your favorite food trucks will be in the south parking lot. Our mobile taste treat sensations include Sarge's Cheescakes, BurgerRito, Wilson's Kettle Corn, Little Boler Beanery, and MJ's Hotdogs. Live bands will keep us entertained from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., while we enjoy great food and fellowship. This is an excellent opportunity to invite friends and neighbors.

St. Mark's UMC



Food Truck Café

Can you help? We need just a few good people!

Setup help is needed from 4:00 to 5:00 pm. We just need two extra people to set up tables, chairs, and shade.

Cleanup work will start about 7:30pm. Three people are needed to put away tables and chairs and empty trash.

If you're available to help, contact Kim Ogle (kim@umcstmarks.org or 297-2062). She would love to hear from you on or before Wed., April 11.



Sonoran Bells Concert

Attention Handbell Enthusiasts!

On Tues., April 17 at 7:30 p.m. the Sonoran Bells will present their 2018 Spring Concert, in our Sanctuary. Come hear exciting music performed on handbells! There is no charge for this concert, but a free-will offering will be accepted. If you are interested in more concert dates or information, you may contact JoAnn Luther (see directory).

St. Mark's Youth Service GOLF TOURNAMENT

Spend a fun day on The Highlands at Dove Mountain golf course and support St. Mark's youth! Your contribution will allow our youth to participate in a life-changing, hands-on Sierra Service Project.

Tournament Details: Saturday, May 12, 2018

This is a four-person Scramble Tournament. Check-in and Driving Range opens at 6:45 a.m. with a Shotgun start at 8:00 a.m. At 12:30 p.m. enjoy lunch, awards, and a silent auction with other golfers and guests.

For information about entry fees, and sponsorships, or to register online go to: www.umcstmark.org (upcoming events).

Hurry deadline is Wednesday, May 10, 2018!

**Kairos Cookies
Due Wed., April 25.
Details on page 4.**

Adult Spiritual Growth

Faith is a journey!

Spiritual Autobiography

Thursdays, 3:00-4:30 p.m., April 5 – May 10
NOT TOO LATE – JOIN US APRIL 12, Rm 17/18
Six sessions, led by Judy Boroto

Ever given any thought to your life's journey? To your faith journey? Have any stories that you'd really like to share with family and/or friends? Ever pondered these questions:

What are my family roots? When was I first aware of God; of Jesus; of the Holy Spirit? How did I get to where I am now — in my faith, in my life? What activities in my life help define me? What family traditions have helped form me into whom I am? What do I want my family to know and remember about me? Come explore these questions and others as we develop and write our spiritual autobiographies.

Genesis: A Living Conversation

Tuesdays, 1:30-3:30 p.m., April 17– May 8, Library
Four sessions, led by Linda Walker & Marlyce Wright

The exciting conclusion to the discussions of the roots of our faith as told in the book of Genesis. These are standalone sessions, so if you missed the first part in January, don't let that stop you from participating in these last four sessions:

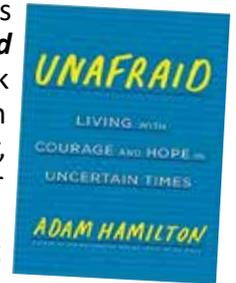
1. **The Test** - Genesis 22-23, Binding of Isaac
2. **Blessed Deception** - Genesis 25-28, Jacob and Esau
3. **God Wrestling** - Genesis 28, 32-33, Jacob, God and Reconciliation with Esau
4. **Exile** - Genesis 39-47, Joseph Saga.

United Methodist History

Thursdays, 6:00 p.m., May 10 and May 17
Led by Kelly Deyoe and Brenda Hunter
Please plan on joining Kelly Deyoe and Brenda Hunter for an overview of the history of the United Methodist Church. This overview of the early church will include influential people of interest; the disappointment of schisms and splits; the excitement of mergers with denominations of similar beliefs; and an overall timeline of important events in our church history. We will discuss some of our church's basic theological beliefs including the role of grace. See you there!

Unafraid: Living with Courage and Hope in Uncertain Times

Sundays, 9:45 - 10:45 a.m., April 15 – May 20
Led by Terry Majewski and Rick Farnsworth
Join the Sharing and Family Life Adult Sunday School classes in Rm 17, for Adam Hamilton's **Unafraid: Living With Courage and Hope in Uncertain Times** DVD and book study. In this five-week study, Hamilton addresses the extent to which fear, anxiety, and worry permeate our lives today and hold us back from the very pursuits that promise fulfillment and joy. Drawing on recent research, inspiring real-life examples, and fresh biblical insight, Hamilton shows us how to untangle the knots we feel about disappointing others, failure, financial insecurity, loneliness, insignificance, and aging. He shows how we can develop sustaining spiritual practices and embrace Jesus' recurring counsel: "Do not be afraid." Unafraid offers an informed and inspiring message full of practical solutions. A book accompanies the DVD study. Some books will be available in class the week before the study begins or can be ordered through Cokesbury. An E-book is available.



Adult Spiritual Growth needs your feedback!

What are you interested in studying that you do not see? Have you ever thought about leading a small group? If you have an interest, but are uncertain about what to do, we have experienced facilitators who are willing to colead a group with you. Please contact Judy Boroto (see directory) or Margaret Synhorst (margaret@umcstmarks.org) with your ideas.



Can You Touch A Prayer?

We are starting a prayer quilt ministry, **Ties that Bind**, which gives the gift of prayer with the gift of a handmade, hand-tied quilt to a person in need of prayer. We believe prayer quilts are a gift of love and prayer and an affirmation of our faith in God and our belief in God's power to comfort, strengthen and heal. **Ties that Bind** is different than our quilting or prayer shawl ministries and is an addition to the unique ways we can bless those in need of our prayers through our Congregational Care Ministries.

The lap-sized quilts are blessed by you, members of our congregation, and others as they tie knots in the threads while saying prayers for someone specific. We make the quilts, but they are finished by these tied threads that hold, or bind, the quilt together. The prayers continue outside of our church because we put in extra threads so friends, relatives, doctors, nurses or visitors may pray for the recipient and add another knot. We ask that the sponsors (those that request prayer quilts) be members of our congregation, and they are making the request for themselves, a family member, friend or someone to



whom they have a personal connection with.

There will be no charge to the recipients or sponsors of the prayer quilts. Our prayer quilts are not for sale, they are a gift of prayer. Materials will be purchased through donations or fund raising. Donations of 100% cotton fabric, batting, sewing and quilting items are welcome, as well as monetary gifts.

We are forming a team now because we need to make quilts before we can begin to give them. You do not need to "know how to quilt" if you can sew on a sewing machine, cut fabric, iron, can do simple hand sewing, or put threads through fabric. All levels of experience are welcome! Quilts can be made at home but I would like to have a regular meeting time

so we have the opportunity to touch base, sew or help each other. Come to our table in the courtyard between services on **Sunday, April 22**, to see some quilts and for more information. I will answer questions and have a sign-up sheet for those interested in participating. If you have any questions, please contact Ann Dyer (see directory).

Enrollment Now Open!

Enrollment is now open at our St. Mark's Early Childhood Center (ECC) for the 2018-2019 school year, but hurry, there are only a few spots left for Kindergarten and our Preschool program.



St. Mark's Early Childhood Center has a high-quality educational curriculum that includes small class sizes for individualized attention and improved communication with students. This nurturing environment along with the balanced curriculum helps kids grow academically in a creative, positive educational setting. There are Kindergarten scholarships available for families who may need some financial assistance.

If you know of a young student or family that would benefit from this type of education, please contact the school office at 520-797-2925.

Laurie Walsh, Director

Call for Artists & Artisans

The Fine Arts and Craft Guild of St. Marks will be hosting the annual **Masterpiece Festival** on November 3, 2018 and are currently accepting applications for vendors.



If you are interested, or know of someone who may be interested in selling handmade art or crafts, please contact Clay Thompson or the church office for more information. We have indoor, covered patio, or parking-lot spaces available. If you have participated in the past three years, check your in-box or junk email for the 2018 vendor application that was mailed out last week. We are looking forward to hearing from you.

We will also be conducting our first planning meeting Saturday, April 21, in Rm 20 at St. Mark's, and invite anyone to attend who would like to participate in the planning and organization for this year's show.

If you have any questions please come to the meeting or contact Clay Thompson.

Clay Thompson, Chairman
St. Mark's Fine Arts and Crafts Guild

THE INN (Project)

Just a reminder, THE INN receives asylum seekers from other countries who have entered the United States LEGALLY through Nogales. ICE brings them to Tucson at least once daily, and First Church on Park receives nearly all of them. Once contact is made with their sponsors in the United States, arrangements are made to transport them — usually by bus to whatever city is needed. In the meantime, THE INN provides shelter, food, showers, a bit of laundry, and some TLC until their departure time. We also send food for their journeys. This project has been approved by the Desert Southwest Conference of the United Methodist Church. However, funding is largely through contributions from individuals and local churches.



Again, supplies are running low and we need your help! It's been a while since my last plea for contributions, but the need never ceases. We need money (it takes roughly \$5,000 monthly), and we continue to request gently-used book bags and duffle bags to replace the clear plastic bags ICE provides them for their journey. Also, children and adult clothing, (mostly smaller adult sizes as many are short in stature). Winter coats, hats, gloves are still needed as much of the U.S. is still cold and our travelers don't have the necessary warm clothes. Other contributions welcomed would be shampoos, conditioners, toothpaste, brushes, laundry soap, dish soap, prepared meals portioned into Ziploc freezer bags (feeds 4-6). We never know how many guests we will have, (so frozen meals, or soups are great as we can thaw for the desired number of people).

Feel free to contact me (see directory) to let me know you've dropped items off at church. I can usually take them down for you. Thank you, and God's blessings on you, so you can be a blessing on them.

Kathie Barrett

Kairos Prison Ministry



The next **Kairos Inside Weekend** will be held April 26 to April 29, at the LaPalma Unit of the private prison near Eloy, where we've held many other weekends in the past.

At this time, we're seeking your prayers and your homemade cookies, as the Holy Spirit does great and life-changing work with these two tools in both the inmates' hearts and in those of the 25 volunteers serving on the weekend.

Cookie recipes, along with baking instructions, can be found at www.umcstmarks.org/pdf/Kairos.pdf or on our home page under Upcoming Events. Please follow the baking and packaging instructions **religiously**, otherwise, we will not be allowed to take the cookies into the prison. Your donations of homemade cookies must be brought to the church kitchen **no later than 4:30 p.m. on Wed., April 25** for transport early on April 26th. I praise God for all those St. Mark's members who've contributed cookies, prayerfully prepared, over these many years.



Please revisit the Kairos information on the Missions tab for an expanded explanation of the Kairos Prison Ministry, and why St. Mark's supports it as part of its Missions budget each year. Matthew 25 clearly instructs followers of Jesus to visit those who are in prison and for many, praying and contributing **Kairos Cookies** is a way to respond to that mission calling. Praise God for His love of us all, even the **least of these**.

Doug Bowers

Meditation Gardens Work Day, Sat., April 14!

I would like to thank everyone who attended the Meditation Gardens work day last month. We had nine volunteers and accomplished a lot. I was overjoyed with the turnout, it doesn't take much to make me happy. We will have another work day on April 14, at 7:00 a.m. We will continue with some spring trimming and weeding. Donuts, coffee and water will be provided. Please bring your gloves, sunscreen and a hat. Also, If you have loppers or hand pruners bring them along, that would be helpful. Thanks again for a great workday in March.

Clay Thompson, Chairman, Meditation Garden Board



Grace Circle

Grace Circle of UMW will meet in the church Library on April 17 at 9:30 a.m. **We will be filling summer school bags for Nash Elementary School.** We will also be putting together hygiene kits for UMCOR, which will be used for disaster relief.



If you can donate any of the following items for the kits, it would be greatly appreciated. All items must be new and in original packaging:

- One hand towel (15" x 25" to 17" x 27")
- One wash cloth
- One adult size toothbrush
- Six Band Aids
- One bath size bar of soap
(No Ivory or Jergens due to moisture content.)
- One 6" or longer comb
- One nail clippers

All women of the church are invited to join Grace Circle. You don't have to be a member of St. Marks. If you have any questions, contact Joyce Lawson (see directory).



Fun & Fellowship with Christian Women

Church Women United in Tucson presents May Friendship Day on Sat., May 5 (Cinco de Mayo!), at St. Francis in the Foothills United Methodist Church, 4625 E. River Road. Come celebrate with us! We will be meeting in the beautiful Celebration Center. Registration begins at 9:00 a.m., program at 9:30 a.m, followed by a taco bar luncheon. You won't want to miss the guest speakers, mariachi music, jewelry swap (bring one gently-used piece to swap and one to donate to Iskashitaa Refugee Network), and special surprises!

Registration info and forms will be available on the UMW bulletin board located outside Rm 17/18. Please register by April 18, if you need childcare. Contact Sharon Hunter (see directory) if you have questions. Carpooling available from our church parking lot.

Open Minds Book Study

APRIL 27, 2018, 9:30 a.m. at the church Library
Book: ***The Color of Water: A Black Man's Tribute to His White Mother***
Author: James McBride



You are invited to participate in a discussion based around the book ***The Color of Water***. This book deals with issues of race, religion, identity and the role and importance of family.

To read from the back of the book, "As a boy in Brooklyn's Red Hook projects, James McBride knew his mother was different. But when he asked about it, she'd simply say, "I'm light-skinned." Later he wondered if he was different, too, and asked his mother if he was black or white. "You're a human being," she snapped... And when James asked what color God was, she said, "God is the color of water."

James McBride, an accomplished musician and writer, tells his story and that of his family—especially his mother—whom he describes as remarkable, eccentric, and determined. Come and bring a friend. There is much here for rich reflection and conversation! *Note: Be sure you do NOT get The Shape of Water—that is a whole different book!*

Give Electronically!

Electronic giving is an easy and convenient way to automate your regular offering or other donations to St. Mark's. For example, if you currently give on a weekly basis, you would no longer need to write out fifty-two checks a year! Additionally, when travel, illness or other circumstances prevent you from attending services, your offerings will continue on an uninterrupted basis. Contributions can be debited automatically from your checking or savings account, or processed using your credit or debit card, and you can designate when you would like your contributions deducted. What's more, there is no additional cost or fees to use this giving option.



To participate in electronic giving, visit our website www.uncstmarks.org and click on the **Donation/Payment tab** (top right corner of our Home page), or use our new mobile giving app, **GivePlus Church**. Feel free to contact me in the church office (297-2062) for assistance or additional information. Thank you for your generous gifts!

Ruth Kester, Bookkeeper

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.umcstmars.org. Also, visit our Prayer Room on campus and leave a prayer on our prayer wall.

Jack Armantrout	Jeanise Hagg	Ruth Machtley	Jim Snedden
Vicki Berglind	Breanne Hallam	Alice Maynard	Jim Stauffacher
Gail Blevins	Carolyn Hanna	Barb Osar	Carol Underwood
Jared Bowman & family	David & Floretta Harrington	Charlie Pepe	Louise Voelker
Michael Campbell	Mary Harrison	Donna Reed	Tom & Linda Walker
Phyllis Carlson	Shirley James	Alan & LuAnn Roberts	Jim Ward
Donald Chester	Patricia Keele	Hazel Roberts	Dave Webster
Diane Damewood	Robert Kittrell	Howard & Gina Russell	Connie White
Judy Drescher	Pam Kytola	Jeff Salfen	Lindsay Williams
Lori Grimsey	Karen Linebarier	Earlene Schock	Yvonne Yare
Keith & Mary Ann Glazier	Ray Loughney	Marian Shultis	

CONDOLENCES: Our sympathy and prayers go out to Donna Severson and family, upon the death of her husband, Roger, on Friday. A service will be held on Sat., April 28, at 3:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary, with a reception following in Rms 17/18.

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 Donna Severson

Zachary Dojaquez, grandson of Donna Severson

Brandonn Eto, friend of Zirnheld/Compernelle family

Rob Eubank, son of David & Johanna Eubank

Mike Freeman, son of Ken & Ann Freeman

Garrett Geer, grandson of Ellen Wise

Patrick Harris, grandson of Marilyn Vaughn

Rachel Kester, daughter of Don & Ruth Kester

Chad Long, grandson of Pat Long

Jake Newton, son of Robert & Cheri Newton

John O'Regan, husband of Ashley O'Regan and grandson-in-law of Janet Krug

Brian Osborn, pastor in the DSW Conference

William Putt, son of Harold & Susan Putt

Adam Seia, son of David & Vonda Seia

Jeoffrey Shafe, grandson of Mary Langemeier

Jason Smith, grandson of Jerry & Judy Smith

Alex Snow, brother of Shelley Shelton

Clint Staschke, son-in-law of Cliff & June Young

Michael and Karisa Szczygiel, daughter and son-in-law of Joyce Flick

Brianna Walker, granddaughter of Barbara Fradenburgh; niece of Joan Fradenburgh



MOMS of Military is a prayer and support group for mothers, wives, sisters, aunts, daughters, and friends of loved ones currently serving in the military. The group meets on the **1st and 3rd Thursday** of the month in the church Library from 6:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. For information, contact Nancy Bautzmann (248-5814).

WASS UP?

April 10, 2018

Volume 19, Issue 7

Vacation Bible School

VBS is June 4-8 this year. Youth are needed to assist in the activities.

This is a great chance for you to practice your leadership skills, shepherd younger children, and serve your church. Remember, kids look up to you. They can't wait to be teenagers.



UPCOMING MIDDLE SCHOOL AND HIGH SCHOOL EVENTS

April 15, 2018—
4:00 to 6:00
Caption Scavenger Hunt



April 22, 2018—
2:30 @ Wesley House
Biosphere
Earth Day
\$5
admission



April 29, 2018—
4:00 to 6:00
Game Night



BIOSPHERE APRIL 22

Be sure you come to Youth Group early on Sunday, April 22. We're going to Biosphere 2. You only pay \$5. Friends are welcome. **EVERYONE** needs a current permission slip.

Find us on Social Media!



St. Mark's Youth Group



stmarksumyf

a note from the

YOUTH DIRECTOR

Wasn't Easter amazing? I especially enjoyed the Sunrise Service. Although, I have to admit that I'm never pumped to get up before 4 a.m.

The service was very moving. Thanks to all of you who participated. I especially want to recognize the Sunrise Singers, led by Cathy Harris-Herchenroeder, and Grace Notes, led by Vince Akins. Ruben did a great job with his homily, and Mackenzie gracefully led us in worship through prayer and commentary.

Of course, Easter at St. Mark's always includes a pancake breakfast. We are very grateful to our pancake chefs, Dean Elledge & Nat Norfleet, and our parent helpers, Sandy and Joe Drake.

Blessings,
Kim

Middle School Moments

One thing I've always loved at St. Mark's is all of the Mission we are involved in. And the youth are totally a part of that! Last Sunday, as a congregation, we helped pack 10,000 meals, in just over an hour. It is always so awesome to see youth working alongside kids and adults to accomplish this. This week was no different- I saw you guys out there! Then when we came back for Youth Group, our awesome Youth Council had planned more Mission work, and we had so much fun doing the work together! It never ceases to amaze me how eager the youth are to be the Hands and Feet! It makes me so excited for this summer's mission trips that you all get to participate in! I Can't wait!

See you Sunday!
Rachel

Middle School Mission

May 29-June 1

**4 days and 3 nights of service,
worship, and friends!**

Ends with a half day at Wet 'n Wild!

All that for only \$65. Scholarships available



Sierra Service Project

Thanks for all the help with the pancake breakfast. Our profit = \$950 On May 12th, we'll have our **Golf Tournament**. SSP participants should be looking for donations for the silent auction, as well as individuals or businesses who are willing to sponsor a hole. Also, the **second payment of \$60** is due in April. (Hint: that makes the first payment of \$40 past due!)

Calendar Notes

Fri., April 13

5:00 - 8:00 p.m. Food Truck Cafe, south parking lot

Sat., April 14

7:00 a.m. Meditation Gardens work day
5:30 p.m. Live Dinner Theater, Fellowship Hall

Sun., April 15

Logo Shop Sale, courtyard, between services
4:00 p.m. Preteen and Youth Group

Mon., April 16

9:15 a.m. Holy Yoga, Fellowship Hall

Tues., April 17

7:30 p.m. Sonoran Bells Concert, Sanctuary

Wed., April 18

Noon - **BULLETIN DEADLINE**

5:45 p.m. Community Meal, Fellowship Hall

6:15 p.m. Soul Station

6:15 p.m. Common Grounds

Thurs., April 19

Noon - **MESSENGER DEADLINE**

6:30 p.m. Holy Yoga, Fellowship Hall

6:30 p.m. Moms of Military, Library

Sat., April 21

9:00 a.m. Five Wishes Workshop, Rm 17/18

Sun., April 22

Blood Drive, Fellowship Hall

4:00 p.m. Preteen and Youth Group

Mon., April 23

9:15 a.m. Holy Yoga, Fellowship Hall

Tues., April 24

9:00 a.m. Coffee Chat, Old Times Kafe



St. Mark's Messenger

Published bi-weekly

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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...



For the past several weeks our family has appreciated the prayers, and support in the loss of Lona Lee. Our extended family at St. Mark's has been praying for Lona over the past several years, which has given her strength to get through many trying times. We have appreciated all the prayers, cards, gifts and calls. The visits from our Pastors and friends have been a comfort and a blessing. The church has meant so much to all of us, thank you!

Jim Stauffacher, Lori Stauffacher, Lisa Cookingham and Jay Stauffacher

Tom and I want to thank our St. Mark's family for all of your love and support for us in our recent time of recuperating from broken ankles and hip replacement. Words seem inadequate to really express our gratitude for all of your cards, calls, visits, prayers and help with meals and transportation. We are so very blessed to have such a compassionate and loving church family. Thank you, thank you, thank you!

Linda Walker

"Every day may not be good but, there's something (or some people) good every day." A quiet joy for the overwhelming kindness to the members of St. Mark's through my trials. My new corrected toes are making an amazing effect on my back too!! Prayers and thoughts, were and continue to be, greatly appreciated.

Catheryn Simpson

Thank you all for the cards, prayers, emails and texts during my surgery and physical therapy for a new hip. Thank you Pastor Tammy for coming by the hospital, the beautiful prayer shawl and praying with Becky and me. It means so much that God has blessed me with the love and support here at St. Mark's. I hope to see you all again in church.

Blessings to all, Diane Damewood.

If you had a chance to walk the Multi-Sensory Stations of the Cross and experience the profound journey that it made possible during Holy Week, then you will want to join with me in thanking our creative team who made it possible. I would like us to thank **Dana Bugbee, Clay Thompson, Nancy Bautzmann, Susan Putt, Ruth Machtley, and Rachel Mosher** for investing their creativity and passion into their stations. I would also like to thank **Kandy Delk** and **Janie Towne** who assisted with opening/readying the stations each day. Lastly, thanks to each one of you who took the time to reflect with us on His journey to redeem us.

Praise be to God! Peace, Pastor Tammy



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Reflections

In today's **Upper Room Disciplines** devotion, author and retired United Methodist pastor, Ann Broyles writes, "I wear a silver necklace by a Hopi artist. It's a simple design of a stalk of corn that reminds me of meaningful weeks spent working on the Hopi reservation with Sierra Service Project." She goes on to talk about how the Hopi grow corn and other crops in an arid and stark land, and that to them corn is life. Her necklace reminds her to look for "plentitude in life" — that when God's love surrounds us, we have gladness of heart, peace and joy, even in dry or dark places or times.

Today I'm reflecting on ways the recent Lent and Holy Week, and the season of Easter are continuing to bring me plentitude in life — plenty of deep joy, experiences of God's grace, and connection with God and others. I'm thinking about our Lent emphasis on the **Connecting to God... Voice of God Within Us**, and stopping to hear God's call, healing words, and words of challenge to go beyond where I am. I'm thinking about the music of the combined choir Cantata on Palm and Passion Sunday "*Love Divine*," and its touch upon my heart. I'm thinking about walking the interactive stations of the cross every day during Holy Week, and each time hearing and seeing something new. I'm thinking about the powerful drama on Holy Thursday,

The Seder that Changed Everything, and realizing again the power of Jesus' words, "I am the bread of life." I'm remembering the darkness of the Good Friday service, with music, and images from the tiny crosses in the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem.

Then I'm remembering Easter Day, April 1, from the sun rising over the mountains at the first service, to the singing of the Hallelujah Chorus at 8:15 & 9:45, to the Praise Band's offering of "*I Am*" and much more at *The Gathering*. I'm thinking about the beautiful flowers and banners, and how the work of the Worship Committee enriches our worship. I'm thinking about the hard work of the ushers, greeters, liturgists and more. And if I had a necklace with a stalk of corn, I would be running my fingers over it, and thanking God for plenty of life, the abundance of joy that God showers upon us — and has shown us most clearly in the life of Jesus Christ.

What reminds you of the plenty of life, the abundance of God's grace? We've started a sermon series now **Connecting to Our Past... The History of Our Faith**, which gives us a chance to look back, and listen and learn about the ways God's work in the past is still bringing us new life.

Blessings, Sharon