



Messenger

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

Volume 57, Number 16

August 8, 2017

RALLY DAY is this Sunday, August 13th!

Children—Preschool through 5th grade meet on the West Patio at 9:30 a.m. to enjoy eegee's and register for class. Then we'll get these great new classes started!

Adults—meet in the courtyard for celebration cake and to register for adult spiritual growth opportunities this fall. Adult Spiritual Growth team members will be there to assist you in learning more about the opportunities, making choices, and getting you ready for the next step of your faith journey!



Final preparations for **Rally Day** on August 13, are underway! The Adult Spiritual Growth Committee has spent many hours in discernment planning spiritual growth opportunities for this congregation. We know that the spiritual growth of individuals and groups is what helps us as a church fulfill our mission of **"Changing the world through Christ, by caring for all people."** Spiritual growth strengthens our relationship with God and others. So why don't more people in our community participate and grow their relationship with God and community? Well, here's a few myths we'd like to share:

You may think it is too big a time commitment, but the offerings this fall include commitments ranging from 1 hour to 34 weeks. We're sure you will find something that fits your schedule.

You may think that it's not the right time, but the offerings vary by day, week, and time. There is something to fit your schedule.

You may think you cannot afford it, but some are free and scholarships are available for all offerings, including Disciple classes. Money is not an issue.

You may think ... "Been there, done that!" but this year is different. The offerings include prayer classes, forgiveness, walking the labyrinth, along with the more traditional studies like Christian Believer. We're sure there is something for you that will help you take the next step on your spiritual path.

You may even think why should I join at all? When you participate in spiritual growth you strengthen your relationship with God, and you develop and strengthen your relationships with the fellowship of the believers. My mother always said, "There are no friends like your church friends. They will know you and love you in a way no one else can." That has been my experience all my life. I treasure the time I have spent with others in adult Sunday School classes, Bible studies, prayer groups, and all the rest because I learned to love God and others in a way I never would have without them. Join us on this faith journey, the rewards are endless!

Water Fun Night & Food Truck Café Friday, Aug. 11th, 5:00 — 8:00 p.m.



Starting at 5:00 p.m., come and enjoy great food from a selection of food truck vendors (even desserts). Starting at 6:00 p.m., on the West Patio, kids of all ages can enjoy the "free" water play activities including a giant water slide, and obstacle course, and other water play activities for children of all ages. A towel and swimsuit (or water clothes) are needed to join the wet fun!



St. Mark's Messenger

Published bi-weekly

St. Mark's United Methodist Church
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Website:

www.umcstmarks.org

Sunday Worship:
8:15, 9:45, 11:15am

Wednesday Nights:
Community Meal
5:45pm
Music/Programs
6:15-7:15pm

Senior Pastor:
Rev. Sharon Ragland

Associate Pastor:
Rev. Tammy Hallam

Interim Christian Formation for Children & Adults:
Margaret Synhorst

Youth Ministries:
Kim Ogle

Communications & Outreach:
Sallyann Wassmuth

Messenger Editor:
Sallyann Wassmuth

Next Deadline:
Thursday,
Aug. 17, at noon

Calendar Notes

Fri., Aug. 11

5:00 p.m. - Food Truck Café
6:00 p.m. - Water Fun Night

Sat., Aug. 12

2:00 p.m. - Primavera Meal preparation

Sun., Aug. 13

RALLY DAY!

7:30 a.m. Blood Drive, Fellowship Hall
4:00 p.m. - Preteens
4:00 p.m. - Youth Group, Wesley House

Mon., Aug. 14

9:15 a.m. - Holy Yoga, Fellowship Hall
3:00 p.m. - Office Closed, Staff Workshop

Tues., Aug. 15

8:00 - 4:30 p.m. - Office Closed, for Staff Workshop

Wed., Aug. 16

8:00 - Noon - Office Closed, Staff Workshop
1:00 p.m. Office Opens

Sun., Aug. 20

Animal Ministry - Donation Drive today!
11:00 a.m. - Exploring Membership, Library

Mon., Aug 21

6:30 p.m. Bells Rehearsal

Tues., Aug. 22

6:30 p.m. Covenant Council

Wed., Aug. 23

5:45 p.m. Soul Station
6:15 p.m. Celebration Singers
7:30 p.m. Chancel Choir

Dear Church Family...



We would like to thank everyone at St. Mark's for the incredible support you have given us after the stillbirth of our son, Luke. Thank you for the meals, visits, cards, messages, thoughts, and prayers. They all have indeed been a blessing and a comfort to us as we work through our grief. Luke will always be missed and some days will be harder than others, but the love you have shown and continue to show gives us strength.

Josh and Ginny Smith

A big thank you to all who baked cakes for Carli Ogle's farewell on Sunday, July 23rd! Not only was there a great variety, there was plenty of cake. Enough to take a couple down to Primavera Men's Shelter. Plus, we kept a few for dessert at Soul Station on Wednesday. I think everyone enjoyed it immensely, thank you so much!

Donna Reed, SPRC

The Nash Neighbors Committee would like to thank the members of the congregation for their very generous donations of school supplies. The supplies were delivered to Nash Elementary on August 4th in time for the new school year. As an FYI, here is what was donated: 494 glue sticks, 342 dry-erase markers, 187 boxes of Kleenex, 71 rolls of paper towels, 21 bottles of hand sanitizer, and 71 containers of disinfectant wipes. Great job and thanks again!

Barb Sargent, Nash Neighbors

Thank you so much for your cards and prayers. I will carry your get well wishes and prayers as I go through my months of chemo.

Thank you, Gail Blevins

Mission Spotlight!

Through your generous giving our Missions Committee ministry at St. Mark's continues to serve the greater Tucson community as well as reaching out to national organizations to provide goods and financial support to various agencies who focus on offering a hand up to people in need. Here are a few "thank you" notes expressing gratitude for St. Mark's contributions:

On behalf of NAAF, please extend our gratitude to St. Mark's UM for all the gardening supplies that were donated. The Tohono O'Odham people were farmers and cattle ranchers, so you are helping take them back to their roots!



*Thanks Again,
Jennifer Dietze*



Casey, Missions Committee, and St. Mark's friends – You are truly champions of compassion and ambassadors for equality of opportunity. Thank you for being our amazing partners on this important pathway!

*Gratefully yours,
JoAnn Salazar*

CPR Refresher Course

Sunday, Sept. 17th - 1:00 to 2:30 p.m.

Mark your calendars for Sunday, Sept. 17th from 1:00 to 2:30 p.m. when St. Mark's will offer Community CPR (Continuous Chest Compression CPR). This is a non-certification course, but all participants will receive a card for completing the training. Through this abbreviated class, you will receive basic information and skills to perform CPR in emergencies. The cost

is \$10 per person, and registration is required. For more information or to sign up, contact Ruth Kester (ruthk@umcstmarks.org or 297-2062) by Wednesday, Sept. 13th.



Providing our brave men and women in uniform with the



gift of God's Word in audio is a blessing that will bring them peace, comfort, and spiritual protection as they put themselves in harm's way while serving our country. Thank you for standing with us in partnership to bring the comfort of God's Word to our military heroes!

*Until all have heard,
Troy Carl, Vice President*

Most of us take essentials like a toothbrush, a new towel, or a fresh pillow for granted, but every day families enter Emerge's emergency shelter with little more than the clothes on their backs. Thank you for your incredible support and thoughtfulness. Your investment in our mission is crucial. With your generous support, Emerge! is working to end the cycle of domestic abuse in our community. We couldn't do it without you.



*Sincerely,
Lauryn Bianco*

St. Mark's Childcare Training

Sunday, Sept. 17th - 3:00 to 4:00 pm

St. Mark's UMC childcare training is scheduled for Sunday, September 17th from 3:00 to 4:00 p.m. It is open to those 7th grade through adult who enjoy interacting with young children and aren't afraid to change a diaper or get down on the ground and play. Current and new childcare workers are required to attend the training. This is a part-time, paid position. Shifts are primarily Sunday mornings and Wednesday evenings during worship, although there are other day and evening slots available as needed. Please contact Ruth Kester at (ruthk@umcstmarks.org or 297-2062) for more information or sign up for the training.



Note: CPR training is required for all childcare workers. This training will be held on Sunday, Sept. 17th prior to the childcare training from 1:00 to 2:30 pm. There is no fee for childcare staff. Please contact Ruth Kester in the church office to sign up.



Preteens Return on Rally Day, Aug. 13th!

If you have a child(ren) beginning the 4th or 5th grade, then this is the group for them! We like to have fun and be silly, also be kind and play together. Last week we learned about God and each other with the Skittles game, played dodge ball, completed a hundred-piece puzzle together, ate donut holes, and made little sea animals. Come join us from 4:00 - 6:00 p.m. in Room 9.

Faith in Action—Adult Mission Trip.

Join us as we travel to Portland, OR, with Sierra Service Project to learn about homelessness and serve God's family. Sierra Service Project is the same organization the youth serve with on their summer mission trip, and we are excited to get the chance to experience faith in action. <http://sierraserviceproject.org/programs/alternative-breaks/>



The tentative plan is for the team to leave in September or October. We'll announce the dates, as soon as they are confirmed. A \$200 deposit is required to hold your spot. Scholarships are available. Please contact Margaret Synhorst at the church office (margaret@umcstmarks.org or 297-2062).



NOOMA DVD Study Begins August 20th

Join the *Sharing and Family Life Adult Sunday School* classes (Sundays 9:45–10:45 a.m. in Room 17), from August 20 through October 1, to view and discuss selections from **NOOMA**, a series of short films that explore our world from the perspective of Jesus. **NOOMA** is an invitation to search, question, and join the discussion. The series is hosted by Rob Bell, an American author, speaker, and former pastor. Bell was the founder of Mars Hill Bible Church located in Grandville, MI which he pastored until 2012. No book is required, and everyone is invited to drop in whenever you can during the seven weeks to experience this new format for getting Christian perspectives.

If you have questions, contact Terry Majewski (see directory) or Rick Farnsworth (see directory).

Exploring Membership

Have you been wanting to know more about this terrific church or considering membership at St. Mark's? If so, you are warmly invited to our next Exploring Membership Class. The class is two "double-sessions" in the Library on Sunday mornings, Aug. 20th and 27th, from 11:00 a.m. until 2:30 p.m. A light lunch is served mid-session each Sunday. Childcare will be available for those who request it. You may sign up on Sundays at the Spiritual Growth bulletin board in the courtyard, online at <http://www.umcstmarks.org/adult-classes.php>, or call Janie in the church office (297-2062). The study is called "Exploring Membership" intentionally – the decision to join after the classes is entirely your own. If these August class don't fit your schedule, the class is offered quarterly. Just watch the **Messenger** and Sunday bulletins for news about future class dates.



Mission U Learning Sessions

United Methodist Women of the South District, Desert Southwest Conference will host one of the annual Mission u learning sessions at Catalina United Methodist Church on Friday afternoon, August 18, and Saturday, August 19. Our own Rev. Evy McDonald and Alberta Farnsworth will facilitate two of the classes this year. Several St. Mark's women will be attending. Please pray for Mission u and everyone who attends.



“GivePlus Church” New Mobile Giving App!

We welcome all donations through any of the options we offer for giving. And for our smartphone users, don't forget you can contribute through a new option called **GivePlus Church**, our new mobile giving app. It's a convenient solution whenever you have your phone, but don't have cash or checks with you.

Go to the App Store or Google Play and search for “GivePlus Church” to quickly find the app and download it for free. You can easily make donations anytime you're moved to give, or create an account to schedule recurring offerings. When you create an account, you can also securely and conveniently store debit/credit or bank account information, manage donations and review giving history. You choose how you prefer to login in – Touch ID/Fingerprint, PIN or password.



Contact Ruth Kester in the church office (Ruthk@umcstmarks.org or 297-2062), if you need more information. We hope you enjoy this new way to contribute to our ministry, and thank you for your support!

Finance Committee

Endowment News

The Permanent Endowment Fund of St. Mark's is established to provide members and friends the opportunity to make charitable gifts to St. Marks United Methodist Church that will become a permanent endowment of financial support and a living memorial. The Endowment Fund is intended for church purposes to supplement programs and ministries as appropriate. Please contact the Endowment Committee Chair, Marci Hill (see directory) or Ruth Kester (ruthk@umcstmarks.org) for further information.

During 2017, the St. Mark's Endowment has funded six requests for over \$9,000 including:

- § Mark-a-ritas Welcome Baby Luncheon;
- § 11:15 a.m. Gathering new keyboard and accessories;
- § Dinners for two six-week seminars for “You Only Die Once” (YODO);
- § Portable sound system for areas not supported by the permanent sound system;
- § Nash Neighbors and Nash Elementary School new literacy program for Nash children in kindergarten; and
- § A part-time St. Mark's staff position for a young adult Common Grounds Ministries Coordinator.

Donation Drive for San Carlos Animals August 20th and 27th!

The Humane Society Veterinary Medical Association - Rural Area Veterinary Services program (HSVMA-RAVS) is a non-profit veterinary outreach program that combines community service and veterinary education, bringing free veterinary services to underserved rural communities where poverty and geographic isolation make regular veterinary care inaccessible.

Last year, the program's six staff members and more than 350 volunteers provided veterinary care for animals in communities where no other animal services exist, from Native American reservations throughout the United States to remote villages in Latin America and around the world.

In 2015, RAVS launched an intensive community outreach project with the San Carlos Apache tribe in Arizona. Each month, a veterinarian from Ohio arrives for a five-day clinic, assisted by numerous volunteers. In addition to more than 8200 free vet exams, they've also provided spay/neuter surgeries, life-saving emergency surgeries, free vaccines, dewormer and tick medication. Local volunteers in Tucson and Phoenix take it upon themselves to round up donations of pet supplies to be distributed during these clinics, and this is where St. Mark's can help!

On the 3rd and 4th Sundays of August (Aug. 20 and 27), the Animal Ministry Team will have tables in the courtyard to accept donations of pet supplies for the animals on the San Carlos reservation. (See list below.) We all know pet owners and animal lovers, so be sure to spread the word and collect items from neighbors and friends, too! Donations can also be dropped in the church office during the week. Questions? Contact Sandi Heilman (see directory). Or, go to St. Mark's website at http://www.umcstmarks.org/pdf/animalministry_080717w.pdf and print a copy of this information to share with your friends and neighbors who may want to help!

Please note: These items can be new OR used!

- ▶ Canned ground dog and cat food
- ▶ Dry puppy and kitten food
- ▶ Dry cat food
- ▶ Kitten and puppy milk
- ▶ Wire kennels
- ▶ Potty pads
- ▶ Collars and leashes
- ▶ Dog beds
- ▶ Dog houses (especially the igloo style)
- ▶ Food and water bowls
- ▶ Treats
- ▶ Toys
- ▶ Gallons of bleach
- ▶ Pet medications



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

Volunteers are needed to provide a meal for 60 to 70 people on Wednesday nights at Soul Station. If your group is interested in participating, 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, or contact the church office (297-2062) if you or your group would like to volunteer.



ART GALLERY EXHIBIT



The month of August is the last chance to view Pastor Sharon's photography that is on display in the Welcome Center Gallery.



Our Desert Southwest Conference is being asked to pray during the week of August 13 – 19 to support the work of the Commission on a Way Forward. The Commission on a Way Forward was proposed by the United Methodist Council of Bishops and approved by the 2016 General Conference to do a complete examination and possible revision of every paragraph of the Book of Discipline concerning human sexuality, as well as explore options that help to maintain and strengthen the unity of the church. Different United Methodist Conferences are being asked to hold the Commission in prayer during each of their nine meetings. (They are about halfway through.) The DSW Conference has prepared a daily prayer guide (below) for our use. Alternatively, Bishop Bob and the District Superintendents will also be leading prayers online at noon each day on [Facebook.com/dsumc](https://www.facebook.com/dsumc).

Further information about the work, progress, and membership of the Commission can be found at <http://www.umc.org/who-we-are/commission-on-a-way-forward>. If you have questions, please contact the pastoral staff (297-2062) at St. Mark's.

OPENING— **Sunday, August 13** (Scripture: Proverbs 2:1-5)

Questions: What is the benefit of being open to God and others in our spiritual journey? At what times of your life has God called you to be open? What does it mean for the United Methodist Church to have “open hearts, open minds, and open doors?”

Prayer: Loving God, in a world of change you placed eternity in our hearts and gave us the power to discern good from evil. Grant us sincerity, that we may persistently seek the things that endure and refuse those which perish. That, amid things vanishing and deceptive, we may be open to see the truth steadily, follow the light faithfully, and grow ever richer in that love which is the life of all people; through Jesus Christ, our savior. Amen. (Adapted from “For Discernment,” United Methodist Book of Worship, #510.)

SEARCHING— **Monday, August 14** (Scripture: Psalm 139:1, 23, Acts 17:26-28)

Questions: Searching surrounds us: smart phones searching for signal, “search engines” guide our internet quests, we search for our keys and our life purpose, we pray for search parties out to rescue and recover. What are ways that you are searching? What searches are you sharing with others? What does it mean that all people are searching for God and living and being in God at the same time? What search is God calling you to and how might that search require trust, compassion, relationship, authenticity, boldness, and collaboration?

Prayer: God of quest and request, your Life-giving Word draws us into the mysteries of this world, the unknown journeys of open hearts, open minds, and open doors. Teach us to ask, to knock, and to search in a way that keeps us open to wonder so that we might find you in all that lives and moves and has being. Amen.

LISTENING— **Tuesday, August 15**

(Scripture: Ecclesiasticus (Sirach) 6:33, Ecclesiasticus (Sirach) 33:4 (From the Apocrypha)

“If you love to listen you will gain knowledge, and if you pay attention, you will become wise.” “Prepare what to say, and then you will be listened to; draw upon your training, and give your answer.”

LISTENING - Tuesday, August 15 continued

Questions: Do you truly listen to others or are you preparing how you will answer them? Do you slow yourself down enough to hear God's direction and guidance? What is stopping you from truly listening to each other and God?

Prayer: Teach me to listen, O God, to all as I engage in conversations with others and You. Help me to be aware of the message spoken whether the words are compassionate or hostile. May the Holy Spirit help me to discern meanings in scripture that guide me to His truth. Slow me from judgment, but move me to acceptance. Teach me, O God, to truly listen. Amen.

UNDERSTANDING— Wednesday, August 16 (Scripture: Matthew 13:23)

Questions: When we listen, do we seek to understand, especially those different than ourselves. Understanding is truly an expression of Love for the other person. When was the last time we talked with someone who's life was different than ours and actually understood their situation or opinion?

This week, look for opportunities to engage with someone different than yourself, and start up a discussion. Listen to their words, and understand where they are. Understanding others is a powerful way to plant God's seeds of Love.

Prayer: Lord Jesus Christ, grant me the gift of understanding. Help me to understand the feelings of others, the desires of others, the goals of others. At the same time, help me to understand myself in my actions and reactions. Widen my vision to love others even though I may not be able to agree with their views. Help me, Lord, to always see you at work in my own life and the lives of others. Bless me with insight, acceptance, and love tempered by you who are all things to all people. Help me to understand, Lord. Amen. (n.d. Retrieved from <https://praisehouston.com/4636194/minute-meditation-prayer-to-understand-others>)

REACHING OUT— Thursday, August 17 (Scripture: Revelation 3:20)

Question: Are you reaching? Are you reaching for God in all that you do? Do you feel God reaching for you?

Prayer: Our heavenly Father, I am reaching out to you to guide me and show me the path. Take my hand Lord and lead me to the light of your love. Help me reach to you and others and share that meal with all who knock at my door. Amen!

EMBRACING— Friday, August 18 (Scripture: Romans 12:15-16a; 1Corinthians 12: 25b-26)

Question: How can we possibly benefit from embracing, from putting our arms around another and feeling their arms around us? What can we lose when we enter into this act? Are there different ways to embrace?

Prayer: When we hesitate to get close; draw us nearer. Help us respect one another's vulnerabilities when we put up walls and keep others out. When understanding seems impossible; remind us all things are possible with you. When love feels too painful, remind us that we are better having loved than never at all. Above all, O God, strengthen us to embrace one another with dignity and appreciation. Amen.

TRANSFORMING— Saturday, August 19 (Scripture: Matthew 7:12, John 13:30)

Question: When was a time someone showed you love in a way that impacted how you live? What does love look like as you pray for the work of the Commission on the Way Forward? How will you be an instrument of that type of love this week?

Prayer: God of grace and God of glory, let your love be so present in all that I do and say, in how I live each day, that people cannot help but see you. Let your love transform us into the church you desire. Then enable us to transform the world with the power of love. Make us one, Lord, united in mission, grace, and love. Amen.



ECC News - Meet our new Pre-K Teacher!

We would like to introduce Ms. Sara Mortensen, one of our new Pre-K teachers! She and her husband, Stephen, moved to Tucson in October. Their son, Oliver, will be turning one year-old this July. Sara has her Bachelor of Science in Education from NAU and has been able to teach in many different settings, including Kindergarten and 2nd grade. She feels blessed to have the opportunity to teach at St. Mark's. Welcome, Sara! We still have a few openings in our 4-year old, five-day program.

Please call the Early Childhood Center (797-2925) if you are interested.

PLEASE KEEP THESE PEOPLE IN YOUR PRAYERS!

Rehab or Care Facilities:

Than Brademas, Donald Chester, Barbara Fradenburgh, Patricia Keele, Bob Ross, Yvonne Yare



Hospice Care:

Bill Duryee, Jerry Langemeier, Judy Mitzimberg, Marla Mutschler, Howard Russell,

Undergoing Treatment at Home:

Jude Anderson, Gail Blevins, Audrey Dawson, Judy Drescher, April DuBoce, Tiffany Guerette, Breanne Hallam, eanise Jalbert-Hagg, Ann Martin, Megan Krzmarzick, Karen Linebarier, Dell Long, Cynthia Rayner, Mel Speck, Don Watt, Connie White

Recovering at Home:

Gary Dean, Nancy Gobrecht, J Janet Krug, Betty Myers, Jim Ward, Dave Webster

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 & Donna Severson

Jayce Cunha, son of Rich and Blanca Cunha

Zachary Dojaquez, grandson of Roger & Donna Severson

Brandonn Eto, friend of Zirnheld/Compernelle family

Rob Eubank, son of David & Johanna Eubank

Mike Freeman, son of Ken & Ann Freeman

Patrick Harris, grandson of Marilyn Vaughn

Greg Haynes, son of Bob & Melinda Haynes

Matthew Hughey, son of Juliee & Billy Morrison and grandson of Joyce Flick

Rachel Kester, daughter of Don & Ruth Kester

Travis Kroll, son-in-law of Becky Strain

Chad Long, grandson of Pat Long

Mark Joseph Maver, son of Seymour & Marcia Maver

Joshua Miller, grandson of Ginny Johnson

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

Joshua Ruth, son-in-law of Marjie Walp

Adam Seia, son of David & Vonda Seia

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

Timothy Trexler, great-nephew of Gail Blevins

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



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Reflections

With Flat Sharon in Art's backpack, and the real me in the passenger's seat (most of the time), on my renewal leave we made our way to Kansas City, MO; Ann Arbor, MI; Chicago, IL; Racine, WI; Deer River, MN; Grand Forks, ND; Colorado Springs, CO; Keystone, CO, then home for a few weeks. We went to Sedona together, and I went back by myself for a personal retreat. Finally we spent time in Lake Tahoe, hiking, resting and enjoying the cool beauty.

Not only did we visit places, we connected with family and friends in deep and meaningful ways. We reconnected with our growing-up places, and where we went to college, remembering and celebrating. Art and I spent great time together, traveling, hiking, and praying together.

Not only did we visit places and people, I rested my brain and heart, and nourished my soul through rest, reading, conversation with loved ones and simply being with God. This was a great gift.

The last part of my leave time was marked by sadness and concern. On July 25, while we were gone, we had to say good-bye to our precious, 15 year-old little dog, Maggie, who passed away in the arms of our grown children, here in Tucson, as we joined them via FaceTime. The next day my brother, Larry, suffered a major bleeding stroke, so I left Lake Tahoe for a few days to be with him and his wife, Marti, in Phoenix. Larry is slowly recovering, but has a long

road ahead of him. We praise God for his progress, and hold him and Marti in earnest prayers.

Now I am back with you. I missed you, worshiping with you, talking with you and knowing about your lives and the ways God is working in them. I will be in worship with you on August 13, and am greatly looking forward to that. I'm very grateful to all those who made my spiritual growth and renewal leave possible including Pastor Tammy, Pastor Evy, our church staff, and so many leaders. Thank you from the depths of my renewing heart.

Thank you for taking Flat Sharon on all your journeys and adventures. What fun I had watching the videos and seeing the photos of Flat Sharon's travels, literally around the world.

What's In A Miracle? is the theme of our messages the next few weeks as we continue **Good News for Today's World** and look at the ways Jesus works in our hearts and lives. The stories of Jesus' miracles will guide our Sunday worship and **Going Deeper** at Soul Station on Wednesday nights.

See you on Sunday!

Thanks and blessings,
Sharon