

Messenger

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



Thank You Janie Towne!



Janie Towne will retire from her position on St. Mark's staff as Administrative Assistant for Hospitality on Friday, May 17, after serving the St. Mark's congregation for over three years.

We appreciate her creativity, hard work, teamwork and commitment to our church's ministry and mission.

Janie plans to travel and enjoy her retirement with friends and family. While we are very happy that Janie will remain a vital member of our congregation, we will miss her smiling face in our front office.

*Ken Dunlap, Chair
Staff Parish Relations Committee*

Welcome Kathryn Barrera!

We are pleased to announce that Kathryn Barrera has accepted our offer to serve as St. Mark's part-time Administrative Assistant for Hospitality.



Kathryn has impressive work and education background and has the skills needed for the position. Her work history as an office manager and as a school administrator coupled with her degree in Music will fit nicely into the St. Mark's Team. Kathryn will report to Administrative Services Team Leader, Ruth Kester.

Kathryn began working in our church office on Monday, May 6 and has already shown that her smile, outgoing personality and skills will endear her to the St. Mark's community. Kathryn relocated from California and now lives in Tucson with her husband and two-year old son. Stop in the office to welcome her.

*Bill Wickham,
Staff Parish Relations Committee*

• Super Summer Spectacular! •

Want a mid-week pick-me-up when you don't have to cook and get to have some fun or maybe learn something new? Join us at Soul Station, June 5 through July 31 for nine weeks of exploring art, cell phone photography, music and learning about love languages, living a resurrection shaped life and the biggest scandal in the Old Testament.

Each week begins with dinner at 5:45 p.m. in Fellowship Hall, followed by children's time, prayers and Holy Communion. After communion everyone will go to one of the three unique offerings. Some will be for multiple weeks and others one week only. Childcare and a program for youth will be available. Registration is not necessary for these activities, simply join us for Soul Station meals then choose whatever interests you most! It's a great way to meet different people from our church community and have fun during the summer months. If you have questions please contact Pastor Evy (evy@umcstmarks.org). Hope to see you often at Soul Station this summer for some spectacular summer fun! A full schedule of the activities is listed on page two.



**JUST A LITTLE
Reminder**

Please Note! The next MESSENGER newsletter publication date is June 12. The deadline for submitting information for that newsletter is Thurs., June 6.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Super Summer Spectacular

Wednesday, June 5

Nancy Bautzmann: Having Fun with Art, Part 1: A Faith-Imagine That...
Adult Spiritual Growth: *Distorted Images of God, Restoring Our Vision*
Pastor Sharon and Pastor Evy: *Living A Resurrection Shaped Life*

Wednesday, June 12

Nancy Bautzmann: Having Fun with Art, Part 2: A Faith-Imagine That...
Adult Spiritual Growth: *Distorted Images of God, Restoring Our Vision*
Pastor Sharon and Pastor Evy: *Living A Resurrection Shaped Life*

Wednesday, June 19

Mark Hrabe: Taking Better Pictures with Your Cell Phone, Part 1
Adult Spiritual Growth: *Distorted Images of God, Restoring Our Vision*
Pastor Sharon and Pastor Evy: *Living A Resurrection Shaped Life*

Wednesday, June 26

Potluck Dinner, everyone brings a dish to share.

Mark Hrabe: Taking Better Pictures with Your Cell Phone, Part 2
Adult Spiritual Growth: *Distorted Images of God, Restoring Our Vision*
Pastor Sharon and Pastor Evy: *Living A Resurrection Shaped Life*

Wednesday, July 3

JoAnn Luther: Fun with Bells
Adult Spiritual Growth: *Distorted Images of God, Restoring Our Vision*
Pastor Stuart: The Biggest Scandal in the Old Testament

Wednesday, July 10

Kathy Narney: Meet Noel, My Heart
Adult Spiritual Growth: *Distorted Images of God, Restoring Our Vision*
Pastor Stuart: The Biggest Scandal in the Old Testament

Wednesday, July 17

Cathy Harris-Herchenroeder: Bible Journaling
Adult Spiritual Growth: *Distorted Images of God, Restoring Our Vision*
Pastor Stuart: The Biggest Scandal in the Old Testament

Wednesday, July 24

Sandi Heilman: A Crash Course in the Five Love Languages
(useful for anyone)
Adult Spiritual Growth: *Distorted Images of God, Restoring Our Vision*
Pastor Stuart: The Biggest Scandal in the Old Testament

Wednesday, July 31

Potluck Dinner, everyone brings a dish to share.
Linda Hill: Gluten-free Cooking for your Friends
Adult Spiritual Growth: *Distorted Images of God, Restoring Our Vision*
Pastor Stuart: The Biggest Scandal in the Old Testament



ST. MARK'S VBS 2019

VBS is an all-church event!

Vacation Bible School is for the whole church! This year's theme is *Love Your Neighbor*, and one of our mission projects is making travel bags for children at The INN. These bags will help people on their multi-day bus trip they take after they leave The INN. One way you can be a part of Vacation Bible School is to bring items for the bags.

Items Needed:

- Small stuffed animals from Dollar Stores
- Coloring or activities books
- Crayons or colored pencils
- Small toys (like puzzles, games, etc.)

You can bring these items beginning Sunday, May 19, to the courtyard or drop them off at the church office during the week.

Prayer!

You may also pray for the children who attend and the volunteers at VBS.

Friday Night Celebration!

Everyone is invited to the closing celebration June 7, at 6:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary. This is such a fun and uplifting event. You should come and see the children, it's awesome.

Volunteers Needed!

Can you give just one hour?

This summer we need volunteers to give one hour and be a Children's Sunday School helper. No experience or preparation is necessary, just come prepared to have fun! Contact Margaret (margaret@umcstmarks.org) or catch her in the courtyard on Sunday to let her know you have that hour to give.

Adult Spiritual Growth

Faith is a journey!

Open Minds Book Discussion

Friday, May 24 - Library at 9:30 a.m.

The Open Minds book discussion group will be concentrating our reading on books about the earth, climate change, or extinctions for our May meeting. The books suggested for reading include:



The Sixth Extinction by Elizabeth Kolbert, a naturalist, explains that we are in the Earth's sixth extinction and what is really going on worldwide. This is a highly regarded book in the field.

Hospitable Planet by Stephen A. Jurovics is about Christians and how they can impact global warming.

The Uninhabitable Earth by David Wallace-Wells is the newest book and hot off the press. It is full of up-to-date information but possibly a depressing read about how things are changing, and rapidly.

Choose one of those or a current book not on the list and join us for our final meeting of the year.

Amazing Grace

May 28, 6:00 p.m., Rm 17/18

This month's featured film from our *Heroes of the Faith movie series* is *Amazing Grace*. This inspiring movie, starring Benedict Cumberbatch, Albert Finney and Loan Gruffud, tells the story of the passion and perseverance of William Wilberforce who led the fight to abolish slavery throughout the British Empire.

Based on a true story, Wilberforce, with the aid of his long-time friend, Prime Minister William Pitt, met intense opposition from other members of Parliament. He was supported and inspired by John Newton, a former slave trader, minister and writer of the hymn, *Amazing Grace*.

Please join us for this excellent film. As usual, popcorn will be provided; bring your own beverage.

Exploring What We Believe

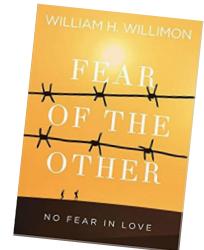
Sundays, June 2, 9, 11:00 a.m. Library

A two-session "short-course" will be offered for those who want to expand their awareness and knowledge of The United Methodist Church and their faith. All persons are welcome—long-time members, new members and those who are considering membership. Linda Walker, long-time adult educator at St. Mark's, will lead the discussions.

Linda wrote: "The first week we will have the chance to explore thoughts about God, Jesus and the Spirit—and the importance of people's relationships with them. We'll also have the opportunity to discuss faith growing and maturing over a lifetime. The second week, we'll explore the Bible: what's in it, ways of interpretation, reading and study tips, etc. We will also be speaking about God's grace." A sign-up sheet is available on the Adult Spiritual Growth bulletin board, or you may register online www.umstmarks.org.

Fear of the Other: No Fear in Love

Tuesdays, July 9—Aug. 6
1:30-3:00 p.m., Library



Linda Walker will lead a discussion of this most timely book by William H. Willimon which deals with the divisiveness in our culture. How many of us have said, "I wish there was something I could do about this atmosphere of hostility where everyone feels compelled to take sides and demonize the others?" It has seemed hopeless, hasn't it? Now there is a chance for us as followers of Christ to learn to lead the way and show that whether or not we agree, we can listen and work together in love. Please join us.

A sign-up sheet will be available on the Adult Spiritual Growth bulletin board, or you may register online www.umstmarks.org.

Summer Movie Series

Join us for the first of three family-friendly movies. Monday evenings in the Fellowship Hall, beginning at 6:00 p.m. The popcorn will be waiting for you—bring the entire family!

JUNE 10
***The Secret Garden*,**
hosted by Linda Walker



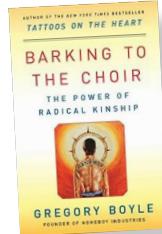
Summer Book Discussions

We will gather on Monday evenings at 6:00 p.m. in the church Library. One book has been selected each month for your summer reading enjoyment. Read the book and join the discussions. It's a great way to meet more people from our St. Mark's family.

June 24

Barking to the Choir: The Power of Radical Kinship

by Gregory Boyle. Led by Sandi Heilman.



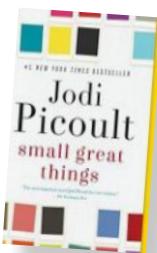
After the successful expansion of Homeboy Industries, Boyle returns with *Barking to the Choir* to reveal how compassion is transforming the lives of gang members. You'll read about men like Sergio, who was arrested at the age of nine, joined a gang by twelve, and served time shortly thereafter. Now, he works with the substance-abuse team at Homeboy to help others find sobriety.

July 29

Small Great Things by Jodi Picoult.

Led by Margaret Synhorst.

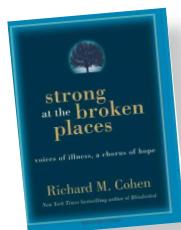
Picoult chose the title from the words of Martin Luther King, "If I cannot do great things, I can do small things in a great way." The book deals with the issue of race in America and revolves around the protagonist, a delivery nurse named Ruth Jefferson.



Aug. 26

Strong at the Broken Places: Voices of Illness,

a Chorus of Hope by Richard M. Cohen.



Led by Art Ragland. An intimate look at living with chronic illness. The author himself has multiple sclerosis, works with five participants who have various chronic illnesses to capture their stories and help others understand the overwhelming toll that chronic illness can take.

Easter Gifts!

Your generous contributions toward the **2019 Easter offering raised \$15,325**. Fifty percent of this amount is designated for the Sierra Service Project fund to support the youth of St. Mark's as they travel to San Diego, CA on their mission trip in July. The other half will be sent to the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) to assist those in need around the globe. **Thank you!**



Welcome Confirmands!

Congratulations to St. Mark's newest confirmation class who took their vows on Sunday, May 12, 2019 and are now members of our church!



James Lewis Carsten

James is in 8th grade at Wilson K-8 and will begin Canyon Del Oro high school in the fall. James plays the guitar.



Frederick Charles Morrison

Frederer attends Wilson K-8 and is in 8th grade this year. He will begin high school at Ironwood Ridge this fall. Frederer plays the trumpet.



Zoe Hero Newell

Zoe attends Wilson K-8 school and is in 8th grade. She will attend Ironwood Ridge high school in the fall. Zoe is an active golfer, dancer, singer and she loves to act!



Annika Lynn Norine

Annika is currently in 8th grade at Cross middle school. She will enroll at Canyon Del Oro high school this fall. Annika has been singing in choir for six years and she loves to write poetry.



Daniel Roberto Titzel

Daniel is in 8th grade at Primavera school and will attend Canyon Del Oro high school this fall. Daniel's favorite things to do is to read and to babysit.

Calling all Middle Schoolers!

The South District Middle School Mission is May 28-31. The event begins with dinner, worship and games on Tuesday and concludes with an afternoon at an amusement place on Friday. Participants arrive at 5:00 p.m. Tuesday, stay at our church, and leave at 5:00 p.m. Friday. On Wednesday and Thursday, teams of youth will travel to different parts of Tucson to be involved with a number of service projects. Friday begins with pack up, clean up, worship and lunch before the amusement event. All youth who have completed the 6th through 8th grades this spring are eligible to participate.

Register online: https://stmarksumc.formstack.com/forms/middleschoolmission_registrationform.
For information contact: Rachel Mosher (rachel@mcstmarks.org), or Kim Ogle (kim@mcstmarks.org).



Volunteer Summer Choir



Throughout the summer our Chancel Choir and Celebration Singers take a well-deserved vacation. During this time, we have a volunteer Summer Choir that rehearses on Sundays at 7:45 a.m. then sings for the two traditional services at 8:15 and 9:45 a.m. The Summer Choir will sing on six Sundays: June 2, 16, and 30, July 14 and 28, and August 11. You do not need to commit to singing all of the Sundays. All are invited to join in this volunteer group led by Sondra Franks. If you have any questions, please contact Sondra Franks (see directory) or Susan Putt (susan@umcstmarks.org).

Craft Circle Meeting

Tuesday, May 28, Rm 17/18, 900 a.m. to noon

St. Mark's United Methodist Women (UMW) invite you to join their newly formed Craft Circle that meets the fourth Tuesday each month. Come for a few hours or whatever your schedule permits. We are always looking for new ideas, examples of crafts, donations of craft supplies and willing helpers. You may work on your own craft, or crafts for the UMW craft fairs in Nov. and Dec. Join us for the fun fellowship, everyone is welcome. *If you have craft and sewing supplies you no longer use, Craft Circle would love to take them off your hands. Buttons, ribbon, styrofoam, beads, lace or anything else is appreciated.* Please contact Bonnie Sargent (see directory) if you have any questions.



and
would

Common Grounds

Common Grounds is gearing up for a fun summer!
I know a lot of us have a jam-packed summer. We will take a break from our Sunday morning classes, but don't worry, there is still plenty of activities for us! 

On Wednesday nights, Soul Station is offering ***Super Summer Spectacular!*** During June and July, Common Grounds is invited to join whichever classes interest you! Watch for more information soon.



*Rachel Mosher, coordinator
Common Grounds*

Giving Statements

You should receive your year-to-date giving statement in the next week. If you have any corrections to your statement, please contact Sherry Walker (*sherry@umcstmarks.org* or **520-297-2062**).

Please keep in mind that it is very important for budget purposes that contributions continue during the summer months. If you have not done so already, you might consider setting up your donation online. This can be a one-time contribution or a regular automatic deduction. It's quick and easy to set up from our website (www.umcstmarks.org) and select the ***Giving*** box). If you have questions or need assistance, please contact Ruth Kester (ruthk@umcstmarks.org).



Visit Great Britain with Church Friends!

Would you like to share a memorable journey with church friends? Rev. Sharon and Art Ragland and Mark and Marjie Hrabe are leading a trip to Great Britain from April 20-29, 2020. The focus will be visiting sites important to the life and work of John Wesley, the founder of Methodism. We'll also be visiting the English countryside and other historic places. There are still some openings for this trip. For a \$150 discount register by May 20, 2019.

For more information contact:

Mark or Marjie Hrabe
zephyrmark@yahoo.com
Mark: 520-276-8064
Marjie: 520-481-9251

Rev. Sharon or Art Ragland
sharon@umcstmarks.org
Sharon: 520-256-7924
Art: 520-250-8245

You can access a trip brochure by visiting:

<https://shared-assets.adobe.com/link/fb8c0bd1-444f-4b05-53e5-b8d7f7568a6f>

Online Registration:

<https://www.forms.travelwithus.com/web/paxreg.nsf/Registration?OpenForm&HE20+X+042020X+39642>

We're excited about sharing this experience with members and friends of St. Mark's.

Worldwide Christian Support Task Force Update

British Foreign Secretary, Jeremy Hunt Orders Review of Worldwide Christian Persecution - Interim Report finds Persecution of Christians at Near Genocidal Levels.



British Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt ordered a review of the persecution of Christians and what the stance has been of Britain toward it. In doing so, he cited an International Society for Human Rights report that Christians are victims of 80% of all acts of religious discrimination. He stated "I am not convinced that our response to the threats facing this particular group has always matched the scale of the problem, nor taken into account of the hard evidence that Christians often endure a disproportionate burden of persecution." He appointed Bishop Philip Mounstephen, Bishop of Truro to lead the review. In doing so, he stated "It is not in our national character to turn a blind eye to suffering. All religious minorities must be protected and the evidence demonstrates that in some countries, Christians face the greatest risk." The Interim report found, "Evidence shows not only the geographic spread of anti-Christian persecution, but also its increasing severity." It stated, "In some regions, the level and nature of persecution is arguably coming close to meeting the international definition of genocide, according to that adopted by the UN."

If you would like more information about persecuted Christians, or to join St. Mark's Task Force, email us at christiansupport@umcstmark.org or drop a note in our committee mailbox, at the church office.

Charles Wise, Chair

*St. Mark's Worldwide Christian Support
Task Force Committee*

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. You may also, visit our Prayer Room on campus and leave a prayer on our prayer wall.

Dottie Allen
Ellen Beene
Jared Bowman & family
Clara Campbell

Donald Chester
Deb Cushman
Shelley Shelton Coltrin
Judy Drescher

Keith and Mary Ann Glazier
Florella Harrington
Patricia Keele
Marian Shultis

Carol Underwood
Jackie Vickers
Dave and Jan Webster
Lindsay Williams

CONDOLENCES

Sympathy and prayers for Howard and Bob Hval and their family on the passing of Howard's wife and Bob's mother, Kay, on May 8, 2019.

We are deeply saddened to let you know that our dear brother in Christ, **Pastor Joe Brown**, passed away early this morning, Monday, May 13, 2019. Please keep Alice and their family surrounded with your comforting prayers. We and Joe's family are grateful that Joe is in the loving arms of his Savior. A memorial service is scheduled on June 8, in St. Mark's Sanctuary at 2:00 p.m.

WASSUP?

May 15, 2019

Volume 20, Issue 9



UPCOMING MIDDLE SCHOOL AND HIGH SCHOOL EVENTS

May 19, 2019—

3:00 to 6:00

Meet at Wesley House

A Dog's Journey

\$2 plus snack money

Friends welcome



May 26, 2019—

Memorial Day Holiday

NO YOUTH GROUP

May 28-31, 2019—

MIDDLE SCHOOL MISSION

June 2, 2091—

2:30

Special Speaker at

St. Paul's UMC

(Details coming later)



Pre Teens,
GOOD NEWS! Summer is almost here. We all like to get good news, right ? The Bible is full of the Good News that Jesus shared with his disciples through His stories and teachings. Join us this summer for Fun Filled Fellowship and to learn more about Jesus' Good News. See you on Sunday.

Blessings,
Julie

May 19th- Movie Night-
"The Kid Who Would Be King"
rated PG

Movie and yummy snacks
Bring a pillow, blanket & friend

May 26th-
Memorial Day Holiday
NO PreTeen

June 2nd—
Water games!

Celebrate
Summer



Find us on Social Media!



St. Mark's Youth Group



stmarksumyf

a note from the

YOUTH DIRECTOR

If you were in church on May 12, you got to see five of our eighth graders be confirmed. They've been in class almost every Sunday since September.

Confirmation is a class for young people in grades 8-12, who have not, yet been confirmed. The class learns about the history of Christianity, back to our Jewish roots; other denominations; and United Methodism.

When a youth is confirmed they are renewing the vows of baptism, and taking vows of membership into Christ's holy church. It's one of the first adult decisions that a young person makes on their own. Not everyone who takes the class decides to be confirmed, and that's fine. It's their decision.

When you see these people, please congratulate them on their accomplishment: James, Freder, Zoe, Annika, and Daniel.

Blessings,
Kim



Confirmation class of
2018-19



Middle School Moments



Our recycle
box grew
legs! What?

You guys seriously rock. Your Youth Council decided in March that they wanted our next Mission to be one that benefits the earth, and would include the whole congregation. They decided the best way to do this was to collect plastic bags to recycle.

All through April, we collected bags and last week at youth group we prepared them.

We collected, flattened, and folded over 600 plastic bags last month! Not only are we taking the bags out of the landfills, but we found the coolest way to recycle them.

There is a group in town that takes these bags, cuts them and turns them into yarn. This yarn is then crocheted into mats for homeless people in our area. These mats provide a cushion to sleep on, and are lightweight, and waterproof. I am so excited to see the mats that we are helping to create!

Way to go, guys!
See you Sunday!
Rachel

Calendar Notes

Sat., May 18

12:00 p.m. New Member Luncheon, Fellowship Hall
4:00 p.m. AZ Emmaus Gathering, Fellowship Hall

Sun., May 19

Spring New Members Class - all services
8:15 a.m. Traditional Service, Sanctuary
*9:45 a.m. Traditional Service, Sanctuary
11:15 a.m. The Gathering, Sanctuary
4:00 p.m. Holy Yoga, Fellowship Hall
4:00 p.m. Youth Group, Wesley House
4:00 p.m. PreTeens, Rm 8/9

Mon., May 20

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

Wed., May 22

10:30 a.m. Chronic Pain/Illness, Fellowship Hall
Noon BULLETIN DEADLINE
5:45 p.m. Soul Station Dinner, Fellowship Hall

Wed., May 22 continued

6:15 p.m. Common Grounds, Library
6:20 p.m. Soul Station Worship, Fellowship Hall

Thurs., May 23

10:00 a.m. Youth Directors , Fellowship Hall
6:30 p.m. Covenant Council, Fellowship Hall

Fri., May 24

9:30 a.m. Open Minds Book Discussion, Library

Sun., May 26

8:15 a.m. Traditional Service, Sanctuary
*9:45 a.m. Traditional Service, Sanctuary
11:15 a.m. The Gathering, Sanctuary
4:00 p.m. Holy Yoga, Fellowship Hall
4:00 p.m. No Youth Group or PreTeens

Mon., May 27

Office closed in observance of Memorial Day

*This service is live-streamed.



St. Mark's Messenger
Published bi-weekly

St. Mark's UMC
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Tucson, AZ 85704
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Email:
info@umcstmarks.org
Website:
www.umcstmarks.org

Lead Pastor:
Rev. Sharon Ragland
Associate Pastors:
Stuart Salvatierra
Rev. Dr. Evy McDonald

Sunday Worship:
8:15, 9:45*, 11:15 a.m.
*Live-streamed at
www.umcstmarks.org

Soul Station
Wednesday Night:
Dinner - 5:45 p.m.
Music/Programs
6:15-7:15 p.m.

Last Market for the Season!

On Saturday, June 1, from 8:00-10:00 a.m., (St. Mark's parking lot) you can purchase 60 pounds of produce for only \$10.



We could also use your help with setup at 7:00 a.m. to keep produce supplied, and with cleanup after 10:00 a.m. Volunteers may sign up on the Adult Spiritual Growth bulletin board located in the courtyard on Sundays, or contact Anita Winslow (see directory) or Casey Compernolle (see directory). We will have damaged produce for your animals starting at 9:00 a.m.

Let's make this is the biggest Market on the Move yet!

Art and Poetry Exhibit of Cynthia Langston Kirk

Stations of Paradise

Often we think of Paradise as a magnificent place where people dwell after death. What if Paradise is evident while we are living? What would we think if Christ, lover of us all, embodies Paradise completely and in a much different way than we've been taught? What if Christ lives as though Paradise is an everyday invitation for us to embrace that which is utterly holy and simultaneously quite ordinary?

You are invited to come ponder Paradise through poetry and art by Cynthia Langston Kirk (former associate pastor at St. Mark's July 1996 - June 2002) and to contemplate what God might be speaking to you. The sanctuary of Christ Church (655 N Craycroft Rd, Tucson, AZ 85711) will be open for viewing May 15, May 29 and June 5 from 12:00 – 1:00 p.m. Viewing of the installation is also available during office hours, just stop by the office for access.



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Reflections

A new day dawns, a gift from God. With windows open I hear the sounds of birds, see clear blue sky and breathe the cool air. Although Easter is more than three weeks past, I remember the great joy of April 21st at St. Mark's. Sunrise showed itself over the mountains and all morning we were blessed with music, baptisms, flowers in the Sanctuary, pancakes, hospitality, Word preached and spoken, and joy, exulting joy in the presence of new life, for which I am grateful to God. I am also grateful to all those who gave of themselves so we could worship deeply and richly throughout Lent, Holy Week and Easter.

Easter is more than a day or even a season of the year. Celebrating Easter is a way of life, acknowledging that God has shown us in Jesus that death and sorrow do not have the final word and that God is always bringing new life. Since the difficult decisions of the Special General Conference of the United Methodist Church held in late February, 2019, and the subsequent rulings in late April of the Judicial Council, I have been praying to trust that God is doing a new thing in our midst and for God to show us how to join in what God is about.

On Sunday, May 19, 2019, I will be in worship with you and will then travel that afternoon to Kansas City to be part of a gathering called UMC Next. This will be held at Church of the Resurrection in Leawood, Kansas, where

Adam Hamilton is the senior pastor. I have been invited to be part of a group of 600 people from around the country who will be praying, discussing and discerning a better way forward for the United Methodist Church. I am honored to be part of this group, nominated and selected so I can join with others to listen to God and help to forge a new future. This gathering will take place from May 20-22; I will be home late on Wednesday, May 22, 2019.

UMC Next is a diverse group of centrists and progressives, led not only by Adam Hamilton but by a planning group that is committed to seeing where God is leading us into a new future for the UMC. I welcome your prayers for me, the others from the Desert Southwest Conference who are attending, and all those at UMC Next. Please pray that God's Spirit gives us direction and wisdom, under an umbrella of deep love for God and all God's people. I look forward to sharing with you about UMC Next when I return.

Blessings, Sharon

P.S. Because of your generous giving, our Easter mission offering totaled \$15,325.00. Half of this will go to support our youth on a Sierra Service Project, with the other half going to the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR). Thank you!