

Messenger

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

Volume 59, Number 15

August 7, 2019

St. Mark's
United Methodist

St. Mark's Rally Day is this Sunday!



Children and Youth

Children will move up to the next grade of Sunday School with a big celebration (preschool children through fifth grade) meet in Rm 4. Sixth graders move to the Wesley House for Sunday School and Youth Group! Middle and High School meet at the Wesley House Sundays at 9:45 a.m.

Adults

Make sure you stop by Fellowship Hall between services and learn about all the activities and studies available. Also, find out more about the various Missions opportunities at our church and ways you can become involved and serve.

St. Mark's: One Church, Two Locations



Dove Mountain Update

What an exciting beginning. On Tuesday, July 23, a group of us were at the ribbon cutting ceremony for the new Dove Mountain CSTEM K-8 School on Moore Rd. It is an incredible facility that will offer an amazing learning environment for all of its students. It is an honor that we will be a part of that community. All of us present were able to see the large, very large, space that our worship service will occupy. It is a welcoming space with ample natural light. In addition, two nice sized music rooms will be used by us for a nursery and a Sunday School. We have a wonderful opportunity to add just the right touches to make it feel like a sacred space and not a cafeteria.



On Wednesday, July 24, eighteen volunteers, including five kids, met at the CSTEM School to help some of the teachers move in. This gave us the opportunity to introduce ourselves and to, truly, be of assistance. We moved boxes, helped unpack and even put together some xylophones. There was a lot of excitement and joy.

Last week, we distributed small gifts to each of the teachers and support staff. Each gift included a Starbucks gift card and a thumb drive. Sallyann (Communications and Outreach Coordinator) designed a great gift tag for each of the bags. On the first day of school, with the help of several volunteers, we hosted a "Boo-Hoo Breakfast" for parents of Kindergarteners.

We continue to work closely with Sallyann on promotion. Soon the Dove Mountain site will have a page on our website where you can keep up with everything that is happening and find ways you will be able to help. We're also looking at all of the portable pieces that it will take to create a worship space in a school cafeteria.

Excitement is rising every day, as we think of possibilities. We can't wait until mid-October, when we get to worship at St. Mark's Dove Mountain UMC!

Kim Ogle, Site Director
Evy McDonald, Pastoral Liaison

Praying Together for Peace



On **Wednesday, August 21, at 6:30 p.m.** we will have a special opportunity for communities of faith to come together to pray for peace in the Sanctuary at St. Mark's. This event began with Fr. Bill from St. Frances Cabrini Parish. It is hosted each month by a different faith community. We will be centering our worship service on the concept of what does it take to be a peacemaker. Come, let us join together at this critical time in our world to raise our voices in prayer and song for peace. Join us for dinner at 5:45 p.m., followed with Holy Communion and then our program.

The Soul Station Team

Tucson Interfaith HIV/AIDS Network News

St. Mark's members Pat Small and Linda Girard recently presented Scott Blades, Executive Director, Tucson Interfaith HIV/AIDS Network (TIHAN) with the church's donation of \$2,500 in support of our work during this 25th year of TIHAN's service to the HIV community. As one of our founding congregations, St. Mark's support and participation has been key to our ability to serve over a thousand people living with HIV. Thank you to all the staff and members of St. Mark's for your love and support!



Caring for Our Children

St. Mark's UMC is committed to caring for our children! If you are currently a St. Mark's childcare worker or if you are interested in becoming one, please mark your calendars for Childcare Training on Sunday, Sept. 15, 2:30 to 4:00 p.m.



It is available to students (7th grade up) and adults who enjoy interacting with young children and aren't afraid to change a diaper or get down on the floor and play. Current and new childcare workers are required to attend the training.

Being a St. Mark's childcare worker is a part-time, paid position. Shifts are primarily Sunday mornings and Wednesday evenings during worship, however there are other day and evening slots available as needed. Childcare staff sign up for shifts using SignUpGenius based on their availability.

It's a great way to gain job experience and earn some spending money in the process. CPR training is required for all childcare workers. This training will be held on Sunday, Sept. 15, prior to the childcare training from 1:00 to 2:30 p.m. There is no fee for childcare staff. Please contact Ruth Kester (ruthk@umcstmarks.org or 297-2062) for more information or to sign up for the training. The deadline to register is Wednesday, Sept. 11.

Need a Refresher in CPR?

On Sunday, Sept. 15, from 1:00 to 2:30 p.m. St. Mark's will offer Community CPR (Continuous Chest Compression). 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, please contact Ruth Kester (ruthk@umcstmarks.org or 297-2062) by Wed., Sept. 11.

Mystery Dinner Theater

Aug. 16, 17—Fellowship Hall

We're happy to report that we have a sold-out theater for both performances this year!



We're looking forward to another outstanding performance and some delicious food. If you purchased a ticket, remember to bring dollar bills to the performance so you can purchase clues to solve the mystery. There's a prize for the winning table!

Thank you for supporting this Faith on Stage entertainment!

Adult Spiritual Growth

Faith is a journey!

Sharing/Family Life—New Study

Beginning on Rally Day, August 11, through October 13 (no class on the fifth Sunday of Sept.), the Sharing/Family Life Adult Sunday School class will study Patty Pell's **Esther: Character Under Pressure**. This nine-week study from the LifeGuide Bible Studies series examines the Old Testament Book of Esther, a book about developing godly character. In the midst of a culture that doesn't emphasize doing what is right, this book from Hebrew Scripture speaks to us in profound ways. "Who are you when no one's looking?" When her people were threatened, Esther had to ask herself that question. She could risk her life to try to save her fellow Israelites. Or she could "keep her head down" to wait out the threat in obscurity and safety. In nine sessions, Patty Pell will lead us to examine the story of Esther. You'll discover how godly character often develops under pressure. And you'll discover ideas for living a godly life in the midst of contemporary pressures.

Study guides are available in class or may be ordered online from various sources such as Cokesbury or Amazon.

Sharing/Family Life meets Sundays at 9:45 a.m. in Rm 17. For further information or to reserve a copy of the book, please contact Terry Majewski (see directory).

Wednesday Morning Study Group

Wednesdays, 10:00 - 11:30 a.m. Rm 17/18
Begins September 4, led by Marcia Rostad

The group will take an "arm-chair" journey through **John Wesley's England** with Adam Hamilton as guide. As the study guides the participants through the relevant sites in England, it will become clear that Wesley's message and faith continue to speak to 21st century Christians. His story is our story, it's our heritage and it defines our faith.

Arm-chair travelers can forego the need to Band-Aid blisters and soak aching feet when choosing to see Wesley's England by attending this class.

Please sign up at the Adult Spiritual Growth bulletin board in the courtyard on Sunday morning and indicate if you need a study book (\$9.00). Otherwise, study books are available online at Cokesbury, Amazon, or Barnes and Noble.

Companions In Christ: A Small-Group Experience in Spiritual Formation

Thursdays, 2:00 – 4:00 p.m., 26 weeks
Begins August 29, led by Judy Boroto

The study introduces and guides participants through a variety of spiritual practices aimed at deepening their relationship with God, Christ, and others.

Part 1: Embracing the Journey: The Way of Christ—an intro to the nature of the Christian spiritual life.

Part 2: Feeding on the Word: The Mind of Christ—looking more closely at the Bible as a means of spiritual formation.

Part 3: Deepening Our Prayer: The Heart of Christ—examines various types of prayer that can bring us closer to God.

Part 4: Responding to Our Call: The Work of Christ—focuses on how God might be calling us through our gifts and the fruit of the Spirit.

Part 5: Exploring Spiritual Guidance: The Spirit of Christ—covers ways we can continue to be guided by the Spirit as we live out our lives of faith.

Books are \$10 and are available on Sunday morning, beginning Aug. 11. The participants will decide the timing of the sessions based on their personal schedules.

Long-Term Studies

A variety of long-term studies are being offered at St. Mark's this fall. If you're interested in growing both your faith and your relationships with others, these studies offer great opportunities to do both. Not only will committing to one of these study groups grow your Biblical and spiritual knowledge, but also you will find that your circle of supportive friends will expand.

Persons who have participated in long-term studies at St. Mark's over many years have formed close, personal relationships that have become truly lasting. We who work in the area of Adult Spiritual Growth hope that you will prayerfully consider registering for and participating in the long-term study group that will help your knowledge of our faith, your important relationships and your personal spiritual life grow to enable you to become a stronger disciple of Christ.

 **Disciple Bible Study I:
Becoming Disciples through Bible Study**

 **Disciple Bible Study II:
Into the Word Into the World**

 **Disciple Bible Study IV:
Under the Tree of Life**

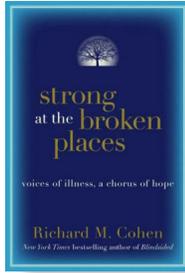
 **Companions in Christ:
A Small-Group Experience in Spiritual Formation**

For details about each study, start dates, or to register go to www.umcstmarks.org, and select CLASSES from the menu.

Summer Book Discussion

Monday, Aug. 26, 6:00 p.m., led by Art Ragland
Strong at the Broken Places: Voices of Illness, a Chorus of Hope by Richard M. Cohen

An intimate look at living with chronic illness. The author, who has multiple sclerosis, works with five participants with various chronic illnesses, to capture their stories and help others understand the overwhelming toll that chronic illness can take. No registration is necessary. Come join the discussion.



What is the Bible?

Begins Sunday, Sept. 8, 11:00-12:30 p.m.
Led by Rev. Judy Boroto

Not sure which Bible to buy? Not sure where to start reading and studying it? This class can help the novice Bible student begin one of the most meaningful journeys of their lives. This is a broad overview of the Bible, including selection, organization, background, context and archaeology. It provides the basics for getting the most out of your Bible and Bible study. The class is for six weeks.

Register now, either online or at the Adult Spiritual Growth bulletin board in the courtyard on Sundays. You can also purchase books there for \$10.

One-Day Retreat

Communication as a Spiritual Practice: Part 2
Saturday, Sept. 21, 9:00 a.m.– 3:00 p.m.,
Redemptorist Renewal Center

Kim Pearce will again lead the group as she continues and expands on her special topic area: **the spirituality of communication**. Many of you participated in Kim's retreat earlier this year and you overwhelmingly requested that she return and continue the conversation—so, here it comes!

Registration has begun. Don't wait too long – registration is limited to 40 people. The cost is \$40 which includes lunch and materials.

5-Day Academy for Spiritual Formation—Sources of Compassion and Strength

Starts 3:00 p.m., Sept. 15 through noon, Sept. 20, Redemptorist Renewal Center

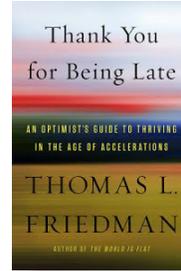
We come, eager to reconnect with the roots of our faith. For too long, our hearts have been hardened by cynical voices around us and within. We come, ready to learn new ways to be the people of God. It is so easy to give up on the Church. We come because Jesus told us to do so. Faculty include: Rabbi Helen Cohn, the spiritual leader of Congregation M'kor Hayim ("Source of Life") in north Tucson; Dr. Frank Rogers; Muriel Bernice Roberts Professor of Spiritual Formation and Narrative Pedagogy and the co-director of the Center for Engaged Compassion at the Claremont School of Theology.

To register go to: <https://dscumc.org/arizona-five-day-academy/>

Open Minds Book Discussion Resumes In September

Friday, Sept. 27, 9:30-11:00 a.m., church Library

In less than two months, we will resume our book studies here at St. Mark's. We hope you will attend. Each month is a separate experience, so come as often as you like. Registration is not required. We meet the last Friday of each month.



The first book for the 2019-2020 year will be **Thank You For Being Late** by Thomas Friedman. This book, though longer and a bit technical at times, will generate some new information and good discussion as to the world in which we are now living. Begin early on your reading and take some notes as you go along!

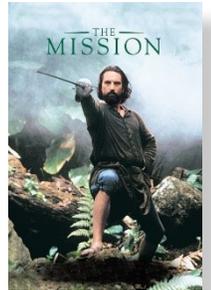
For October, we will read the popular memoir, **Educated** by Tara Westover. Then in November, our selection is Walter Brueggemann's well known work, **Journey To The Common Good**.

We look forward to seeing you! Bring your neighbor or friend. Refreshments will be served. For information, contact Todd or Tyger Penson (see directory).

Heroes Of The Faith Movie Series Resumes

Tuesday, Sept. 24, 6:00 p.m.

Join Linda Walker as she hosts the showing of **The Mission**. It stars Robert DiNero, Jeremy Irons, Aiden Quinn, Liam Neeson. This movie relates the experiences of a Jesuit missionary in 18th-century South America and the plight of the indigenous tribe under colonialism. Spanish Jesuit priest Father Gabriel (Irons) enters the northeastern Argentina and eastern Paraguayan jungle to build a mission station and convert a Guaraní community to Christianity who are not initially receptive to Christianity or outsiders in general. He is joined by a penitent conquistador and slaver (DiNero) as they both try to save the Guaraní from Portuguese colonialism, although they disagree on how this should be done.



Although it has a 1986 PG rating, there is violence. It runs two hours. Popcorn will be provided. Bring your own beverage.

Church Office Hours Change



During the month of July, the church office observed summer hours and closed at 3:00 p.m. This decision was based primarily on

staffing transitions in the front office, but it also allowed the staff to observe office activity and what impact closing the office early would pose. It was determined that a 3:00 p.m. close is too early, but a 4:00 p.m. close time aligns well with office activity. Effective Monday, August 12, the new hours for the church office will be: Monday – Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Also, the St. Mark's annual staff planning retreat is scheduled on August 19-21. The staff will meet off campus during this time and will have limited access to phones and email. If you have an emergency while the office is closed, please call the church office (297-2062) and leave a voice mail.

During the retreat, the church office will close at 4:00 p.m. Monday, Aug. 19, and be closed all day on Tuesday, Aug. 20. The office will reopen Wednesday, Aug. 21, at noon. If you have questions, please contact the church office at 297-2062.

thank
you!

The Nash Neighbors Committee would like to thank the congregation for their very generous donations of school supplies. The supplies were delivered to Nash Elementary on Aug. 5, in time for the new school year. Here's what was donated:

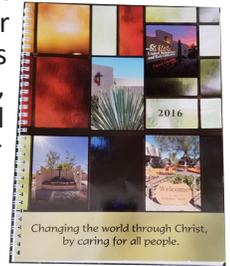
- ✓ 534 glue sticks
- ✓ 444 dry ease markers
- ✓ 353 pink pearl erasers
- ✓ 175 boxes of tissues
- ✓ 74 rolls of paper towels
- ✓ 78 bottles of hand sanitizer
- ✓ 90 containers of disinfectant wipes
- ✓ assorted other items.

The teachers at Nash appreciate your support. Thanks again!

Barb Sargent
Nash Neighbors Committee

Church Photo Directory

In 2016, St. Mark's worked with Lifetouch to produce a church photo directory for the congregation. The book includes a photo section as well as names, addresses, and phone numbers of all the people who signed up to have their photo taken. If you recall, you were given a personal identification number to access your information online and make changes to your information.



A phone app was also available to access the directory. However, the software quickly became outdated, making it impossible for people to access their personal information.

Good news! We have been working with Lifetouch and are happy to advise that you can now access St. Mark's Photo Directory from our website at www.umcstmark.org. Use the main menu and select RESOURCES, then ONLINE PHOTO DIRECTORY. Next, you will be asked to enter an access code. (*Please call the church office for the access code*). Enter this code and you will be able to view the 2016 St. Mark's Photo Directory.

We've taken some time to update as much of the information as possible. You will notice that we have added all our new members who have joined the church since 2016. Unfortunately, we cannot add or remove photos, but we can update names, addresses, and phone numbers so if your contact information needs changes, please email the information to Sallyann Wassmuth, Communications and Outreach Coordinator (sallyann@umcstmarks.org)

This is a great resource to find names, address, and phone numbers of our church family. You don't need to worry, this information is not accessible to the public who visit our website. It is only accessible to people who know the access code.

We would like you to know that there are still free copies of the 2016 Church Photo Directory available to anyone who would like a copy. Stop by the church office and pick up a directory, while they last.

Greeter Ministry

The Worship Committee is still looking for people to greet on Sunday mornings for the 8:15 and 9:45 a.m. services. All that is required is a friendly smile and a hand shake to those who are attending the service. You'll need to arrive about 30 minutes prior to the service, then once the worship begins, you may join the others in the Sanctuary.

Look for the volunteer board on the wall in the narthex to sign up for either service by writing your name and phone number under "Greeters." There are 2019 Greeter Handbooks located in the credenza near the board if you would like more information, or you may also call the church office (297-2062) for details.

WASS UP?

August 7, 2019

Volume 20, Issue 15



UPCOMING MIDDLE SCHOOL AND HIGH SCHOOL EVENTS

August 11, 2019— Rally Day
Welcome Incoming 6th Graders
Sunday School:
Grades 6-12 at the Wesley House

4:00 to 6:00
Scavenger Hunt
"There's an app for that."

August 17, 2019—
District trip to Patagonia Lake
(see back page)

August 18, 2019—
No Youth group:
It's on Saturday this week!

August 25, 2019—
4:00 to 6:00
Youth Group @ Wesley House

Greetings Preteens,

Wow, Another summer has come and gone ! Time sure goes fast doesn't it? It's hard to believe that some of our friends are now 6th graders and moving up to Youth Group.

Each day we have so much to be grateful for and yet we often don't take the time to notice. This month at Preteen, we will celebrate the new school year, check our Attitude of Gratitude and learn about Super Hero's. Can't wait to see you on Sundays for Fun Filled Fellowship!

Blessings,
Julie

August 11th- Rally Day
Welcome incoming 4th Graders
Giant Water Slide
Bring towel and swim suit.

August 18th - An Attitude of Gratitude
Gratitude games & yummy snack

August 25th - Super Heroes!!
Wear something to show off your favorite Super Hero. What does it take to be a Super Hero?

Find us on Social Media!



St. Mark's Youth Group



stmarksumyf

RALLY DAY

AUGUST 11

9:45—10:45 a.m. Sunday School at the Wesley House
Grades 6-12 (Middle School & High School classes)
4:00—6:00 p.m. Youth Group

PATAGONIA TRIP AUGUST 17

Who?

You. Your friends. The South District!

What?

A day at the lake. Food, games, and tons of water activities, including boats!

Lunch at the lake & dinner at Patagonia UMC . All for only \$10!!

Where?

Patagonia Lake and Patagonia UMC

When?

August 17. Meet at the Wesley House at 9 a.m.



WHO NEEDS A PERMISSION SLIP? You do. New school year/ new permission slip.

How do I download a permission slip?

YOUTH & PRETEENS

You need this info, so that you can invite friends to the cool programs!

Step 1: Go to umcstmarks.org

Step 2: Find "Resources" in the upper right corner, & click.

Step 3: Go to "Forms" and look for Youth Ministries Forms

Step 4: Click & Print

Step 5: Share with a friend!

Craft Circle Meeting

On Tuesday, Aug. 13 and 27, St. Mark's United Methodist Women will host a Craft Circle in Rm 17/18 from 9:00 a.m. until noon. Please join us for fun and fellowship, even it's only for an hour or two—come as your schedule permits. Bring your craft ideas, examples of your favorite craft or extra craft supplies. You may work on a craft of your own, or help with crafts for the UMW craft fairs in Nov. and Dec.



We are always looking for donations of craft and sewing supplies such as buttons, ribbon, Styrofoam, beads, lace, cords, fabric, trim, batting or anything else is appreciated. Please contact Bonnie Sargent (see directory) if you have questions or need to have your donations picked up.

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.

*Ellen Beene
Jared Bowman & family
Clara Campbell
Donald Chester
Shelley Shelton Coltrin
Deb Cushman*

*Judy Drescher
April DuBoce
Keith and Mary Ann Glazier
Floretta Harrington
Patricia Keele*

*Marian Shultis
Carol Underwood
Jackie Vickers
Dave and Jan Webster
Lindsay Williams*

CONDOLENCES

We extend our sympathy and prayers to:

Ellen and Don Beene and their family upon the death of Ellen's daughter, Lynn Ellen Aberger. She passed away on Monday, July 22. A service celebrating her life will be held in Rhode Island.

John Webster and family on the sudden passing of John's wife, Marta, on July 14.

Kim and Jason Richards and their family on the recent passing of Kim's mother.

CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to Matt and Amy Hawk on the birth of their son, Maverick, on Friday, August 2, 2019. He joins big sister, Mackenzie, at home.



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
Alex Boettcher, grandson of Carla and Paul Boettcher
Jon Chytka, nephew of Donna Severson
Zachary Dojaquez, grandson of Donna Severson
Patrick Emmett, son of Julie Wiens
Mike Freeman, son of Ken & Ann Freeman
Garrett Geer, grandson of Ellen Wise
Matthew Hughey, son of Juliee & Billy Morrison and grandson of Joyce Flick
Rachel Kester, daughter of Don & Ruth Kester
Sam Lennarson, grandson of John & Sherri Lennarson
Christopher Lewis, grandson of Donald Lewis

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
Geoffrey Shafe, grandson of Mary Langemeier
Jason Smith, grandson of Jerry & Judy Smith
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



Calendar Notes

Fri., August 9

6:00 p.m. Water Fun Night and potluck, west patio

Sun., August 11-RALLY DAY!

8:15 a.m. Traditional Service, Sanctuary

*9:45 a.m. Traditional Service, Sanctuary

11:15 a.m. The Gathering, Sanctuary

11:15 a.m. Common Grounds, Rm 20

4:00 p.m. Holy Yoga, Fellowship Hall

4:00 p.m. PreTeens, Rm 8/9

4:00 p.m. Youth Group, Wesley House

Mon., August 12

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

Tues., August 13

5:30 p.m. Advisory Board, Library

6:30 p.m. SPRC, Conf. Rm

6:30 p.m. Worship Committee, Rm 20

6:45 p.m. Missions Committee, Rm 8/9

Wed., August 14

Noon BULLETIN DEADLINE

5:45 p.m. Soul Station Dinner, Fellowship Hall

6:15 p.m. Common Grounds, Library

6:20 p.m. Soul Station program

6:30 p.m. Finance Committee, Conf. Rm

Thurs., August 15

Lois Mullen Memorial, Library

Fri., August 16

6:30 p.m. Mystery Dinner Theater, Fellowship Hall

Sat., August 17

3:30 p.m. Mystery Dinner Theater, Fellowship Hall

6:00 p.m. Common Grounds, Library

**This service is live-streamed.*



St. Mark's Messenger

Published bi-weekly

St. Mark's UMC
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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.

Dinner for Eight

Dinner for Eight is a great way to make new friends and enjoy a good meal! Basically, couples or singles sign up to be part of a season of four meals to be scheduled in October/November, January, February, and March/April. You host only one time. Participants rotate, so you are with different people each time.



Each group generally consists of eight people. You may plan a dinner, a brunch, a cookout, or a theme dinner. The host will provide the main course, and the others will bring a salad, dessert, or whatever is needed. (If hosting at your own home presents a problem, consider contacting the church office about using a room at St. Mark's.)

You have the option to sign up as a regular participant, or if you prefer, you may simply put your name on the substitute list. If you would like to attend more than four dinners you may want to sign up as a participant and also as a substitute. Online registration for Dinner for Eight is open now. Go to our website www.umcstmarks.org and select RESOURCES from the main menu, then FORMS to access the online Dinner for Eight registration form. The deadline to register is Wed., Aug. 14.

A Note to Singles: You are welcome to participate in Dinner for Eight as an individual which would mean hosting on your own. Or if you wish, two people can sign up as a duo... you'll be scheduled together for each meal (and for hosting).

Reminder!

The next **Messenger** newsletter will be published on Wednesday, August 28. The deadline to submit articles for this issue is Thursday, August 22, by noon. The August schedule was adjusted to accommodate the office closing for the annual staff planning retreat.

Address Service Requested

If you would like to receive the Messenger electronically, and discontinue your paper copy, submit a request to messenger@umcstmarks.org

Reflections

When it is hard for me to know what to say or write, Jesus tells me to “take a walk.” Now this is not a “take a hike,” get-out-of-my-face statement, but rather, “go outside and walk.” So, in today’s early morning under rain-threatening skies, I do that. Here is what I find.

I find that I am filled with gratitude for the ability and freedom to walk in the desert after a new rain and take in the smells and sounds of morning. I am grateful for less pain in my sciatic-driven lower back and a clear head to walk and think. I am grateful for my friends and family who love and uplift me. I am grateful for the people of St. Mark’s who are generous, loving, forward-looking people. Just one sign of this is the group of people who worked yesterday morning to serve a “boohoo” breakfast to kindergarten parents at our new worship site, on the first day of school at the Dove Mountain CSTEM school. I am grateful for the people and life experiences that have led me to this day, to have a mostly loving heart.

I find that I am also sorrowful this day for the hurt and hate in our nation and world. I am filled with sorrow for those who grieve this day because of violent acts and those who will suffer perhaps for the rest of their lives. For a moment, with the Psalmist, I cry out to God as I walk, “how long, how long, must your people suffer?” I hear the voice of Jesus say, “as long as hate is spouted rather than loving,

hopeful words, as long as people fail to see my face in one another, as long....that is how long.”

I find that God wants to renew my commit to live and share the love of Jesus, in all times and places, with all people. It means I and you must always ask, “what is the most loving thing to say or do in this situation?” Sometimes that means calling out hatred and injustice, naming that these are not part of the Christian life. It means taking the time and energy to teach and mentor children and young people, encourage and support them in school, Sunday School and youth groups, helping them know that we care about them. It means noticing when a child or young person needs help and not being afraid to help them get that.

As I finish walking, I find that God is already putting a spirit of hope upon my heart. God is here, working to bring hope and healing. We have the joy of joining God in that. **“Changing the world through Christ by caring for all people.”** – walk with me to do that.

Blessings, Sharon