

Messenger

Changing the world through Christ by caring for all people.

Volume 60, Number 8

June 3, 2020



Plans for Reopening the St. Mark's Campus

St. Mark's United Methodist Church remains open, carrying out the tasks of worship and service in creative ways during the COVID-19 pandemic. A plan for safely and deliberately reopening our campus is being developed by a group of leaders consisting of the pastors, representatives from laity and staff, who have been meeting weekly. A summary report of their work to-date was presented to Covenant Council on May 19.

I want to let you know what is being discussed and what you can expect. As I have stated in several communications since the campus shutdown, the United Methodist Churches in the Desert Southwest Conference are under the leadership and direction of our bishop, Robert Hoshibata. On March 25, 2020, Bishop Hoshibata directed all United Methodist campuses in our conference to be closed to all in-person gatherings, including worship, classes, outside groups and meetings. Since then, our Bishop has reiterated this directive in his weekly updates.

Along with guidance from state and local officials, the St. Mark's phased campus reopening will be guided by the directives of our bishop and our final plan will be sent to our District Superintendent for review and approval. St. Mark's may choose to be stricter in the interpretation of the guidelines to best care for everyone.

Several different situations and areas have been identified as requiring plans. They include: (1) reopening of worship spaces, ability of the pastors to record worship in the Sanctuary rather than off-site, ability of small instrumental musical groups to record in the Sanctuary, eventual return of in-person worship, first with small groups and then larger groups; (2) gradual reopening of the church office; (3) reopening of the campus for church groups – choirs and musical groups, small groups for study and service, committees and classes; (4) reopening of the campus for outside groups.

Where are we now? As of this writing, our campus remains

closed to all in-person gatherings, which includes closure of the church office, worship and preparing/recording for worship, classes and meetings, and the Early Childhood Center. Our campus will remain closed until the following conditions are met, or until directives from our bishop indicate otherwise:

- A 14-day downward trend in COVID-19 cases reported in our area.
- Providers are offering a robust testing response including antibody testing.
- Hospitals are treating all patients without crisis care.
- Pastors and church leaders can ensure that implementing a phased reopening is in the spiritual and physical well-being of the community.

When the above conditions are met, Phase 1 of reopening could commence and may include:

- Continued suspension of in-person worship.
- The ability of pastors to record worship in the Sanctuary with protective measures and distancing.
- The ability of a small group of instrumental musicians to record in the Sanctuary.
- Staff and volunteers continuing to work from home, and the office continuing to suspend in-person services. If a limited number of staff or volunteers must do in-person work, strict protocols will be instituted.
- All classes, meetings and groups continuing to meet via zoom or other platform rather than in person.

If all the above have been met, and there is no rebound in the number of cases in our local area, then Phase 2 of reopening could commence and may include:

- Opening the campus to small groups for worship-type activities (format under development by Adult Spiritual Growth) and classes with a limited number of participants. Clear health and sanitation procedures will be in place.
- Expanded Church office hours under clear health and sanitation guidelines.



Continued on page 4

Adult Spiritual Growth

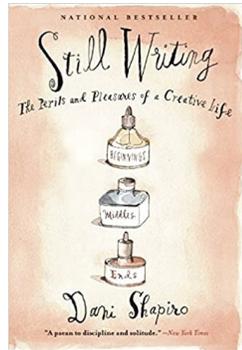
Faith is a journey!

Summer book discussions are BACK!

We are thinking that people have a bit more time to read this summer than they usually do, so Adult Spiritual Growth is planning FIVE opportunities to participate in book discussions. They are all scheduled for Mondays from 6:30-8 p.m. via Zoom, every two weeks, beginning this month. A link to the discussion will be emailed to those who register with Margaret Synhorst: margaret@umcstmarks.org. Here is the lineup.

June 29: "Still Writing: The Perils and Pleasures of a Creative Life" by Dani Shapiro (2014), 230 pages

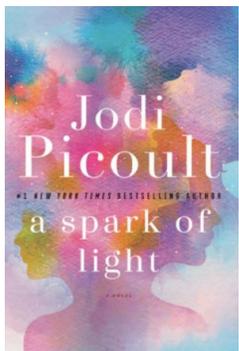
Pastor Sharon and Art Ragland will kick off our summer book discussions with a lively discussion of this work. Shapiro brings us a witty, heartfelt and practical look at the exhilarating and challenging process of storytelling. A memoir, a meditation on the artistic process and advice on craft, *Still Writing* is an intimate companion to living a creative life filled with honest words to live by. It's a well-drawn map for the lost, the weary and the found.



Available from Amazon: \$7.99 for Kindle; from \$7.78 for used paperback and hardcover; \$13.39 new.

July 13: "A Spark of Light"

A novel by Jodi Picoult (2018), 352 pages
Discussion led by Margaret Synhorst



Jodi Picoult—one of the most fearless writers of our time—tackles a complicated issue in this gripping and nuanced novel. How do we balance the rights of pregnant women with the rights of the unborn they carry? What does it mean to be a good parent? *A Spark of Light* will inspire debate, conversation and, hopefully, understanding.

Available on Amazon: \$12.99 for Kindle; \$4.40 & up for used; \$10.29 new.

July 27: "Here If You Need Me: A True Story"

by Kate Braestrup (2007), 224 pages
Discussion led by Sandi Heilman



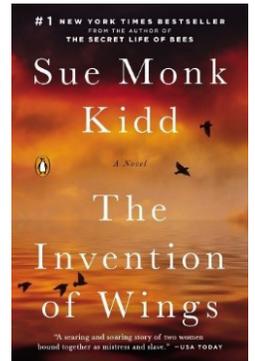
This is the story of Kate Braestrup's remarkable journey from grief to faith to happiness – as she holds her family together in the wake of her husband's death, as she pursues his dream of becoming a minister and as she ultimately finds her calling as a chaplain to search-and-rescue workers. Her story is dramatic, funny and deeply moving – an uplifting account of finding God through helping others and of the small miracles that happen every day when a heart is grateful and love is restored.

Available at Amazon: \$1.99 for Kindle; \$1.24 & up for used; \$10.19 new.

Aug. 10: "The Invention of Wings"

by Sue Monk Kidd (2014), 373 pages
Discussion led by Susan Putt

This historical novel is set in motion on Sarah Grimke's 11th birthday in 1803, when her parents give her ownership of enslaved 10-year-old Handful, who is to be her waiting maid. We follow their remarkable journeys over the next 35 years, as both strive for a life of their own, dramatically shaping each other's destinies and forming a complex relationship marked by guilt, defiance, estrangement and the uneasy ways of love. While the story is considered historical fiction, Monk has done her homework and most of what the storyline contains is actually true. *As an added dimension, we will have joining us the manager of the historical home in which the Grimkes lived in Charleston (now known as the Heyward-Washington House) to share additional insight and perspective.*



Available on Amazon: \$9.99 on Kindle; \$4.19 & up for used paperback; \$11.99 new

Aug. 24: "An Altar in the World: A Geography of Faith"

by Barbara Brown Taylor (2009), 216 pages
Discussion led by Rev. Dr. Roger Pierce

The author shares how she learned to encounter God far beyond the walls of the church. She reveals meaningful ways to discover the sacred in the small things we do and see, from simple practices such as walking, working

Continued on page 5

Church Finance Update

St. Mark's finances reflect a positive result for the first four months of 2020 as summarized below:

	Actual YTD	Budget YTD	Variance to Budget
Total Income	\$413,526.56	\$413,232.00	\$294.56
Total Expense	\$393,266.84	\$416,927.00	(\$23,660.16)
YTD Difference	\$20,259.72	(\$3,695.00)	\$23,954.72

April was the first full month we offered Sunday worship only through the Livesteam. For the month of April, we received income of \$92,403 and had expenses of \$90,114 for a net income of \$2,289. Committees were asked to defer expenses where possible, with two exceptions – Missions and Trustees. Missions is continuing to meet its current commitments of 10% of revenue and giving where there is an immediate need. Trustees are continuing projects begun prior to the economic decline. This includes the kitchen remodeling. There is currently \$218,230 in the Unrestricted Fund.

Please keep in mind that it is very important for the ministries and missions of the church that contributions continue during the summer months, and even though we are not meeting in person to worship, there are other ways to donate. You can mail your contributions to 1431 W. Magee Rd, Tucson, AZ 85704. Mail is distributed into a locked mail box and is being checked daily. If you bank online, you can instruct your financial institution to send a check to the address above. Another option is to set up online donations through the St. Mark's website. Go to umcstmarks.org and click on the **GIVING** tab. If you have any questions, please contact Ruth Kester at ruthk@umcstmarks.org.

Contribution statements were mailed the middle of May. If you have any questions regarding your pledge or statement, contact Sherry Walker at sherry@umcstmarks.org.

Just Breathe Holy Yoga is now on Zoom!

The Gospels tell us to “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your mind, with all your soul and with all your strength.” Holy Yoga provides an opportunity for fellowship with others while stretching, practicing controlled breathing techniques and reflecting on scriptures while building flexibility and strength.

Class is on Monday mornings. The Zoom “room” opens at 9 a.m., with the class starting at 9:15 a.m. If you are interested in trying a gentle, scripture-based yoga practice, please email Tricia@umcstmarks.org for the Zoom link and more information.



Common Grounds

Fellowship for adults in their 40s and younger

Hello friends! It feels like so much time has passed since we last got together in person, doesn't it? I sincerely miss you all and our time together! I hope you are staying well and finding ways to stay connected with others. I hope you have been getting emails from me. If you haven't, and would like to be a member of my Common Grounds mailing list, please let me know! Every few weeks, you should be receiving an email with a fun-themed family movie night with menus, activities and discussion questions. I know we can't get together for a family movie night, but through shared experiences, we remain connected. Please share your pictures of the fun your family has via email or our Facebook group, St. Mark's Common Grounds. Email me at rachel@umcstmarks.org to be added to the email list or if you have any questions. I am also always available if you have prayer requests or need anything, even if you just need to chat. Please don't hesitate to reach out!



Thank you!

Rachel Mosher, Common Grounds coordinator

Plans for Reopening continued from page 1

- Vulnerable populations being asked to remain away from any in-person gatherings.

If all the above have been met, and there is no rebound in the number of cases in our local area, then Phase 3 of reopening could commence and may include:

- Opening the campus for larger groups (exact size TBD) to worship under strict guidelines and with clear sanitation procedures. Those strict guidelines could include wellness screening, entrance and exit procedures, limitations on the number of people in Sanctuary or Fellowship Hall spaces and potential restrictions on singing (refer to article in this Messenger from our Chancel Choir Director). Ensure that communion procedures are safe.
- Other group worship services, such as at Dove Mountain (based on guidelines from Marana School District) and Soul Station, beginning under clear health and sanitation guidelines.
- Expanded church office hours with clear health and sanitation guidelines.
- Other groups beginning to meet with clear procedures for registering attendance and checking for wellness, etc.
- Vulnerable populations being asked to remain away from in-person gatherings.

Regarding the Early Childhood Center, the current plan is to open June 15 under strict, state-mandated guidelines.

In addition, several sanitization and disinfecting procedures are being investigated and reviewed.

- Hand sanitizing stations – These would include both fixed dispensers and mobile dispensers.
- Disinfecting system – Several systems and services are being considered to disinfect surfaces effectively and efficiently on a regular basis.

Please know that all areas are planning for the future – what programs and ministries need to change? What are we learning from this time that can help direct our future? What plans need to be made to connect with people in new ways? Learnings from this time are directing efforts toward planning for the future. I hope that you find this information helpful, and please keep this effort in your prayers.

Blessings, Sharon

Leaders' Team Members:

Pastors: Sharon Ragland, Stuart Salvatierra, Evy McDonald

Lay Leaders: Don Booth, John Cecilia, Brenda Hunter

Staff Members: Ruth Kester, Margaret Synhorst, Kim Ogle

Other leaders: Ken Dunlap (SPRC chair), Bill Zermuehlen (Finance chair)

Safety and Singing

Pastor Sharon has asked me to keep our St. Mark's family updated on the current research being done regarding COVID-19 as it relates to singing (both choral and congregational), so this is the first of several communications related to that. I have spent about 24 years of my life as a church choir director and 26 as a full-time choral director of college/university choirs, so typically I'm sharing with anyone who will listen the many physical, social, mental, emotional and spiritual ways that singing can benefit us. At this time, however, highly respected immunologists and virologists tell us that the virus travels through aerosolized particles, and singing is one of the most common and even dangerous ways that



these particles are circulated. This is hard news to hear. As a choir director, I have learned more about aerosolized virus particles and their transmission than I ever wanted to know, but here are some things to consider for now:

- 1) God is good.
- 2) Recommendations and knowledge about the pandemic are changing on a daily basis.
- 3) There are several major studies currently being undertaken regarding virus transmission through singing (including group singing) and the results are expected to be available over the summer – some as early as mid-June and some by Labor Day. These will be helpful in knowing what we can and can't do until a vaccine is available.
- 4) Singing together outside of our homes is not safe right now. (So sing more at home!)
- 5) Protecting the vulnerable members of our church family is more important than singing right now.
- 6) We can be grateful for the many, wonderful memories of singing together that will carry us through the time that we can't. We can even audiate songs, that is to say we can hear and sing them in our minds. You know this because of "ear worms."
- 7) The time WILL come again when we can safely sing together and when that time comes, we will have the most joyful singing celebration we have ever known.
- 8) God hears the songs in our hearts, whether they come out of our mouths or not.

*Peace and health,
Elizabeth Schauer
Chancel Choir Director*

A New Opportunity to Connect and Reconnect with Friends

For the past few months, we have all had to change our lives in big ways because of the realities presented to us by COVID-19. We have not been able to participate in life in the ways that we prefer. We are not able to be with our friends. We have had to find new ways to communicate with each other. This can be a positive opportunity to connect and reconnect with people in new ways if we choose it to be.

At the church, we have been using Zoom a great deal for business meetings. Everyone signs on and the business of the church is done from the comfort of our own homes. This has been a very effective tool for getting necessary work done, but it can also be used for so many other things. This technology designed to host business meetings is a great way to get a group of friends together

Volunteers Wanted!

Our online worship with each other has been a wonderful developing ministry of our church. It is one of many ways

in which we have been working to grow closer together during this time of crisis. The Technology Committee is looking to add anyone who has video editing skills to be a part of the team that makes our wonderful worship possible. If you have skills in this area and

are looking for a great way to serve, please contact our Technology Coordinator, Kevin (kevin@umcstmarks.org), or Pastor Stuart (stuart@umcstmarks.org) or call the church office at (520) 297-2062.

Summer books, continued from page 2

and prayer. Something as ordinary as hanging clothes on a clothesline becomes an act of meditation if we pay attention to what we're doing and take time to notice the sights, smells and sounds around us. Making eye contact with the cashier at the grocery store becomes a moment of true human connection. Allowing yourself to get lost leads to new discoveries. As we incorporate these practices into our daily lives, we begin to discover altars everywhere we go, in nearly everything we do. Through Taylor's expert guidance and delicate, thought-provoking prose, we learn to live with purpose, pay attention, slow down and revere the world we live in.

Available at Amazon: \$13.99 on Kindle; \$2.72 & up for used; \$10.29 new.

no matter where they may find themselves. Programs like Zoom are often free to use so signing up and "hosting" a "meeting" can be a great way to connect with people. You could watch worship together, share a meal, have a Bible Study or just enjoy the company of friends. We may not be able to be physically together right now, but it does not mean that we cannot still be the vibrant community that God calls us to be.

Important Message for Current Zoom Users

As more meetings and gatherings move to Zoom, be sure that you have updated to the latest version, 5.0. According to Zoom, after May 30, all Zoom clients on older versions will receive a forced upgrade when trying to join meetings as special encryption will be fully enabled across the Zoom platform. Visit <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/360043555772> for more information on the changes and how to update your Zoom application.

Coming in Worship in June

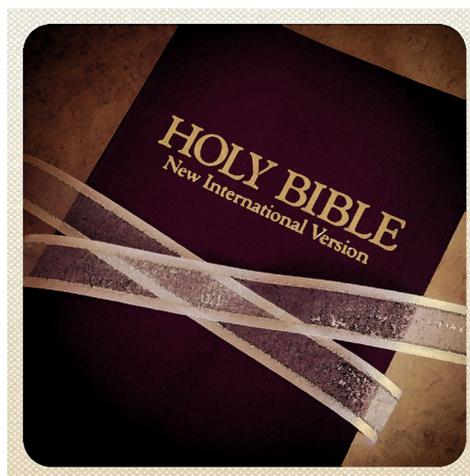
This year we've focused in worship on "Words for Life." We wrapped up our series on "Walk...with Christ" on May 24 and celebrated Pentecost on May 31. Now we move on to June and new words for life.

We begin with a two-week interlude called "Pastor's Choice." On June 7, Pastor Evy will bring us words of hope. On June 14, Pastor Sharon will focus on "How Are We?" - giving an update on the current condition and plans for St. Mark's.

From June 21-July 5 (three weeks) we'll talk about "Deadly Sins." Some people think we never talk about sin! Here are three weeks on the deadly sins of greed, wrath and envy & pride.

Join us for worship at 9:45 a.m. (or watch later) on our website (umcstmarks.org/live-worship), St. Mark's Facebook (facebook.com/StMarksTucson/), or on YouTube (St. Mark's Oro Valley).

- Sharon



Missions Update

This year's Easter special offering was \$10,933, with half going to Sierra Service Project Youth and half to Agua Prieta Fuente da Vida Methodist Church for its feeding ministry with immigrants.

The food drive for Interfaith Community Services has received more than 1,100 pounds of non-perishable food from St. Mark's congregation since the collection began on May 5. To put that amount in perspective, that is more food than was given during the entire year in 2019! ICS is so appreciative of our donations because the need for food boxes remains higher than ever before. Thanks to John Yost and Ken Dunlap for receiving the food and delivering it to ICS.

We are continuing our feeding ministry at Primavera Men's Shelter. Many thanks to the Ragland Neighborhood Group for providing food in May and the Butter and Grimsey families for feeding them in June. If you or your group is interested in providing food for the shelter, please contact Casey Compennolle, liaison to Primavera by email. (See directory or call the church office.)

The Missions Committee continues its financial support to our mission partners, based on the greatest needs. Our liaisons and committee members are updating us on our partners' activities and needs. We continue to include liaison reports in the Messenger. We would like to thank our congregation for your continued support and generosity.

Pat Kittrell, Chair

Update from Our Family Services

Thanks to the \$2500 contribution from St. Mark's United Methodist Church, Our Family Services was able to raise the \$7,000 needed to meet Tucson Electric Power's generous dollar for dollar match challenge. Our Family Services was able to raise a total of \$16,177 for homeless youth and families with this challenge match. "We are deeply grateful to St. Mark's UMC for their support."

Update from Nash Neighbors

Though classes were suspended in April and May, members from the Nash Neighbors Committee and the Nash staff held the Mobile Food Pantry for families, according to Carol Cecilia, Nash Neighbors Chair. This vital program helped many families supplement their food

ICS Food Drive

Many of you are wanting to help those who have food insecurity during this pandemic. And the need is great. St. Mark's is going to collect food in the north parking lot twice a week, starting May 5. Food items will be donated to Interfaith Community Service (ICS) food bank. Here are the details:



What: Non-perishable food items

When: Tues., 10-11 a.m. (John Yost)

OR Wed., 6-7 p.m. (Ken Dunlap)

Where: North church parking lot (Magee side).

If you are willing and able, buy a couple of extra items at the grocery store and drop them off (there will be no contact). Even in these difficult times, St. Mark's is still caring for those in our community who need it most.

needs as it has for the past school year. For the summer, there will continue to be a Grab & Go meal distribution twice a week to benefit the students. On Tuesdays they receive 3 breakfasts and lunches; on Thursdays they receive 4 of each. It is still undecided when Amphi schools will re-open and when our classroom volunteers might return.

Update from Tucson Interfaith HIV/AIDS Network (TIHAN)

During this pandemic, the Tucson Interfaith HIV/AIDS Network (TIHAN) continues to serve the needs of its CarePartners (clients living with HIV) who are vulnerable to COVID-19 because of their HIV status and additional underlying health issues including asthma and diabetes. And most CarePartners are between the ages of 55 and 75 and living in poverty.

With the support of its congregations including St. Mark's, TIHAN has adapted its programs and services and is providing modified and additional support in this time of social distancing. It's providing check-in phone calls to help address the stress and isolation, and the group has set up new delivery systems to provide 2,000 more meals and hundreds of Care Packages to keep its CarePartners safe and at home, especially those who need to take public transportation. TIHAN received funding to provide phones to keep them connected to TIHAN and their doctors and additional phone minutes for those whose phone plans do not last them through the month. TIHAN also is offering puzzles, adult coloring books and pencils

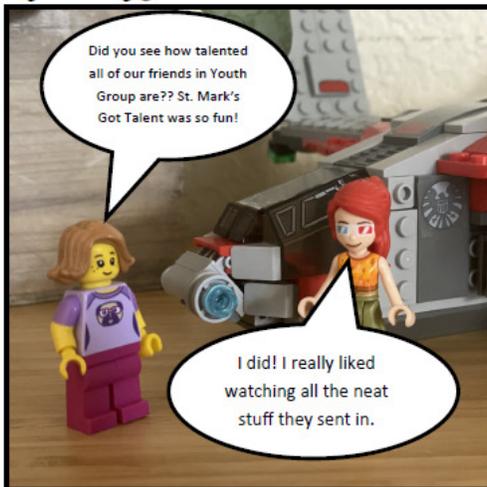
Continued on page 10

Youth Ministry

The latest news for High School, Middle School and PreTeen Students!



Adventures of the Youth Directors



What is Going on with Youth Group?

Youth Group looks different than it ever has before. But what doesn't? We talk a lot about being a connectational church. Our church is part of the South District of the Desert Southwest Conference. The bishop guides the church in our conference. Each week, the bishop has been looking at the recommendations of the CDC and guiding churches in our area on when our buildings can open. It's important to note that the church is not closed. The church building is closed, but we are still reaching people!

ST. Mark's got Talent

June Birthdays

Abba Chester	6/6
Jenasys Turner	6/12
Ian Holehan	6/13
Gio Sanchez	6/17
Lake Lao	6/20
Jacob Doyle	6/29
John Wyatt Compton	6/30



NOTE FROM RACHEL: Thanks to everyone who shared your talents with us. I had so much fun watching all of the cool things you all can do! I have watched the finished show many, many times. The [link](#) is on our Facebook page if you would like to watch it!

Youth Ministry

Latest news for High School, Middle School, and Preteen Students!



The bishop has given us guidelines on how to reopen buildings safely, and we have a group of people at church working on guidelines specifically for us. Be sure to read the weekly emails and check Facebook for updates as they come out! For now, we are communicating through email and Facebook, and worship can be found online. But be sure that church is still happening, and your leaders are still praying for you!

Every Sunday at 4 p.m., Kim and Rachel are on Facebook Live for 5-10 minutes. If you join them live, you can interact and type messages to them. If you aren't available right then, you can always watch the replay! We miss you and want to keep in touch. If you have any fun ideas for us, let us know!

Middle School Mission

We sure are bummed we didn't get to hang out and do our annual Middle School Mission at the end of May! We missed seeing all of you come together and work in our community. But don't worry, even though we couldn't get together when we normally do, there will still be a time to participate in mission! Keep your eyes peeled for future opportunities.



Sierra Service Project

As you all know from the Sierra Service Project article in the last Messenger, we have been waiting to hear the SSP plan for this summer. We got notice that, for the first time in its 45 year history, "SSP will not be spent working side by side together in person." The plan is to have a virtual mission during the same week that we had planned to go to Lake County (July 12-19). We're still waiting to find out what that looks like.

This actually works out well for us. The only way to get to Lake County would have been to fly into San Francisco. Your youth leaders had already investigated changing our site to Tsaille, so we didn't have to risk being on a plane during a pandemic. Almost at the same time, the Navajo



Even though our buildings are closed, through technology we are kind-of, sort-of meeting. Each week I send out fun projects, challenges, recipes etc. via email for you. These activities are fun and of course are optional, and I am trying to keep materials minimal. Please send me a picture or a video of yourself completing the activity. That way I can see all your beautiful, smiling faces and I won't miss you so much. So far I have sent out a cardboard challenge and a yummy, easy Oreo Ice Cream Recipe. Check out the photos of Maddie, Eli and Norah completing some of the challenges! I am emailing both Preteen and Soul Station Families, so pretty much anyone can participate. If you have not received an email from me and would like to be included, you may contact me at (see directory) and I will add you to the list.

Blessings, Julie



nation became the most infected area in Arizona, and it was closed to anyone going in or out. Obviously, neither site is an option now.

We know this is just one more disappointment for you this year, but we're anticipating a fun, interesting program. This also opens up opportunities for some of you who hadn't planned to make the trip to Lake County. You can even invite friends to participate.

Remember, we are a missional church. To quote one of your Sunday School teachers, Kirk Jacobson, "Any chance to serve someone is better than not serving at all."

June Prayer Requests

St. Mark's Prayer Ministry Team provides this information so you can pray for people and activities in and around church during the month. The monthly prayer requests are posted on the church website, www.umcstmarks.org, under the MINISTRIES tab, then CONGREGATIONAL CARE. Or if you are reading this online, you can follow this [link](#).

Kitchen Remodel and Campaign Update

Since the last Messenger, the Kitchen Remodel and Campaign have continued to move forward. First, the capital campaign to fund the project has continued to grow due to the generosity of the St. Mark's community. The most up-to-date numbers are as follows:

- Campaign contributions and pledges now total **\$248,955**, or **83%** of our \$300,000 Victory Goal.
- Only **\$51,045** remains to reach the Victory Goal.
- Outstanding pledges represent **\$14,269** of the **\$248,955** Campaign total.

Receipt of pledges will be critical in meeting our progress payment commitments to the contractor and other project expenses.

We are now 8 weeks into the project and the kitchen space is coming back together. Current status includes:

- Framing and drywall hanging nearly complete to be followed by taping & spackling
- Intermediate building inspections passed
- Mechanical work for all HVAC upgrades in progress
- Appliances and cabinetry on order
- Exhaust hood installed

The plan for the next month includes the following:

- Complete drywall, taping and spackling
- Complete HVAC upgrades and air handling upgrades

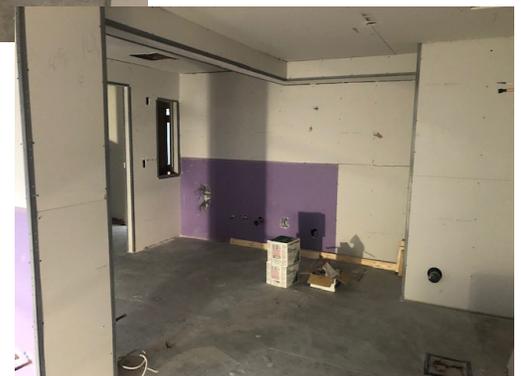
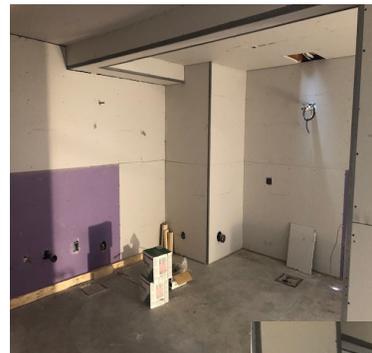
- Install new floor tile
 - Install stainless steel and Fiberglass Reinforced Panels on walls
 - Complete above floor electrical & plumbing
- From a budget and timeline perspective, the project remains on track due to the collaborative work between the Trustees and our construction partner. We have included some updated pictures of the kitchen so that you can see the progress and share in the excitement.

We hope these pictures will inspire you to support the Kitchen Remodeling Campaign if you have not already given or wish to add to your prior gift. *(Note: The CARES Act now offers a new above-the-line tax benefit for qualified charitable contributions in 2020. It is especially meaningful for those that cannot itemize their deductions. Consult your tax advisor for details.)*

As our new kitchen emerges, you will want to be among those who made a difference. Our kitchen is vital to St. Mark's, serving not only our constituents and visitors but also many we reach as Jesus' disciples in our community. All donations to the Kitchen Remodeling Campaign add up. Let's reach our Victory Goal before the Ribbon Cutting Ceremony!

Lezley Barth & John Cecilia

Kitchen Remodel Campaign



Do you have a concern for the Prayer Chain?

The St. Mark's Prayer Chain is active and ongoing. Anytime you would like your church family to pray for you, or your family, friends and neighbors, or a specific situation that concerns you – please email prayerchain@umcstmarks.org or telephone the church office (520-297-2062) to leave a message. Church emails and phone messages are checked regularly during the week, while the office is closed due to the Coronavirus situation, in order for Prayer Chain members to receive and pray for your requests.

If your request is confidential, i.e., for the pastors only, please indicate that in your email or phone message. Confidential requests go only to our pastors for prayer and follow up.

Missions continued from page 6

and homemade cloth masks.

An update from Youth on Their Own (YOTO)

Due to the disruptions caused by COVID-19, YOTO students have found themselves in need of even more support than usual. Most cannot work because of closures; some usual housing is not available or they cannot stay with relatives

or friends due to quarantines or other reasons. Since March, they have asked YOTO supporters to help provide urgent financial assistance to these students by donating to the COVID-19 Emergency Fund. Both the YOTO staff and the students have been awed and inspired by the way our community has been stepping up to help!

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 and leave a prayer on our prayer wall.

*Kathie Barrett
Peter Booth
Jared Bowman and family
Donald Chester
Deb Cushman*

*Judy Drescher
Marge and Darrel Frazer
Keith and Mary Ann Glazier
Keith Johnson
Megan Krzmarzick*

*Jim and Mary Sanders
Carol Underwood
Ana Luisa Terrazas
Jackie Vickers
Judy Wickham
Lindsay Williams*

CONDOLENCES

We extend our sympathy and prayers to:

- the family and friends of Mary Lou Moore, who passed away on Thursday, May 14, 2020. We wrap her family and friends in God's comforting care.
- Charlotte Mitchell and her sister Bev on the passing of Bev's husband, Verne Foss, on May 16, 2020. Verne was in hospice care at the Mitchell home at the time of his passing. Please hold their family in your hearts during this time.

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
Christian Bowers, grandson of Doug & Charlotte Bowers
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
Don Lauver, Son-in-law of Linda Connolly
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



Pastor Sharon's reflections continued from page 12

- 41% of those responding said they would not feel comfortable returning to in-person worship until a vaccine or treatment for COVID-19 is widely available.
- 35% of those responding said it would be after December 2020 before they might feel comfortable attending in-person worship. 8.5% of people said they would feel comfortable returning in June, 15% in July, 21% in August, others between September-December.

Many people made comments about trusting the leadership of our church to make the best decisions for our health, safety and future. Our Leaders' Team has been closely monitoring the situation with COVID-19, reading articles, discussing and listening to our congregation. For now our buildings remain closed for in-person gatherings, even as we carry out the work of the church in new and vital ways.

We are planning for "We Gather Together," small group worship experiences held on weekdays that will make it possible for groups of 10 to gather to hear a recorded message, listen to inspiring music and pray together.

When we are able to be in our buildings, "We Gather Together" will be implemented. Watch for more info about this exciting and hope-filled worship opportunity.

Remember that God is indeed our refuge and our strength. Watch for the ways God is working. Listen for the voice of God in those around us. Act in ways that show kindness, promote justice and draw us closer to the living God.

*Blessings,
Sharon*



Dear Church Family...

Thank you all for your love and support through this close call. There is NO DOUBT God was with me throughout this journey, and I learned the peace one finds in total submission. ... God was in charge from start to finish, and Jim and I have again felt His strength embracing both of us. Then, our St. Mark's family showered us with calls and cards, and prayers, only underlining what a special congregation we have.

Thanks, love and prayers, Kathie Barrett

My sister Beverly Foss & I want to thank everyone for their prayers, calls, flowers and beautiful cards. We also appreciated Sharon's phone calls. Verne passed away peacefully on 5/16. It's always comforting to know I'm part of this wonderful, caring, nurturing loving church.

In Christian love, Charlotte (Charlie) Mitchell

Input Project Update

I am asking again for your patience! The final report from the Input Project was shared with the Covenant Council on May 19. Unfortunately, we were unable to do a thorough discussion because we had a full agenda. We all are busy adjusting and adapting to new ways of doing things, and we do not want this work to get ignored in all that is happening. In addition, we had wanted to have a way to follow up on the results, and with the postponement of the "Learn, Love, Grow" workshop, we lost that opportunity. Finally, we want to create a secure way to share the report via our website. Since General Conference has been moved to 2021, we do have additional time to give the report the attention it deserves. As a result, we have decided to wait longer until we release the report to all of you. I realize this is disappointing since you have already been waiting for months. I ask again for your patience and thank you for your understanding.

Thank you,
Brenda Hunter, member of the Input Project Committee



St. Mark's UMC
1431 W. Magee Road
Tucson, AZ 85704
(520) 297-2062

Email:
info@umcstmarks.org
Website:
www.umcstmarks.org

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

Sunday Worship
Livestreamed
9:45 a.m.
umcstmarks.org
Facebook
YouTube

Reflections

Our Refuge and Strength

Every day our times seem to grow more tumultuous. My heart aches and breaks for those who suffer – because of racial violence, anger, fear, sickness or mourning. I long for the ability to worship and gather together so that we can offer in-person words of comfort and strength. In some moments I can barely lift my eyes and put one foot in front of the other. Then the sun comes up over the mountains to the east and I see a glimmer of light, and turn to God in prayer. In this article I will offer a prayer, with words from Psalm 46, and some information.

Merciful God, help us remember that you are our refuge and our strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change, though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble with its tumult. With sorrowful hearts we come, O God, and cry out to you to heal our nation, mend its people, provide wisdom to leaders, and justice for those who suffer. Help us look at our aching hearts and understand our own fears and blind spots and see as you see, speak with your heart and act with your hands and feet. Heal the sick, remove the threat of illness from our world so

that we can once again be fully about your work in the world – strengthening and uplifting one another in your gracious name. Amen.

In the midst of turmoil our church continues to bring a light of hope to our people, community and world. We have collected food for Interfaith Community Services' food bank and needed items for the Primavera Foundation. We faithfully knit together the pieces of worship and offer it to God on Sunday mornings. We are a strong online presence through "Who's With Me Tonight?" as well as Zoom Sunday school, classes and meetings. Our church is open even as we are on pause for in-person gatherings.

A Leaders' Team has been meeting every week since mid-March and spearheaded the survey that was recently taken by 353 people. Our Lay Leaders (Brenda Hunter, John Cecilia, Don Booth) will be sharing about the survey in upcoming emails. Here is some information from the survey:

- 311 people responded that the online worship experience has met or exceeded expectations.

Continued on page 11