

# Messenger

Changing the world through Christ by caring for all people.

Volume 60, Number 11  
September 2, 2020



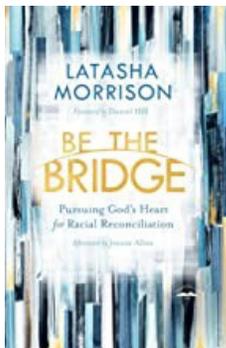
## New Fall Lineup of Spiritual Formation Opportunities 21-Day Racial Equity Challenge Begins Sept. 6 Online, No Book Required

Adult Spiritual Growth and Church & Society challenge the congregation of St. Mark's UMC to engage in material and conversation to deepen our understanding of racism and the experience of being a person of color in America. We pray that by the end of our 21-day journey together we will grow in our understanding of race relations and of each other so we can continue growing into the beloved community Jesus desired us to be. Each day for 21 days watch, listen to or read something that will broaden your perspective on the history and lives of people of color. Each week, groups will meet and discuss their reactions via Zoom. No Zoom? Email your thoughts to Judy Boroto to share in the group. Don't want to share? Sign up anyway and write down your thoughts privately. Each day's challenge will be emailed to you the evening before. Sign up now!



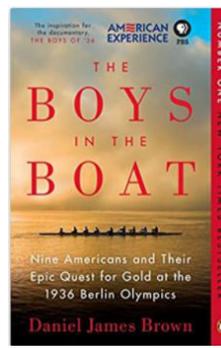
## Other Fall Classes and Discussions

All registration is online at <https://umcstmarks.org/classes/adult-spiritual-growth-opportunities/>  
Facilitators will then email you with specific information needed for each opportunity.



**Mondays:** Begins Oct. 5, four sessions, 6:30-8 p.m. – led by Margaret Synhorst on Zoom – **“Be the Bridge: Pursuing God's Heart for Racial Reconciliation”** by Latasha Morrison. With racial tensions at an all-time high, it is time for Christians to become the leaders in the conversation on racial reconciliation. This guide equips readers to participate in the ongoing dialog and to serve as a bridge for righteousness,

justice, healing, transformation and reconciliation. \$12/Kindle; \$13/paperback.



**Fridays: Open Minds Book Group** – 9-10:30 a.m. Monthly book discussion led by Celeste Pardee & Ann Reaban. Sept. 25: **“The Boys in the Boat”** by Daniel James Brown (2013). A tale of beating the odds (and the Germans) at the 1936 Berlin Olympics. A portrait of 9 boys who first rowed together at the University of Washington. \$20/hardback; \$15/Kindle; \$13/paperback.

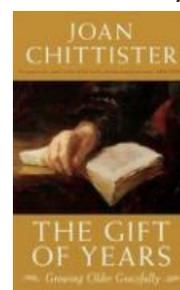
**Oct. 23: “Together: The Healing Power of Human Connection in a Sometimes Lonely World”** by Vivek H. Murthy, M.D. (2020).

**Nov. 20: “The Light Between Oceans”** by M. L. Stedman (2012).

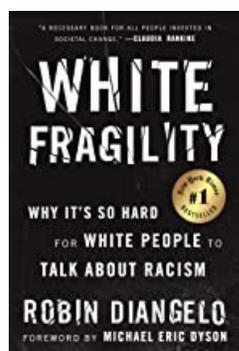
**Dec. 18: “I Am Malala”** by Malala Yousazai (2013).

### Sundays:

• Email study beginning Sept. 6 for 10 weeks – led by Harold Putt –



**“The Gift of Years: Growing Older Gracefully”** by Joan Chittister. A series of 40 four- to six-page essays. Each essay covers not just “growing older gracefully,” but also some aspect of the meaning of life itself. While discussing joys and challenges of aging, Chittister encourages readers to discover the deep spiritual meaning that



**Tuesdays:** Begins Oct. 6, four sessions, 1-2:30 p.m. – led by Pastor Evy on Zoom – *Back by popular demand!* – **“White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism”** by Robin DiAngelo. A book written by a white woman talking to white people about racism. She covers many different things surrounding racism and how race is handled. The book gives a lot of food for thought

and challenges white people on how they react to certain situations. \$10/Kindle; \$12.25/paperback.

Continued on page 2

*Continued from page 1*

can come with older age. Each week, participants will be asked to read and reflect on four of the essays and will be invited to share with the group via email their thoughts on one or more of the readings.

\$15/hardback; \$10.50/paperback; \$5 and up/used; \$10/Kindle.

- Begins Sept. 6, 6 sessions; 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. – led by Judy Boroto on Zoom – **“What is the Bible?”** (Student text) by Rev. Anne Robertson. Not sure which Bible to buy? Not sure where to start reading/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. \$11/paperback; \$6/Kindle.

- Begins Oct. 18, 6 sessions; 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. – led by Judy Boroto on Zoom – **“Sacred Rhythms: Arranging Our Lives for Spiritual Transformation”** by Ruth Haley Barton. Do you long for a deep, fundamental change in your life with God? Do you desire a greater intimacy with God? This study is an introduction to spiritual practices that open us to the transforming love and changes that only God can bring about in our lives. \$10.35/Kindle; \$8/

Cokesbury paperback; \$13.39/Amazon hardcover.

It's time for **Disciple Bible Study**. If you have been hesitating to take any of these studies, do not put it off any longer. These studies are LIFE-CHANGING and may be just the thing you need to help you through these difficult times. Dates and times will be determined by the participants. ASG is prepared to offer 2 of them if there are six or more people interested – Disciple 1 and Disciple 3 can be offered. Zoom only.

### **SPECIAL EVENT**

**Finding Your Voice: A Contemplative Writing Retreat**, \$30. 7 p.m. Nov. 13 to 3 p.m. Nov 14 via Zoom.

## **Holy Yoga is on Zoom!**



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](mailto:Tricia@umcstmarks.org) for the Zoom link.

During these very challenging times, we need places to help us listen to God as well as ways to express our deepest thoughts and prayers. This online retreat is offered as one of those places in the midst of pandemic and polarization to help you find your voice. Robin Pippin, recently retired from The Upper Room, is well-equipped to be our guide in this process. Time for writing and time for worship are built into the schedule. Sponsored by Adult Spiritual Growth, The Upper Room, and the Desert Southwest Conference 5-Day Academy for Spiritual Formation. To register for this event, please go directly to: <https://dscumc.org/arizona-five-day-academy/>

### **ONGOING CLASSES BY ZOOM AND BY EMAIL**

These classes are open to all people at any time. Contact the facilitators (see directory) to join.

**Mondays: Starting the Week the Right Way**, 9-10 a.m. led by Roger Pierce on Zoom. Scripture selections are read during the week and then discussed in a group.

#### **Wednesdays:**

- **Thoughts to Ponder** led by Linda Walker via email. Quotes on a chosen topic are sent to participants who then reflect and email their thoughts to the entire group. The group is currently pondering the themes lifted up each week in St. Mark's Sunday worship services.

- **Wednesday Morning Study Group**, 10-11:30 a.m. led by Marcia Rostad on Zoom.

Begins Sept. 9 with a six-week study of **“Hebrews: Grace and Gratitude”** by David A. DeSilva. The class format presents varying topics on an ongoing basis.

Current book: \$17/new; \$11.50 & up/used; \$10/Kindle

#### **Sundays:**

- **Seekers** – 11:15 a.m.-12:15 p.m., led by Kelly Deyoe and Brenda Hunter on Zoom. This group is currently studying the Gospel of Luke. A study Bible of any translation is recommended.

- **Sharing & Family Life** - 9:45-10:45 a.m., led by Terry Majewski & Rick Farnsworth on Zoom.

This class resumed Aug. 30 with the 10-week study of **“New Testament Characters”** by Carolyn Nystrom. It is not too late to join the class! A Zoom link will be provided by no later than Friday before the Sunday class. Books are available free from Terry Majewski, while they last. You can get them directly from Amazon: \$10.

## **New devotionals are available**

The September/October Upper Room and the September/October/November Daily Bread devotionals are available for pickup in the black mailbox outside the office door.

# 'Anchored in Hope' Stewardship Campaign Begins Soon

*A report from the Finance Committee*

St. Mark's finances for the first seven months of 2020 are summarized below:

	Actual YTD	Budget YTD	Variance to Budget
<b>Total Income</b>	\$670,538	\$723,156	(\$ 52,618)
<b>Total Expense</b>	644,298	726,234	81,936
<b>YTD Difference</b>	\$ 26,240	(\$ 3,078)	\$ 29,318

Although we have a positive balance of \$26,240 year to date, actual income is -\$52,618, or 7% less than budget. This shortfall in income is offset by the reduction in expenses, which are \$81,936, or 11% less than budget. We are in a surprisingly good financial position as a result of the generous contributions of the congregation and the wonderful response of committees controlling expenses. There is \$224,210 in the Unrestricted Fund.

The Finance Committee has begun planning the 2021 Stewardship Campaign, Anchored in Hope. "Words of Hope" will be the sermon series for the month of November, and the stewardship committee thought this was a perfect theme for the 2021 campaign. In these uncertain economic times, money is on many people's minds. So since a large part of the St. Mark's budget goes toward the program and support staff, the committee is planning a soft lead-in to the campaign using a series of videos that will focus on the individuals on staff and the services they provide to the church. These videos will begin in September, with the Anchored in Hope messages to follow in October and November.

*Bill Zermuehlen, Finance Chair*

*Ruth Kester, Administration & Finance Coordinator*

## **Behind the Scenes: Hidden Assets**

The series your Finance Committee is planning on our St. Mark's "Hidden Assets" has nothing to do with money or property. But it does deal with a most valuable item – the people on the program and services staff. These are people who help keep the church operating smoothly. They make sure the church's financial obligations are met, that youth and adult Bible study classes are available, that information on church activities is sent to the congregation and much, much more. They are involved in helping to plan Sunday Worship. And now, they provide the technical facilities necessary to keep the church open. Zoom classes and meetings and Sunday worship on the internet would not be possible without them.

During the Sunday service starting Sept. 20 and continuing for the following three weeks, you will have the opportunity get to know some of these individuals who work "Behind the Scenes." We hope you enjoy hearing from them and will let them know how much they are appreciated. If you want to hear the more, the complete interviews will be available on the St. Mark's website.

*Bill Zermuehlen, Finance Chair*



## **Masterpiece Festival CANCELED**

**CANCELED**

With great disappointment, we announce we are canceling this year's Masterpiece Festival. Pastor Sharon and I have discussed this issue, and based on the guidelines our bishop and district superintendent have outlined for reopening our campus, we see no realistic scenario that will allow us to host a gathering this large in less than three months. Our primary concern is to keep everyone – our vendors, our customers and our staff – healthy and safe.

As difficult as this decision was to make, I know it is the right one. Many of our vendors depend on this event to supplement their income, so please keep those affected in your prayers. I appreciate the understanding and support of the congregation, community, vendors, customers and staff. Please stay safe and healthy, kind and respectful.

*Clay Thompson, Fine Arts and Crafts Guild Chairman*

## Voting is a Christian Action

The United Methodist Social Principles say, “The strength of a political system depends upon the full and willing participation of its citizens. The church should continually exert a strong ethical influence upon the state.” We exert this influence through voting.

The Church and Society Team encourages each of you to vote. This article is a plea to see it as a way to honor all those who went before us to ensure that every American could cast a ballot. Mark Hrabe and Dorothy Montgomery compiled the information below so each of us could easily cast our ballot in this next election.

The General Election is Tuesday, Nov. 3. If you are not registered to vote or have moved since the last election, go online to obtain registration information: <https://recorder.pima.gov/regvote>. The deadline for registration is Monday, Oct. 5. In this election you will have several options for voting. You can vote in person at your precinct polling place. Hours are 6 a.m. to 7 p.m. If you are not sure where your polling place is located, you can go online to find it: <https://recorder.pima.gov/VoterStats/PollingInfo>.

You can also choose to vote early in person. The dates for early voting are Wednesday, Oct. 7 through Friday, Oct. 30. Three sites will be available for early voting starting Oct. 7: The downtown main office at 240 N. Stone Ave., the east side office at 6920 E. Broadway Blvd. (next to the Gaslight Theater), or the Ballot Processing Center at 6550 S. Country Club Blvd. (one block south of Valencia). Starting Oct. 26, additional early voting sites will open at the Oro Valley Library and the Wheeler Taft Abbott Library (Continental Ranch). Go to <https://recorder.pima.gov/EarlyVotingSites> to find sites located farther away from St. Marks.

The last option is vote by mail. To vote by mail you will need to be on the permanent early voting list or request an early ballot prior to each election. To request a mail-in ballot go to this link: <https://recorder.pima.gov/BallotBy-MailRequest>. The deadline for requesting an early ballot is Friday, Oct. 23. **To ensure there is enough time to receive and return your ballot, make your request as soon as possible.** Early ballots will begin to be mailed Oct. 7. If you return your ballots by mail, they must be received by the Recorder’s Office by 7 p.m. on Election Day. To guarantee this, the recorder’s office suggests you mail your ballots back no later than Tuesday, Oct. 27. Instead of mailing early ballots, you can also drop them off at your polling place on Election Day at Early Voting Sites or deliver them to the recorder’s office at 240 N. Stone Ave. After you have returned your ballot you can check its status at <https://recorder.pima.gov/VoterStats/BallotInfo>.

We pray that each of you will cast your ballot. This is true democracy.  
*Your Church and Society Team*

## Update from Worldwide

### Christian Support Task Force

#### From the U.S. State Department Report on International Religious Freedom – India 2019

According to the non-government-organization Persecution Relief, 17 Christian church buildings were attacked including in Belgaum District, Karnataka, where a group of men set fire to a church under construction. According to NGO Open Doors, Hindus tore down a church building in Guntur District, Andhra Pradesh. On April 14, 200 men attacked a church in Jaunpur District of Uttar Pradesh as police officers looked on without intervening. The church’s clergy fled while men attacked members of the congregation with sticks.



Christians have been attacked for “religious conversion.” Nine of 28 states have enacted laws restricting religious conversion. Three states require district authorities to be informed of any intended conversions three months in advance. According to the Indian Supreme Court, lower castes converting from Hinduism to another religion may result in denial of government benefits, such as placement in educational institutions or job training.

NGOs International Christian Concern and ADF India stated authorities pursued charges against Christians in several states under religious conversion laws or laws prohibiting “insults” to religion or religious belief, such as Section 259A of the national penal code. In September 2019, ICC reported that eight people were arrested, and several house churches closed down in Lakhimpur Khere District. Those arrested were charged under Section 259A. On Sept. 8, Jharkhand police arrested Catholic priest Dinoy John and lay leader Munna Handsda for allegedly trying to convert villagers in Jharkhand’s Godda District. Media reported that many of the 271 Christians charged by the police in Jaunpur District of Uttar Pradesh in September 2018 with “spreading lies about Hinduism” remained in prison by year’s end.

According to ICC, Christian pastors, their families and their congregations were threatened by police and Hindu residents in Jharkhand, with some fleeing their villages out of concern for their safety. ICC reported pastors receiving death threats, mobs attacking Christian worship services, and Christians being detained by police for not giving money for Hindu ceremonies. *Please pray for Christians in India.*

If you would like more information about persecuted Christians, or to join the St. Mark’s Worldwide Christian Support Task Force, email us at [christiansupport@umcst-marks.org](mailto:christiansupport@umcst-marks.org) or drop us a note at the church office.

# Kitchen Remodel and Campaign Update

“Countdown: In the Final Stretch” of the Kitchen Remodel Campaign has arrived. As you can see from the campaign thermometer, there is only **\$31,156** remaining to reach the **\$300,000 Victory Goal**. The St. Mark’s congregation has generously contributed **\$268,844** to date!

## Kitchen Remodel Campaign



We continue to receive your generous donations each week – thank you! If you have not participated yet or wish to increase your donation, we hope you will consider doing so. We are very close to a fully funded project, which is an outstanding achievement.

The Kitchen Shower just wrapped up, and the response has been nothing short of incredible! Many of the items have been claimed for donation and our kitchen team is busily purchasing new kitchenware and making plans to get all the items in place so we are ready for the eventual

## 'We Gather Together' Begins in October!

As you know, the Genesis Team has been meeting and planning the reopening of the campus. The first gathering will be a group of 10 people for a small worship experience called We Gather Together. Groups will meet once a week for four weeks to hear a pastor read scripture and give a recorded message and listen to prerecorded songs. The people attending will be able to discuss the message and offer prayers together for the first time in months. All safety protocols will be followed to ensure the well-being of those in attendance.

We hope to begin meeting groups in early October, if the current COVID-19 case number trends continue. If you are interested in being part of a group, please keep an eye on the website for your opportunity to register for one of six groups: Monday 9 a.m. or 7 p.m., Wednesday 9 a.m. or 2 p.m. or Friday 9 a.m. or 2 p.m.

campus reopening.

Construction continues, and we are rapidly approaching the “punch list” phase of the project. Progress since the last Messenger article includes:

- All major appliances and fixtures connected
- Final inspections almost complete
- All cabinetry installed
- Counter tops to be installed this week
- Fire suppression system installed and ready for 24-hour monitoring
- Appliance checkouts in progress
- Punch list items being identified

There are a lot of final details to complete to make certain we have the best finished product possible. We hope Pastor Sharon’s kitchen tour video from worship Aug. 22 gave you a good sense of the how our kitchen has been transformed.

Thanks for your continued support!  
*Lezley Barth and John Cecilia*

## Kitchen Shower Thank-You

Thank you for the many generous donations for the virtual Kitchen Shower. We had a wonderful response to the request for items on our wish list. We invite you to tour the kitchen and see all the wonderful new items when St. Mark’s reopens. If you purchased an item and were not able to drop it off at the church, please contact Anita Winslow at (see directory) or Bonnie Sargent at (see directory), and we will make arrangements to pick up your shower gift.

## Volunteers Needed for 'We Gather Together'

When we begin our small group worship, "We Gather Together," we will need volunteers. Your role would be to take temperatures, document them and make sure everyone has a mask and is maintaining social distance. We have developed guidelines and will conduct training. One volunteer is needed for each session of We Gather Together. If interested, please call the office (520-297-2062) and leave a message with your name and phone number.

Thank you,  
*Pastor Evy and Jan Walker, Chair of Safety Team*



## Missions Update

The Missions Committee met by Zoom Wednesday, Aug. 12. After considering our remaining budget for 2020, we decided to support our active mission partners at 60% of our original proposals. We will supplement the 10% allocation to missions that comes from the church budget with monies from the Missions Committee's Change the World Fund.

Our allocations for August included \$1,200 to Frontera Wesley, the Methodist organization on the University of Arizona campus, \$600 to the Thornhill/Lopez Center for gay, lesbian and transgender information and health, and \$400 to Primavera to cover the cost of Saturday evening meals on Aug. 1 and 29. These funds come out of our Change the World Fund.

We are continuing to support food donations from the congregation for Interfaith Community Services. To date, we have donated more than 5,500 pounds of food to this important cause. As you can read in John Yost's article, we are challenging all of you, the congregation, to donate a total of 10,000 pounds by the end of this year.

Thanks for your support!

*Pat Kittrell, Chair*

## St. Mark's Volunteers Deliver Carloads of Supplies for Nash Elementary Classrooms



## ICS Food Drive

### Challenge!

Please note the revised times we are collecting nonperishable food donations for the food bank at ICS.



**Collection times are 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. Tuesdays and Saturdays in the north parking lot.**

The dropoff process is safe for you as we take your donations out of your car for you. Our plan is to continue to do this the rest of the year. ICS greatly appreciates our efforts, and we are making a huge difference in our community.

Now, we are aiming even higher in helping those in need. Our church, which has already collected more than 5,500 pounds, is making a challenge to you, the congregation:

**LET'S DONATE 10,000 POUNDS OF FOOD TO ICS BY THE END OF THE YEAR, WHICH WILL ALMOST DOUBLE WHAT WE HAVE COLLECTED THROUGH AUGUST.**

This is an ambitious target, but we can do it if we all pitch in. If you are looking for a way to help others during these difficult times, please think about this challenge – pick up a couple extra items at the grocery store, ask your friends and neighbors to make donations, and bring them to the north parking lot at church during the designated times. We have received nonperishable items from one can up to 150 pounds, and everything is appreciated. There is tremendous need in our community.

St. Mark's is a wonderful, caring family. Thank you so much for your help as we continue to work toward making our 10,000-pound end of year challenge!

*John Yost, ICS Liaison*

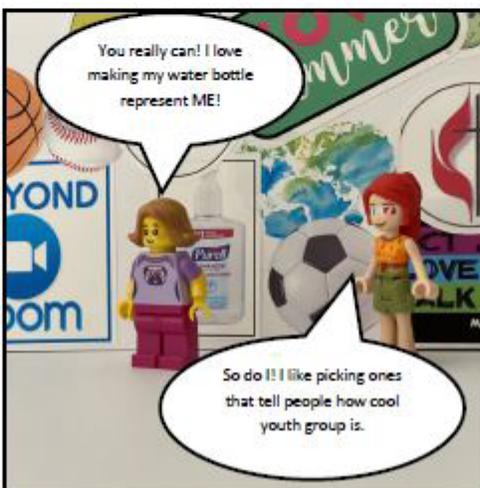
**Nash Neighbors Christmas Gift Cards.** Watch for more details about collection of \$25 Walmart/Target gift cards to help Nash Elementary families. Coming in November! Merry Christmas!

# Youth Ministry

The latest news for High School, Middle School and Pre Teen Students!



## Adventures of the Youth Directors



## Confirmation News



The 2020-2021 Confirmation class will start Sept. 13!! Confirmation is open to students in grades 8-12 here at St. Mark's. The class goes through May and is so much fun. You learn all kinds of cool stuff and get to hang out with Rachel every week. Awesome!

We will begin this year with classes online (they will be so fun!). If you are interested in signing up, contact Rachel ASAP at [rachel@umcstmarks.org](mailto:rachel@umcstmarks.org) or text her.

## September Birthdays

- 9/3 — **Rachel Mosher**  
(Youth Ministry Coordinator)
- 9/3 — **Lucy Newell**
- 9/9 — **Daniel Titzel**
- 9/11 — **Charlotte Chester**
- 9/21 — **Tristan Turner**
- 9/28 — **Cait Rowden**



# Youth Ministry

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



## Stickers!

Those stickers behind Kim and Rachel in the Adventures of the Youth Directors look so fun! What do you like to put stickers on? Last month at our Middle School Zoom, we put virtual stickers on virtual hydros and it was virtually awesome! It was so much fun, the South District Youth Directors decided we wanted to take it to the real world! Check the mail – you should be getting an awesome South District Youth sticker! We hope they help you remember that even if we can't meet for events right now, we are all part of this amazing group. Send us a picture of where you put your sticker!



## Communication Connections

“Hi!” “Hello!” “What’s up?” So many ways to say hello! All summer, we have been saying hello in so many ways!



We have had text trivia, weekly emails, Facebook videos and Facebook Live. Now that school is back in session, we are adding monthly Zoom gatherings, too. You are all so busy on your computer for school, we know that you need to take screen breaks every once in a while, so we are going to change up how we do things!

From now on, each week will EITHER have a text trivia OR an email activity. On the first and third weeks of each month, you will receive an activity email. On the second and fourth weeks, text trivia. And on the fifth week – it will be a surprise which one you get! Please be sure Kim and Rachel have your phone number and email address so you get all the fun communications.

# St Mark's PRETEENS

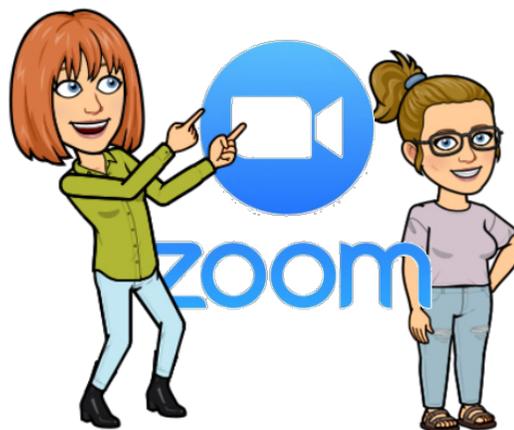
Happy August, PreTeen friends!!

If you are in fourth or fifth grade, make sure Julie has your (or your parents') email address! Each week, Julie sends emails to touch base, along with some fun activities for you to do, too!

The most recent email has a fun getting-to-know-you survey. Usually we would all be together and getting to know each other, so let's get to know each other over email. We can't wait to hear from you!

## Zoom into Youth Group

We miss your faces!! We know that you see us each week on Facebook, but we miss seeing you! The third Sunday of every month, we will have Zoom Youth Group. Middle School students will meet with Rachel, and High School will have Sippin' Over Scriptures with Kim. We will send out the links before each meeting. Stay tuned!



## Join Us for Online Worship

Worship with us at 9:45 a.m. Sundays on our website, <https://umcstmarks.org/live-worship>, or St. Mark's UMC, Tucson on Facebook or at UMC St. Mark's Oro Valley on YouTube. It's the same service on all three media, so take your pick. If you like, leave a comment so we know you were there. See you then!



# Rally Day 2020 Was a Little Different But Still Fun!

Rally Day 2020! Children's Zoomday School resumed Aug. 9 and had a drive through Rally Day Parade, complete with goodies, music and more! The children have been studying the Fruit of the Spirit and in September we will begin using the brand-new Sunday school curriculum, "Celebrate Wonder."



St. Mark's UMC  
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(520) 297-2062

Email:  
[info@umcstmarks.org](mailto:info@umcstmarks.org)  
Website:  
[www.umcstmarks.org](http://www.umcstmarks.org)

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

Sunday Worship  
Livestreamed  
9:45 a.m.  
[umcstmarks.org](http://umcstmarks.org)  
Facebook  
YouTube

## 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](mailto:prayerchain@umcstmarks.org). You may also visit our Prayer Room and leave a prayer on our prayer wall.

*Jared Bowman and family  
Donald Chester  
Deb Cushman  
Judy Drescher*

*Marge and Darrel Frazer  
Keith and Mary Ann Glazier  
Megan Krzmarzick  
Jim and Mary Sanders*

*Ana Luisa Terrazas  
Carol Underwood  
Jackie Vickers  
Judy Wickham  
Lindsay Williams*

## CONDOLENCES

We extend our heartfelt sympathy and prayers to:

- The family and many friends of Gina Nussman, who passed away on Sunday, Aug. 9 after a short illness. We pray for God's love to surround her husband, Jim, and their daughters and families (Justina and Robert Trejo and sons, Jessica and Rich Howell and daughters, Julia Nussman, Kevin and Tricia Chester and two daughters and two sons). Services are pending.

## Dear Church Family...

With a broken but grateful heart I extend my thanks to my St. Mark's family for the outpouring of care and concern I have received throughout Keith's battle with cancer and following his recent passing. The beautiful cards, filled with love, inspiration and offers of help have been comforting and heartwarming. Keith's journey is over, but it feels as though mine has just begun as I find my way through the grief and learn to live without Keith by my side. I especially thank Pastor Sharon for her love and support throughout this past year as Keith and I walked the path toward what we had hoped would lead to his restored health. It wasn't to be – but he, too, so appreciated all your expressions of love and care for him.

With sincere and deep gratitude,  
*Pam Johnson*

A special recognition to Don Booth for his years of supporting others in our community with their computer needs and problem solving. He does this work with a helping heart, without expectation of payment.

One of my Mobile Meals clients at Interfaith Community Services is a 93-year-old lady who lives by herself in the Catalina Foothills. In talking to her, she told me she had a new iPad and needed help in learning how to use it. I called Don and he, without hesitation, agreed to go help her. Within a few days, Don had her all fixed up, and she is very grateful. This type of service really helps our seniors and adds to their quality of life.

Thank you, Don!  
*John Yost, ICS Liaison*

## LOVED ONES IN THE MILITARY

Please keep these people in your prayers. Email additions or updates to [messenger@umcstmarks.org](mailto: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



## September prayer requests

St. Mark's Prayer Ministry Team provides information so you can pray for people and activities happening in and around church during the month. NOTE: The monthly Prayer Requests are located on the church website under the MINISTRIES tab, then CONGREGATIONAL CARE. Or if you are reading this online, follow this link:

[https://umcstmarks.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/monthlyprayerlist\\_web9.20.pdf](https://umcstmarks.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/monthlyprayerlist_web9.20.pdf)

✚ Give thanks for our church kitchen remodeling project that has been under way during the COVID-19 shutdown and is nearing completion. Pray that all the pledge/commitments money and the remaining \$40,000 or so needed for this project will be received. Also, give thanks for the generosity of our church family participating in the Helping Hands, Nourishing Hearts Kitchen Shower.

✚ Pray for Pastor Sharon, Pastor Stuart and Pastor Evy as they continue to provide ministry, leadership and care for our St. Mark's congregation during the shutdown. Pray for their good health, safety and well-being in all situations. May they feel God's presence and know His love for them each day.

✚ Pray for the health and safety of the St. Mark's Early Childhood Center – Laurie Walsh, director, all teachers and staff and all the children and their families as classes and child care have started.

✚ Give thanks for our recorded worship services each week. Include prayers for the time and effort our pastors, the Worship Committee and various musicians, as well as our technology staff and volunteers, give each week to provide internet worship on Sunday mornings.

✚ Pray for Pastor Kim Ogle, Rachel Mosher and Julie Eblen as they lead and care for the St. Mark's pre-teens and junior and senior high youth during the shutdown. Ask blessings for the Zoom and other online activities and gatherings that happen every week.

✚ Give thanks and ask God's blessings for St. Mark's pastors and church staff, who continue to work from home, and/or selectively and carefully work in the office to accomplish the essential, necessary and critical business of the church.

✚ Give thanks and ask God's blessings for teachers and children participating in our online Zoomday Sunday school classes that take place every Sunday morning.

✚ Pray for good decisions and plans being made to restart the Mobile Food Pantry at Nash Elementary School this fall – a much-needed project for Nash students and parents. This will involve the Tucson Community Food Bank and several St. Mark's volunteers.

✚ Ask God's continued guidance for our pastors and staff, our lay leaders, members of our Safety Committee and other church leaders meeting online to facilitate the St. Mark's Reopening Plan (a document of guidelines and procedures). The plan covers when and how the St. Mark's UMC campus can reopen for activities, classes, worship services and gatherings.

✚ Give thanks for the work of St. Mark's Adult Spiritual Growth Committee to provide interesting and worthwhile book studies/online discussions. Pray for good participation in the 21-Day Racial Equity Habit-Building Challenge. Also pray for those interested in Disciple Bible Studies to make the commitment to participate in one of these life-changing, all-encompassing studies this year.

✚ Pray for God's wisdom and guidance for good decisions and leadership of our government leaders, health professionals, scientists and others as restrictions and guidelines change. Pray as businesses and events open up, and travel, shopping and gatherings begin again – that we will all stay healthy and be safe.

✚ Pray for God's help and guidance for educators, teachers, staff and parents to determine the best and safest ways for learning to take place this school year, e.g., in-person classes or remote/internet classes. May each child have what they need to learn, grow and develop physically and mentally during the COVID-19 pandemic.

✚ Give thanks for the ongoing donation of non-perishable food items from our congregation that go to the Interfaith Community Services Food Bank.

## Reflections

What's on my mind and heart? You – the people of St. Mark's – are never far from my thoughts. Sometimes I think of you as a whole congregation, picturing you in the past at our different worship services. I know some of you are connected to our church through friends and activities, and others are being contacted by our Telecare Ministry – I still find myself wondering how you are doing and have connected with many of you. If you have a need or concern or just want to connect with a pastor, you can always leave a message on the church phone (520-297-2062) or email us at [info@umcstmarks.org](mailto:info@umcstmarks.org). Phone messages are checked regularly throughout the mornings and forwarded by our church staff to pastors or others.

What's on my mind and heart? Plans for reopening our church buildings are never far from my mind. Our Genesis Team has completed (and received approval from our district superintendent on) our reopening plan, which will be posted on our website by the end of this week. Watch for info in the weekly email on just how to find it there. Here's what we hope and expect, if the COVID-19 numbers in Pima County continue in a downward trend and other criteria are met:

- In a few weeks we will reopen the church office for limited hours.
- We will begin "We Gather Together" small group mid-week worship experiences. We hope to begin this four-week experience Oct. 5.
- We are making plans to begin in-person worship in the Sanctuary, hopefully by early to mid-November. Physically distanced, we can have about 85 people in our Sanctuary, when the time is right. We are not yet ready to do that but hope we will be in a couple of months.

- We expect to continue meetings and classes via Zoom for a while.

I know these expectations are somewhat vague. Our main concern and goal is to keep our congregation safe and healthy, while still giving us opportunities to connect for worship, fellowship, classes and programs. We've realized by now that this is a marathon, not a sprint, so we're moving deliberately and gradually, guided by prayer, seeking God's wisdom and guidance and closely following information from the Arizona Department of Health Services and other places.

Finally, what's on my mind and heart? The unrest in our country, which is sometimes accompanied by hatred and false information – that's on my mind. My heart is with those who suffer. I put one question to you that I encourage you to keep with you as you read, think and act: Is this something that helps? Do my words or actions paint the color of God's love in the world, or not?

I'm extremely grateful to our Genesis Team, our other pastors, staff and other leaders who are working with me to guide us through this time. Most of all, what's on my mind and heart is turning to God regularly – not just once of day, but sometimes every hour or minute – to ask for guidance and wisdom. I think of you, all of you and each of you, and hold you on my heart and in my prayer.

*Blessings,  
Sharon*