

Messenger

Changing the world through Christ by caring for all people.

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SPECIAL EDITION



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Join us in person in October for 'We Gather Together'

Have you missed worshiping in person with others? Have you missed being in the church buildings? We have received permission to have a small-group, in-person worship experience on campus called "We Gather Together." This is a chance to worship in a small group with others beginning Oct. 5 and running for four weeks. You register for a specific day and time (such as 9 a.m. Friday) and come at that time for all four weeks. There will be recorded messages and scripture readings from the pastors that are different from the Sunday sermons, around the theme "Care Born ... Out of Solitude," based loosely on a little book by Henri Nouwen called "Out of Solitude." Led by a facilitator, the worship time will include discussions of the message, sharing prayer concerns and praying together. We invite you to register for the opportunity to be among the first people back on campus. Safety protocols will be carefully followed, including mask requirement and the taking of contactless temperatures.



Sessions are limited to 10 people each (including the facilitator and a safety volunteer) and will be held at 9 a.m. Mondays, Wednesdays or Fridays, at 7 p.m. Mondays or at 2 p.m. Wednesdays or Fridays. Register by Oct. 1. Spaces are filling up! You can access the registration at https://stmarksumc.formstack.com/forms/we_gather_together_registration_form or go to the St. Mark's website, <https://umcstmarks.org>, and click on "Latest Update." Scroll down to find the link.

'Who's With Me Tonight?' Changes to Tuesdays and Thursdays in October

"Who's With Me Tonight?" is our 10-minute devotion with puppets that is held at 7 p.m. on St. Mark's Facebook live. We've had lots of fun and touching moments since beginning WWMT back in March. Currently, WWMT is presented on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays.



Beginning Thursday, Oct. 1, "Who's With Me Tonight?" will be held ONLY on Tuesdays and Thursdays for the month of October. The puppets and pastors look forward to seeing you on those days at 7 p.m. on St. Mark's Facebook live. We encourage you to participate in Soul Station at 6:30 p.m. Wednesday nights (get the Zoom link by sending an email to info@umcstmarks.org) and to sign up for We Gather Together.

New Sermon Series

Begins Oct. 4

On Oct. 4, we'll celebrate World Communion Sunday and begin a new sermon series as part of this year's "Words for Life." The new series is called "Hard Words" and helps us talk about some of the challenging words of Scripture and our faith:

- Oct. 4 – "Sacrifice" & Holy Communion – Prepare your elements to join in World Communion Sunday worship – a piece of bread or cracker and juice or another beverage.
- Oct. 11 – "Power" – How are we to use the power God gives us?
- Oct. 18 – "Judging Others" – What do Matthew and Luke tell us about judging others?
- Oct. 25 – "Tolerance" – How do the decisions of the early church in Acts 15 give us guidance for today?

Join us for recorded worship at 9:45 a.m. Sundays at <https://umcstmarks.org/live-worship>, on the St. Mark's Tucson Facebook page, or on YouTube at UMC St. Mark's Oro Valley. You can also find the recording later on our website, umcstmarks.org, under "Live Worship – Previous Services."

Pumpkins arrive Oct. 11!

The youth Pumpkin Patch at St. Mark's is well-known in NW Tucson. So much so, that in 2019, when a hard freeze ruined the New Mexico crop and we didn't get pumpkins, people were calling the office asking where they were. Well, not this year!

A semi-tractor/trailer full of pumpkins will pull into the south parking lot at 12:30 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 11. If you're available that day, come on out and help us unload the truck full of pumpkins. Come-and-go help is also welcomed. You will want to bring gloves and sunscreen.

Each year, this experience proves that a little work is amply rewarded with lots of fun and fellowship! This year will still be fun, but you'll have to guess who your friends are, because we'll all be wearing masks. That's right, COVID 19 safety procedures will be in place, so the unloading routine will look a little different. As much as we want to sell pumpkins, we want our friends to be safe even more. One advantage of being one of the happy unloaders is that there will be a wide variety of sizes and prices to choose from, and you get to shop early while the selection is great! Tell your friends, or better yet, bring them along!



Again this year, the youth are looking for adult volunteers who are available during the day to staff the patch until school is out. If you can sign up for a two-hour shift (or several of them!) between Oct. 12 and 31, we will sincerely appreciate it. Watch for a SignUpGenius link coming soon. The Pumpkin Patch profits go to fund youth missions (Sierra Service Project), support retreats and support our local service projects.

Join 'Membership 101'

Tuesday, Oct. 6

Have you been thinking about membership at St. Mark's and wondering how to get more information and then join? From 6-7:30 p.m. Tuesday, Oct. 6, Pastor Sharon and Tricia Chester (Administrative Assistant for Hospitality) will lead a Membership 101 class via Zoom. This is an opportunity for you to learn more about St. Mark's – our priorities and plans, as well as history and United Methodist beliefs. To register for this class, send an email to tricia@umcstmarks.org or register on the website – <https://umcstmarks.org>. Go to "Latest Update" on the homepage or scroll over to the "Classes" dropdown menu, where you'll find a tab for Membership 101. If you have questions, leave a message at (520) 297-2062 and you will be contacted.

Confirmation

Confirmation at St. Mark's is such a fun experience! Students are invited to participate in Confirmation once they are in eighth grade. The class meets weekly and covers the history of the Christian church and the United Methodist Church as well as St. Mark's. We go on field trips and serve in Mission together, and it's a great class! This year we started on Zoom and Google classroom with a curriculum written in-house and prepared by a Google Certified Educator. It's been fun to learn together!

Any students in grades 8-12 who have not yet been confirmed are invited to join this year's Confirmation class. Class started Sept. 13, but it's not too late, we would love to have you join us. Contact Kim (kim@umcstmarks.org) or Rachel (rachel@umcstmarks.org) for more information.

Come to Pima County Interfaith Accountability Session

Pima County Interfaith is a broad coalition of many of our faith-based organizations. All those involved recognize that, as people of faith, we have a responsibility to be well-informed voters. Each election cycle, PCI holds an accountability forum in Tucson. This is our opportunity to hear from some of the individuals running for local offices.

This year the focus is on pandemic recovery—how we move forward in the areas of jobs, education, the economy, immigration and public health. This nonpartisan opportunity allows us to hear from those seeking office, including the county supervisor races, sheriff's department and more. **This is not a debate.** Pertinent questions are asked that will help us understand each person's platform. This accountability session will be held at 3 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 4 via Zoom. To register, please go to <https://tinyurl.com/PCIZoom>.

The Church and Society team encourages you to attend. Let us remember that the United Methodist Social Principles state, "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." The best way we can do this as Christians is to be informed and then to vote.

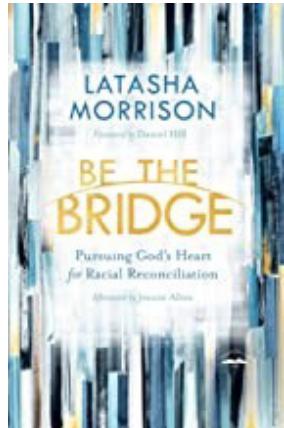
Hope to see you at this important Zoom opportunity.

*Church and Society
Rev. Dr. Evy McDonald, Chair*

Adult Spiritual Growth

Faith is a journey!

Register for all classes at <https://umcstmarks.org/classes/adult-spiritual-growth-opportunities>



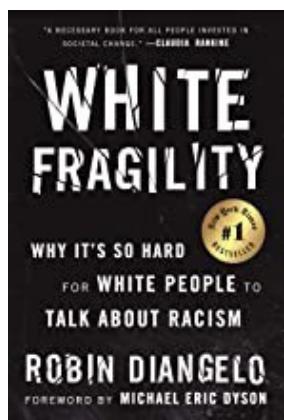
"Be the Bridge: Pursuing God's Heart for Racial Reconciliation" by Latasha Morrison.

6:30-8 p.m. Mondays beginning Oct. 5 via Zoom, led by Margaret Synhorst and Judy Boroto

A leading advocate for racial reconciliation offers a clarion call for Christians to move toward relationship and deeper understanding in the midst of a divisive culture. 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. From the foreword: *"In reading this book, you will learn a lot about how you can move from good intentions to genuine heart transformation and meaningful action. You will be pushed to take the work of reconciliation more seriously, and you will be inspired to join forces with a growing community who believe the gospel calls us to nothing less than a wholehearted commitment to truth and unity. But more than anything, you will see Jesus more clearly."*

Amazon: \$12/Kindle; \$13/Paperback - 2019, 240 pages



"White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism" by Dr. Robin DiAngelo.

1-2:30 p.m. Tuesdays beginning Oct. 6, four sessions via Zoom, led by Pastor Evy

A book written by a white woman talking to white people about racism. An academic with experience in diversity training, DiAngelo coined the term "white fragility" in 2011 to describe any defensive instincts or reactions that a white person experiences when questioned about race or made to consider their own race. 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.

Amazon: \$10/Kindle or paperback - 2018, 192 pages

New Tools for Worship

If you'd like to print a large-print bulletin at home for worship you can go to our website (umcstmarks.org) and scroll across to "Resources" and down to "Printable Bulletin."

On a mobile device, go to the website, click on the three lines in the upper right corner, and when the options pop open, do NOT click on Resources, but rather click on the little arrow at the far right of the "Resources" line.

Also, you can now register your worship attendance under "Resources," using the "Attendance" form that is found there. We'd love to know who is worshiping with us, so please use this form to let us know.

Celebrate Christian Education Sunday Sept. 27

The weekend of Sept. 12-13 was full of celebrations for children and youth in our church. On Sept. 12, via Zoom, our 2019-2020 Confirmation students were finally able to be confirmed and join our church. On Sept. 13, our third-graders were "given" their Bibles via Zoom – real Bibles, with their names and signed by the pastors, were delivered to their homes shortly after.

On Sunday, Sept. 27, we'll have the pleasure of seeing video clips of these special events during Children's Time in our recorded worship. Join us at 9:45 a.m. that day to see these joyous celebrations.

Donations Needed to Meet ICS Food Bank Challenge

Our congregation is well on its way to meeting the 10,000-lb. ICS Food Bank Challenge by the end of the year. We collected 603 pounds on a recent week, setting a weekly record for us! That brings our total past 7,000 pounds, thanks to your generosity.



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:
Rev. Stuart Salvatierra
Rev. Dr. Evy McDonald

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

- Most-needed items are:
- ✓ Peanut Butter (14 oz. jar)
- ✓ SpaghettiOs, Chili or Ravioli in Pop-Top Cans
- ✓ Canned Meat, Tuna, Chicken
- ✓ Instant Mashed Potatoes
- ✓ Rice/Dry Beans
- ✓ Dry Pasta (Spaghetti, Macaroni, Macaroni and Cheese)
- ✓ Spaghetti Sauce
- ✓ Breakfast Cereal
- ✓ Stuffing Mix



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Reflections

Jesus looked at his disciples and said, “For mortals it is impossible, but for God all things are possible.” Matthew 19:26

What was impossible? This passage is at the end of Jesus' conversation with a rich young man who wanted to know how to have eternal life. When he told Jesus that he had kept all the commandments, Jesus realized the young man's devotion to his possessions was holding him back from life in God. When Jesus told the young man to give up his possessions, the young man went away grieving. Right after that Jesus tells his disciples that it will be harder for someone with riches to enter the kingdom of heaven than for a “camel to go through an eye of a needle.” Then his disciples wondered, if a rich man (who had everything) could only enter heaven with difficulty, who could go? That's when Jesus told his disciples that “for mortals it is impossible, but for God all things are possible.”

Jesus was saying that there are things that can hold us back from life in Christ, now and eternally, and attachment to material things is one of them. Underneath it all, Jesus knew the rich young man was fearful, afraid of what would happen if he let go of his possessions. His true task was to let go of his fear and trust in God's love and providence.

These last months have been full of temptations to be fearful rather than trusting in God. Some people have felt our buildings have been closed because we're afraid, but that's not true. Our buildings have been closed because we're committed to life and safety for all God's people. We have been willing to give up some things precious to us – like gathering with others – so all people can have health and

a good life.

Now we're beginning to gather in person once again. Although many classes, groups and committees will continue to meet via Zoom or email, over the next few weeks you will have opportunities to gather in person. The first of these is our small-group worship experiences, “We Gather Together,” which begin Oct. 5. Soon, our church office will open for limited hours. We are also making plans for in-person Sunday worship, so watch for more news about when that will begin. We are closely watching the COVID statistics in Pima County and making plans accordingly. When we gather, you will need to wear a mask, answer some health questions, have your temperature taken and be asked to sign a waiver, like you are doing at doctors' and other offices.

We plan to have our annual Pumpkin Patch beginning Oct. 11. This is a youth fundraiser, so we hope you will support this as you have in the past.

Our 9:45 a.m. recorded worship service will continue for the foreseeable future. You can find that at umcstmarks.org/live-worship, on the St. Mark's Tucson Facebook page, or on YouTube at UMC St. Mark's Oro Valley.

This issue has many other opportunities for learning and growth during this time. Sometimes over these months, things have seemed impossible – lonely, fearful, uncertain, upsetting. Jesus' words remind us when we fully turn our attention to God's love – giving up our fears and remaining positive, hopeful and forward-looking – all will be well, because God is with us. Nothing is impossible with God!

Blessings, Sharon