

Messenger

Changing the world through Christ by caring for all people.

Volume 61, Number 1

January 6, 2021



"Love is ..." Coming in Worship in 2021!

Back in October, I had one of those serendipitous moments. I was reading an article that said something like this: "At the heart of everything that is good and life-giving – everything that is Jesus – is nothing more than love. At the root of it all, when we strip everything away, there is love."

Within a few hours of reading that I heard a talk from someone who said something like this: "Love is so much more than a feeling. It is a way of life, the way of Jesus. It can be a feeling, but it is one of deep peace, of God's heart beating with our hearts. And, it is love that inspires us to act in Jesus' name, to deeply desire to act in ways that Jesus life and love are known." As I thought about hearing and reading the same thoughts on that October day, I realized that God's hand and heart were telling me about a theme for worship in 2021 – "Love Is ..."

From Jan. 10 through June, we'll look at the depth and breadth and width of God's love in Scripture and in our lives and God's call upon our lives to live such love. We begin a series Jan. 10 called "Grounded in Love" and use passages from I Corinthians 13, Colossians 3:12-17, and two Old Testament stories from the books of Jonah and Ruth. This series will go through Feb. 14.

Lent begins with Ash Wednesday on Feb. 17. Lent is the time of preparation that leads us to Easter on April 4. During Lent we continue our "Love Is ..." theme with an in-depth look at



the book of Philippians in the series, "Love is ... A Journey to Philippi."

We'll continue to offer pre-recorded worship at 9:45 a.m. every Sunday on our website umcstmarks.org/live-worship, Facebook St. Mark's UMC Tucson and YouTube UMC St. Mark's Oro Valley. You can also watch those services later in the day or week.

For now, all our worship will be pre-recorded. We will return to in-person worship as soon as we can, based on the COVID-19 situation (infection rates, hospitalizations, ICU bed availability) in Pima County and the guidelines in our reopening plan.

Do you know someone who is longing to hear God's message of what "love is ..."? Invite them to watch worship and then take time to talk with them about what they've heard and seen.

*New year blessings,
Rev. Sharon Ragland, Lead Pastor*



The St. Mark's Quilters presented Pastor Evy with a retirement quilt with good wishes and warm snuggles as she ventures off to new endeavors.

Pastor Evy Bids Farewell ... For Now

Greetings Friends and Partners in Ministry,

More than seven years ago I came to St. Mark's searching for a congregation that was loving, involved in learning, and committed to reaching out to our community and beyond. You became my spiritual home and family.

What many of you may not know is that I moved back to Tucson because I had to leave full-time ministry far sooner than I expected. My body had become ill, and at the time I needed a space to heal both body and soul. Unbeknownst to you, your generosity of love and acceptance was a central part of my healing.

It was not long before I began to take steps into ministry with you. Slowly but steadily I became engaged in a pastoral role that culminated in these past 2 1/2 years as a part-time Associate Pastor.

Pastor Evy, continued on page 2

Pastor Evy, continued from page 1

You welcomed me into your homes and hearts. We shared meals, family events and conversations, and some of you were even brave enough to be part of a play. Thank you for all of it and for the many, many ways you walk the talk of discipleship.

Pastor Sharon opened the way for me to complete my role as an appointed pastor. I could not be more grateful. Being on staff has brought more joy to my life than I ever could have imagined. We have been an incredible team. Commitment, creativity, companionship on the journey, and a collective courage fueled our ability to continue ministry during this difficult season. To each member of the team, I thank you for your love, kindness and understanding through the challenging moments.

As I move into this next phase of my life, I want you to know that each one of you have helped shape my journey and I will carry that into whatever is next. This will initially be a season of listening to where God is calling me and to what God is leading me to do. You will continue to be in my prayers and I ask for your prayers as I move into the unknown.

A favorite quote of mine is from Edward Teller – "When you come to the end of all the light you know, and it's time to step into the darkness of the unknown, faith is knowing that one of two things will happen: Either you will be given something solid to stand on, or you will be taught how to fly."

May you feel God's blessings as we each seek the next steps of our faith journey.

*In His love,
Pastor Evy*



Stewardship Campaign Update

The following is a summary of the St. Mark's 2021 Stewardship Campaign to date. The table compares the current campaign to the prior year's campaign:

	2021 \$ Pledged	2021 Cards Returned	2020 \$ Pledged	2020 Cards Returned
<i>Campaign Total</i>	\$805,867	288	\$922,505	345

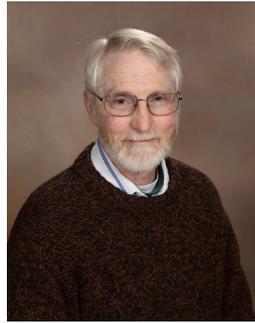
Thank you for your generous contributions. The Finance Committee will now begin the process of developing a budget for 2021. The budget will reflect the \$116,638 reduction in pledges for the coming year.

This past year has been difficult for everyone, and it appears COVID will continue to create health and financial issues for the immediate future. We will do our best to develop a budget for St. Mark's that will continue the missions and ministries of St. Mark's.

It is not too late to pledge. If you have not yet submitted a pledge card, please do so if you are able. Cards can be mailed to: St. Mark's United Methodist Church, 1431 W. Magee Road, Tucson, AZ 85704. (If you need a pledge card, you can find one on our website under <https://umcstmarks.org/giving>.) Or, you can make your commitment online by email to ruthk@umcstmarks.org. We have this hope that "Anchored in Hope" will be a success.

"We have this hope as an anchor for our lives." – Hebrews 6:19
Bill Zermuehlen, Chair, Finance Committee

Thank You, Bob Tucker!



Bob has served as our Soul Station accompanist for 10 years and has retired from our music staff as of Dec. 31. Bob accompanied at Soul Station from its very beginning, before it was even called Soul Station. In addition, Bob accompanied our Summer Choir for several years, played for soloists and led our music ensemble that included piano, instruments and (sometimes) vocalists.

Bob has retired to assist his wife, Phyllis, at home.

The Staff-Parish Relations Committee has accepted Bob's resignation but wants him and everyone to know how much he is appreciated for all the ways he shared his musical talents. The pastors and staff also add their gratitude to Bob for his many years of faithful service.

Staff-Parish Relations Committee

Bell Tree Honors Judy Wickham



The Bells of St. Mark's bell choir has a special new bell tree. The "tree" was a memorial gift in honor of Judy Wickham from her husband, Bill. Judy was a member of our bell choir for many years and rang in many choirs even before coming to Tucson. You may have seen the bell tree during the prelude for Evy's last service with us on Dec. 27. We're looking forward to many more years of bell tree fun and will always think of Judy.

Adult Spiritual Growth

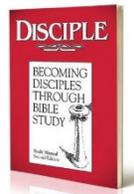
Faith is a journey!

Spring Lineup of Spiritual Formation Opportunities

ALL REGISTRATION IS ONLINE AT <https://umcstmarks.org> then go to Classes and then select Adult Spiritual Growth Opportunities. Facilitators will then email you with specific information needed for each opportunity.

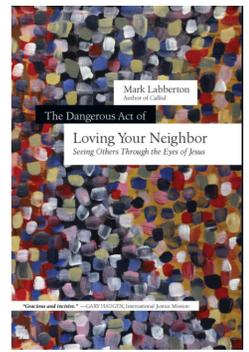
WOW! 2020 is finally over. What a year we've had! One of the main lessons of this past year has been learning the importance of caring for each other in new ways. As we begin a worship theme on "Love is ..." we have the opportunity to discuss how to love our neighbor. Our class offerings in January will help us take the next steps of our Christian journey. See details below.

"Disciple Bible Study 1: Becoming Disciples Through Bible Study" Sundays 1-3 p.m. beginning Jan. 10. If you have been hesitating to take this study, do not put it off any longer. It is LIFE-CHANGING and may be just the thing you need to help you through these difficult times. This overview of the Bible shows the over-arching steadfast and sustaining love of God. It will draw you closer to God and to Christ. This 34-week study is being offered Sundays this spring and finishing in the fall.



Facilitator: Rev. Judy Boroto. Study books \$35 through St. Mark's. Scholarships available. If you have questions please contact Judy Boroto (see directory).

"The Dangerous Act of Loving Your Neighbor: Seeing Others Through the Eyes of Jesus" by Mark Labberton (2010). 6-7:30 p.m. Jan. 11 – Feb. 15 (six weeks). (Registration deadline is Friday, Jan. 8.) This book is a perfect match for the new sermon series for 2021: "Love Is ..." It also is a great study of love as Jesus taught and practiced. Are we able to see others with the eyes of Jesus? Seeing rightly is the beginning of renewal, forgiveness, healing and grace. Seeing rightly is the beginning of how our hearts are changed. This is a well-researched volume filled with hope and encouragement for Christians who want to seek justice and help fulfill God's purpose of establishing a kingdom free of abuse of power toward people.



The study will be facilitated by Kathy Narney, a spiritual director and member of St. Mark's UMC. Books available: Amazon paperback \$15; Kindle \$13.50.

Ongoing (see website for current studies) ...

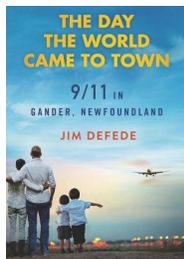
These classes are open to all people at any time. Contact the facilitators to join.

- "Starting the Week the Right Way," 9-10 a.m. Mondays, led by Roger Pierce on Zoom. Scripture selections are read during the week and then discussed in a group.
- "Thoughts to Ponder," led by Linda Walker via email. Quotes on a given topic are sent to participants, who then reflect and email their thoughts to the entire group.
- Wednesday Morning Study Group, 10-11:30 a.m. weekly, led by Marcia Rostad.
- Seekers, 11:15 a.m. – 12:15 p.m. Sundays, led by Kelly Deyoe and Brenda Hunter on Zoom. A study Bible of any translation is recommended.
- Sharing & Family Life, 9:45-10:45 a.m. Sundays, led by Terry Majewski and Rick Farnsworth on Zoom.

Open Minds Book Group

Book discussion led 9-10:30 a.m. monthly on a Friday by Celeste Pardee and Ann Reaban.

Jan. 22: "The Day the World Came to Town: 9/11 in Gander, Newfoundland," by Jim Defede (2002). When 38 jetliners bound for the United States were forced to land at Gander International Airport in Canada after U.S. airspace closed on Sept. 11, 2001, the population of this small town on the island of Newfoundland swelled from 10,300 to nearly 17,000. This is the heartwarming story of how Gander citizens welcomed the stranded passengers with kindness and goodwill. The book is available from Amazon in paperback (\$11.69) or on Kindle (\$8.99) and from Barnes & Noble.



Feb. 26: "Left to Tell: Discovering God Amidst the Rwandan Holocaust," by Immaculee Ilibagiza (2014). Ilibagiza's idyllic world was ripped apart as Rwanda descended into a bloody genocide. This memoir tells the inspiring story of this young woman's prayerful journey through the darkness of terror and anger to the peace of love and forgiveness.

March 26: "Little Fires Everywhere," by Celeste Ng (2017). This riveting novel explores the dangers of class privilege in a small community, the weight of family secrets, the nature of art and identity, the ferocious pull of motherhood, and the delusion that following the rules can avert disaster.

MEMBERSHIP 101



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. on Tuesday, Jan. 26, 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, go to our website, <https://umcstmarks.org>, then over to "Classes" and down to "Membership 101." If you have questions, leave a message at 520-297-2062 and someone will contact you.

Common Grounds is Fun and Welcoming New Members



St. Mark's Common Grounds (for people in their 20s, 30s and 40s) has had such a fun and fulfilling year! Thank you to everyone who has joined us on our scavenger hunts, our Zoom check-ins, our virtual game nights and of course our Dollar Store Christmas Extravaganza in December. While we miss our paint nights, in-person scavenger

hunts and our annual Christmas party, I am so happy that we have found ways to stay connected. Thank you all. I can't wait to see what 2021 will bring to this amazing group!

If you would like to join this group, please email rachel@umcstmarks.org to be added to the email list.

Try Holy Yoga 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 for the Zoom link.

Log on for Inauguration Day Prayer Service

Inauguration Day is Wednesday, Jan. 20. We thought it would be appropriate to humbly ask God for guidance and blessings for our leaders, our communities and ourselves on that day. Therefore, instead of Soul Station on the 20th, we will offer a nonpartisan, pre-recorded prayer service. Since we are united by our desire to follow Jesus, we will also include a Remembrance of Baptism and offer Communion as additional symbols of the faith that binds us together. (Please have your Communion elements ready if you want to participate in Communion.) The prayer service will be accessible via the same formats as our Sunday worship services: the St. Mark's website, Facebook St. Mark's UMC Tucson and YouTube UMC St. Mark's Oro Valley.



2021 Messenger schedule online

The 2021 *Messenger* schedule is available on the website. On the home page, <https://umcstmarks.org/> scroll down to Deadlines & Archived Newsletters under the Newsletters heading.

The next issue publishes on Feb. 3 and the deadline to submit information is Jan. 28. Submit information for the *Messenger* to messenger@umcstmarks.org.

Rainbow Fellowship Meets 1/17



Even in these days of remote church and social gatherings, our St. Mark's UMC Rainbow Fellowship continues to meet via Zoom. If you personally identify as LGBTQ – no matter your

age, membership status or location – please know you are welcome to join us! We Zoom the third Sunday of every month before the St. Mark's online worship to check in with one another and share in Christian fellowship. Contact Melinda Sims via the church office (info@umcstmarks.org) to receive a Zoom invitation.



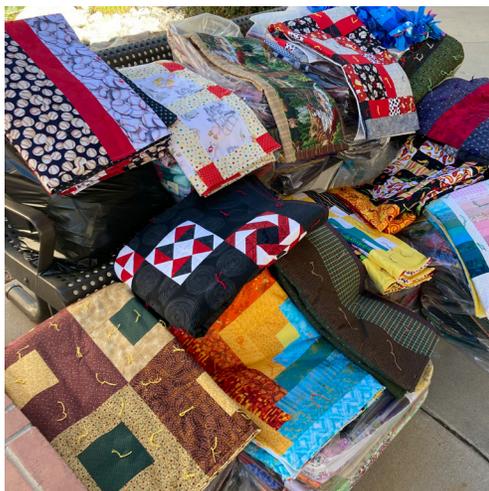
Quilts and HeartWorks bags aplenty

Our St. Mark's Quilters group has been meeting weekly on Thursdays on Zoom since not long after the COVID shutdown. After a few weeks, we decided we would continue making lap-sized quilts in our own homes. We reached out to the community to see if quilts were still needed and they said, "Yes!" We have continued making quilts by donning our masks and social distancing in the parking lot to quickly pass the quilts on to the next person.

Since the beginning of April we have donated 50 quilts to Emerge!, 64 quilts to Aviva, four to shut-ins, and 28 quilts to Healthy Families. In December, we donated an additional 118 quilts, a fleece blanket and two crochet blankets to Aviva. They were given to foster children at Christmas. We have been asked by Easter Seals Blake Foundation for 100 more quilts after Christmas. They will be given to dialysis patients and others in need in our community.

To purchase supplies for these quilts, a small group of ladies do hand-quilting to raise funds. With them and others donating fabric, supplies and their time, we have all contributed to those hundreds of quilts we made this year. It is amazing how many we have been able to make! I feel so blessed to be a part of this group.

Ann Dyer



A heartfelt "thank you" to all who donated finished HeartWorks bags and fabric for our ministry. Our church donated a total of 530 bags to Aviva during 2020. Way to go UMC!

HeartWorks members sew duffel bags for children taken into protective custody. Colorful fabric bags are a much more compassionate receptacle for a child's quickly packed belongings than the trash bags that were previously used to transport their items. Even people who don't sew can participate by cutting out fabric and preparing the "kits" to be sewn.

Starting Saturday Jan. 9, a HeartWorks member will be available at the north parking lot from 10 to 10:30 a.m. every Saturday to distribute kits and instructions for sewing bags and to accept finished bags and fabric donations. Contact Linda Sterling (see directory), Joyce Flick (see directory) or Patricia Duryeea (see directory).

In December, Pastor Sharon blessed 175 HeartWorks bags and 118 Quilters' quilts for the Aviva Christmas event for foster children. These items were assembled with one month's notice. The quilts were made with a special emphasis on 13- to 18-year-olds who are typically harder to provide gifts for during holiday fundraising.

Missions Update

On behalf of everyone at St. Mark's, I would like to thank Patricia Kittrell for her many years of service on the Missions Committee and for serving these last three years as chair of the committee. She has been a tremendous ambassador for us in taking God into the world. Although Patricia has "retired" from the Missions Committee, she along with Robert will continue to serve as a key part of our ICS food collection efforts.

Great news! In spite of all of the obstacles we faced in 2020, we were able to fund 100% of the mission projects that we budgeted for. The budget was approved last January before we knew that the pandemic was coming our way.

The following disbursements were made in December:

Tu Nidito - \$2,500
 Aqua Prieta - \$2,500
 Frontera Wesley - \$800
 Thornhill / Lopez - \$400
 Youth On Their Own - \$800
 Tucson Metropolitan Ministries - \$1,000
 Emerge! - \$1,000
 UMCOR - \$600
 Primavera - \$1,000
 Worldwide Christian Support Task Force - \$200

That is truly amazing and demonstrates once again the commitment St. Mark's has to doing missions work and the generosity of our members.

Hallelujah!
 John Yost
 Missions Committee Chair

ICS Food Bank Update

The final tally is in. Our wonderful St. Mark's faith community donated 15,627 pounds of food to the Interfaith Community Services Food Bank in 2020! That is an unbelievable amount and beyond our wildest dreams when we began. Thanks to everyone who participated throughout the year and to our church staff for their commitment and leadership. We have helped thousands of people in need.



Our work is not done. The need continues to be great. We plan to continue our collections between 10-11 a.m. every Tuesday and Saturday morning in our north parking lot. A safe dropoff process is in place. If you are able, please consider donating when you can. No donation is too small. We made it to our huge number last year literally a bag with a couple of cans or jars at a time. It all helps.

Your donations of fresh citrus are also welcome. Please make sure the citrus is ripe and ready for consumption.

We are blessed to be part of such a caring, generous church family.

Peace.
 John Yost, ICS Liaison

Most-Needed Food Bank Items

- ✓ 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



Youth Ministry

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



Adventures of the Youth Directors



January Birthdays



January Birthdays

- Jan. 2—*Liam DaDeppo*
- Jan. 9—*Zoe Newell*
- Jan. 9—*Isaiah Weiler*
- Jan. 14—*Sydeny Edwards*
- Jan. 28—*Annika Norine*



Happy New Year

Happy New Year! Many people see Jan. 1 as a clean slate. A chance to start over, and start fresh! I have heard even more people than usual this year looking forward to a fresh start! How about you? What's

new in this new year for you? You will start this semester back online for school. Church, youth group, and Confirmation are all meeting online still. That's not new. BUT we can attend these virtual events with new optimism that one day soon, we will again be together. We might not know when. But we know that we will be! We can make new commitments to attend these events, to plan more virtual things, and eventually more in-person things. Kim and Rachel are excited to see what 2021 will bring to the St. Mark's Youth Group!



December Mission

Thank you so much for everyone who donated to Toys for Tots for our December Mission! Whether you sent in a picture or simply donated to them, we are so glad you helped some kids have a Merry Christmas! THANK YOU ALL!

St. Mark's Youth on the Big Screen



Have you seen the cinematic genius that is on the St. Mark's Youth Group Facebook page!? You don't even have to have Facebook to check it out. Each Sunday, Kim and Rachel do a Facebook Live at 4 p.m., and it's available to watch whenever you have the chance. Also, on Fridays, Rachel posts a fun video for you to enjoy. If you didn't

see her "12 Days of Christmas" interpretive dance, you should really check it out. It was so inspirational! It's about time for another collaborative video with all of us. If you have any ideas of what we should do, let Rachel know!

Confirmation News



As we round out this new year and head into our new semester, Kim and Rachel want to thank the eight students who are in this year's Confirmation class. Neither of us have ever taught a virtual Confirmation class before, and you all have been very patient and helpful! While we miss seeing your faces, we are so grateful for the technology and willingness to continue our class. Thank you!

High School and Middle School Youth Group

Each month, Kim meets with our high school students for fun, conversation and caffeine! These meetings can be used to discuss what's on your mind, scripture you have a question about, whatever you need it to be. Kim will text you the Zoom link ahead of time, so make sure she has your phone number! The next Sippin' Over Scripture will be at 4:30 p.m. Jan. 17.

In December, middle school students worked together to solve the mystery of the Nativity Escape Room online together. It was such a fun afternoon, full of challenges and laughter. In January, we will meet during a three-day weekend, and Rachel has some great winter fun planned for you. Watch your email for a Zoom link for 4:30 p.m. Jan. 17. Make sure Kim and Rachel have your address, and let us know if you don't get the link!

Well, we did it, we made it through 2020! Did you stay up 'til midnight to ring in the New Year? Does your family make resolutions? I love hearing about people's traditions. While we were not able to gather in person for most of 2020, we were still a group. Some of the activities that preteens had fun with in 2020 were making posters and cards for first responders and health care workers, making pumpkin slime and making Oreo cookie ice cream and fall snack mix. We learned about showing hope, peace and love in our community. We learned that God is the greatest superhero, and we gave out paper plate awards to our family and friends. Over the Christmas break we had a FUN scavenger hunt. Some of the items found included a decorated Christmas tree, an elf and something that said "St. Mark's." Kids who sent some pictures from the scavenger hunt received a sweet prize of a gift card for ice cream! Yummy! Congrats to the kids who participated :) I hope you all have a safe and healthy new year! If you would like to be included on our preteen/soul station email list send me an email at [\(see directory\)](#) to be included.

Happy New Year & Blessings,
Julie

Below are some pictures from the scavenger hunt!



Small Hands are a Big Help at St. Mark's Early Childhood Center

During Advent this year, the St. Mark's Early Childhood Center helped the non-profit organization A Place to Call Home by donating more than 60 new toys to children living in foster care. A Place to Call Home is a local organization that helps developmentally disabled children and young adults. Our kindergarten class also collected and sorted more than 237 pounds of food for Interfaith Community Services. We wish our St. Mark's family many blessings for the new year.

NOTE: Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we have to cancel our annual rummage sale for this year. Please do not leave items at the door, as we cannot store them. Thank you!



January prayer requests

The St. Mark's Prayer Ministry Team provides information so you can pray for people and activities happening in and around church during the month. 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/2020/12/monthlyprayerlist_web0121-1.pdf

Ask God's blessing of all the completed 2021 "Anchored in Hope" commitments/pledges of support received and still coming into the church. Pray God's presence and guidance as the St. Mark's Finance Committee, pastors and staff develop the church's 2021 operating budget in the weeks ahead.

Pray God's blessings for Pastor Evy in her recent retirement. May she feel God's presence and love and enjoy lots of rest and relaxation and all aspects of being retired. Continue prayers for her health and safety during the COVID pandemic.

Give thanks and ask God's blessings for all those who register for one or more Adult Spiritual Growth studies, such as Disciple 1, The Dangerous Act of Loving Your Neighbor and other studies/classes that are available via Zoom or email.

Pray for good attendance at the St. Mark's Inauguration Day nonpartisan prayer service on Wednesday evening, Jan. 20. We will pray for healing, unity and guidance for government leaders at all levels, and for our community to heal, grow and be united in local actions.

Ask God's continued blessings for Laurie Walsh, director, and all teachers and staff of St. Mark's Early Childhood Center as they provide excellent child care, preschool and kindergarten education on our campus. Pray for everyone's safety and good health through the COVID pandemic.

Ask God's blessings and new strength and energy for all doctors, nurses and hospital workers as they care for increasing numbers of COVID patients. Pray for their individual health and safety and for necessary medicines and treatments to be available as needed.

Pray for pastors Sharon, Stuart and Kim as they continue to provide ministry, leadership and care for our congregation, and as some aspects of the COVID-19 shutdown are tightened again. 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 that we and all members of our community continue to care for ourselves, our family members and each other by wearing masks, staying socially distanced and washing our hands frequently any time we are out and about. Ask God's help to direct our thoughts and actions for us to continue to stay home as much as possible.

Give thanks for the newly approved COVID vaccines. Pray they are safe and effective. Ask God's guidance and help as the vaccines are produced, delivered and made available to people in an orderly and safe manner.

Ask God's continued blessings for the pre-recorded Sunday worship services as many in the congregation, other visitors and friends participate in online worship each week. Give thanks for the weekly effort of our pastors, staff and musicians, tech volunteers and Worship Committee members who accomplish this.

Give thanks for the congregation's ongoing donation of non-perishable food items for the Interfaith Community Services Food Bank.

Pray God's blessings for the new 2021 worship theme and sermon series titled, "Love is ..." beginning Sunday, Jan. 10.

Each month, the South District of the Desert Southwest Conference encourages us to pray for the churches and pastors in our district. This month, please pray for the pastors, congregations and communities of St. Paul's UMC in Tucson, San Pedro Valley UMC in Benson and Trinity UMC in Bisbee.



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.

Jared Bowman and family
Deb Cushman
Jim Deyoe
Judy Drescher

April DuBoce
Marge Frazer
Keith and Mary Ann Glazier
Mary Sanders

Ana Luisa Terrazas
Carol Underwood
Jackie Vickers
Lindsay Williams

CONDOLENCES

We extend our heartfelt sympathy and prayers to:

- The family and many friends of Jim Jackson, who died Nov. 14 in Kearney, NE. Jim and his wife, Nina (who survives him), were active members of St. Mark's for many years until moving to Scottsbluff, NE a few years ago. Jim was very active in the mission work of St. Mark's, especially in Mexico, as he fluently spoke Spanish and enjoyed connecting with the people and land of Mexico.
- The family and many friends of Jim Snedden, who passed away from COVID on his 87th birthday, Dec. 8. We're sending healing prayers to Jim's wife, Beth, and son, James, who were hospitalized with COVID but are now home recovering.
- The family and many friends of Rev. Orlie White, who served as St. Mark's pastor from 1967-76, and had lived in California for many years. We are saddened to learn of his passing on Dec. 20. A memorial service will be held later in California. Rev. White has a website where sermons and writings can be found: <http://www.orliwhite.com>. Condolences can be sent to: Richard White, 1195 Rancheros Rd., Pasadena, CA 91103.
- Tom and Dalene Peters on the passing of their son, Mark Higgins, on Tuesday, Dec. 29 in Joplin, MO. Mark died of complications from diabetes. Our prayers are with Mark's daughters, as well as their entire family as they grieve the loss. A memorial service will be held at a later time.



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

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

Lead Pastor:
Rev. Sharon Ragland
Associate Pastor:
Rev. Stuart Salvatierra
Youth and Outreach Pastor:
Kim Ogle

Sunday Worship
Livestreamed
9:45 a.m.
umcstmarks.org/live-worship
Facebook:
St. Mark's Tucson
YouTube:
UMC St. Mark's Oro Valley

Dear Church Family...

Words are what we have, yet they seem inadequate in times like this. All I can say is "thank you." Those words carry a profound gratitude for your generosity, your gifts, your love that has been shown to me in this season. *Blessings, Pastor Evy*

Thank you all for yet another generous donation to Emerge! and in support of the families that we're here to serve. Just wanted to thank you not only for the financial support, which obviously means a great deal to us. It's the long-term history piece. The fact that you continue to be there for us year after year, given that the need doesn't go anywhere. Thank you for helping us do this work.

*Ed Mercurio-Sakwa,
CEO of Emerge! Center Against Domestic Abuse*

Thanks to your generous donations, the Thanksgiving offering raised \$9,050. The donations will be placed in the Change the World Fund and used by the Missions Committee to provide funds for projects or organizations that have special needs outside the budgeted distributions, such as meal packing events and natural disasters. Your contributions are very much appreciated!

I am a teacher at Nash. I want to thank you for the wonderful bag of treats you made for all of the teachers. We enjoyed them very much, and I also had a few things to take home and eat during our break. Thank you for thinking of us. *Jim Buckwalter, Grade 5*



Address Service Requested

Reflections

As 2021 begins, I want to share a few thoughts with you. First, over these last months, we've heard and talked a lot about all the things we can't do at this time. You know what I'm talking about – gathering in large groups, going maskless, and so on. In these recent weeks and months, though, I've realized that my thinking has shifted to "what I can do." Perhaps this is a result of doing things more simply over the holidays or seeing that all the things we can do gives a lot of richness and meaning to life. For example, we can enjoy recorded worship, participate in classes and groups via Zoom, gather with close family or friends, take drives, walk outside, call people who are alone and much more. As we move into 2021, I've resolved to continue to grow in appreciating all that we can do.

Second, one thing we can do is continue to learn and grow. We can participate in upcoming classes that will be offered in the next few weeks. We can look forward to Lent (which begins in just a few weeks – Feb. 17) when other classes will be offered.

Third, we can continue to give. I know some people have suffered financial hardship during these strange times and are giving all they can. Others of you, though, have many resources. I know this because you have given generously to our holiday missions offerings, which make it possible for us to assist so many people. Now our general fund needs your help. If you have not made your commitment to giving in 2021, please do that so we can finalize our budget in a few weeks. Your giving to our general budget makes it possible for us to pay our staff, maintain our campus and give to missions. If you find that you don't need the funds expected to come from the government, we could wisely use those funds through our general fund. Thank you in

advance for your generosity. You can make a commitment for 2021 (Anchored in Hope) or give on our website, <https://umcstmarks.org/giving>.

Fourth, we can continue to see where God is working in and around us. Every morning when I wake up I give thanks for another day. I breathe and say to God, "God, my friend, I offer you this day. May all that I think, say or do honor you and help me grow in your love. I pray this day for" Then I pray for those I know are hurting or in need or simply come onto my mind and heart. Throughout the day I hold myself open to see where God is working and often find myself saying, "Wow ... that's the hand of God at work."

Finally, we can commit to perfect worship attendance in 2021. Even though we're not yet in person for worship and won't be until the COVID numbers improve significantly, we can join in the recorded worship services. You could invite someone to "come" to St. Mark's, watching worship with you or in their home and then talk about it.

This year our worship focus is "Love is ..." We begin on Jan. 10 with a series on "Grounded in Love" and will explore what it means to have our hearts and lives grounded in the love shown to us in Scripture and by God in our daily lives. I'm looking forward with joy to 2021.

*Blessings,
Sharon*