

Messenger

Changing the world through Christ by caring for all people.

Volume 61, Number 3

February 17, 2021



A Special Announcement from Pastor Sharon

Members and friends of St. Mark's,

My greatest joy in ordained ministry has been to serve with you at St. Mark's as your lead pastor for the last 11 years. With my family, I have made the decision to retire from active ministry as of June 30, 2021. I have submitted a letter to Bishop Hoshibata and the Board of Ordained Ministry asking to be granted retirement as of the end of June.



It is time for me to spend time with Art and the rest of my family. I have devoted more than 30 years to serving Christ through the United Methodist Church and have been deeply blessed by the opportunities to serve local churches and as a district superintendent. Again,

being with you at St. Mark's has brought intriguing challenges and boundless joy to my life and work.

Saying "farewell" as your lead pastor will be heart-wrenching and difficult. But I look forward to the next things God has in store for me and our family. Thank you for being on this journey with me.

I will be your lead pastor until June 30, fully serving and leading. Over the next few weeks I will host several "Coffees with the Pastor" where we'll have a chance to talk in person over Zoom. I'm also going to be fully supportive of your new lead pastor and expect we will know soon who that will be.

The greatest tribute you can bring to me is to continue to be who you are at St. Mark's – changing the world through Christ by caring for all people.

Blessings,
Sharon

Continued on page 2

Come to Drive-in Worship During Lent!

In 2020, an old favorite was revived—drive-in movies. It's a fun way to see a movie, get out of the house and stay safe in your car. Guess what: We've



found that drive-in worship has the same advantages. People got to view the stream of one of the Christmas Eve services a couple of months ago. Now, in the season of Lent, we can actually drive into the south parking lot of St. Mark's and see worship live!

A few of us did a "test drive" of LIVE drive-in worship on Sunday, Feb. 14, and it was great. We stayed in our cars, we had as many family members as we had seatbelts, and we heard everything from an FM station on our car radios. We also rolled down our windows and waved at a few friends. And, yes, "live" means that your pastors, musicians, tech people and worship volunteers were all there in person.

We invite you to **join us at 9 a.m. for the next five Sundays of Lent, Feb. 21 through March 21, for live worship in the south parking lot.** When you arrive, you will be given a bulletin with the lyrics to songs and the FM station you need to receive sound in your car. You will also be guided to your parking row. Compact cars are in the row closest to the stage, followed by sedans, then small SUVs, large SUVs and mini vans, and high-profile vehicles in the back.

Additionally, at 7 p.m. April 1, the Maundy Thursday service will be live-streamed to an inflatable screen in the parking lot. That service will also be available for you to watch at home on the website, Facebook page, or YouTube.

Pastor Sharon from page 1

Join Sharon for a time of conversation at Coffees with the Pastor at 11 a.m. Sundays, Feb. 21 and 28, and March 14 and 21, via Zoom. Use this Zoom link to enter the Feb. 21 and 28 Coffees, which will last about 45 minutes (a new Zoom link will be provided for March):

<https://tinyurl.com/feb-pastor-coffee>

Meeting ID: 991 0948 9136, passcode: 650566

From Staff-Parish Relations Committee:

We want to express our gratitude to Sharon and review the process of United Methodist pastoral appointments. In the United Methodist Church, pastors are appointed and sent, not called or hired. "Itinerary" is the system used by the United Methodist Church, and it refers specifically to the obligation of pastors to go and serve wherever their bishops send them.

Pastor Sharon submitted to Bishop Hoshibata a request to retire at the end of June. Last month, the bishop initiated a consultative process outlined in "The Book of Discipline" that includes district superintendents, clergy and staff-parish relations committees in our Desert Southwest Conference. This is the time of year when all appointments are decided for the entire conference. The needs and desires of clergy are considered, but the mission of the church comes first.

We want to assure you that our district superintendent, Rev. Matt Ashley, met with St. Mark's SPRC members via Zoom to ask questions and to learn about our concerns. He requested that SPRC submit a pastor profile to him to share the attributes we believe will be needed in our next pastor. The bishop and the appointive cabinet are currently going through a discernment process that enables the bishop to make the appointment of our next pastor. SPRC members expect the announcement of our newly discerned pastor in the near future. We expect that Rev. Stuart Salvatierra and Pastor Kim Ogle will continue in their current roles.

So, we are thankful to God for blessing us with Sharon, and we are celebrating with Sharon, Art and their family the gift of retirement. We are also praying for the bishop and appointive cabinet as they discern our next pastor.

In the next few weeks and months we will be planning for celebrations to honor Sharon and thank her and her family. Watch for more info!

Sally Mettler, Chair, SPRC

Tom Ellis, Vice-Chair, SPRC

SPRC members: Sherri Lennarson, Bill Wickham, Rick Wendtland, Helen Schindler, Lynn Nystrom, Sandi Heilman, Paul Stegall, Don Booth

Market on the Move is Back!

St. Mark's will again host Market on the Move from 9-11 a.m. Saturday, March 6 in the SOUTH parking lot. MOM will practice safe COVID-19 and flu measures to limit your exposure and that of the volunteers. For a \$10 donation (cash only – part of which benefits St. Mark's), you get up to 60 lb. worth of fresh produce and pantry goods, plus a prepackaged "Farmers to Families" box containing dairy and meats, available to everyone. First come, first served. If you find there is something you can't use, give it to a friend or neighbor, or perhaps make a new friend.



Please come in through the La Cañada entrance, open your trunk before you get too close, and wind around to the distribution area. Volunteers will be gloved and masked and will load the back of your vehicle with prepackaged boxes and bags. As you exit through the Magee driveway, please be kind, be safe and stay healthy.

Those wishing to volunteer, please contact Lenna via the church office at info@umcstmarks.org. We need lots of help, beginning at 7 a.m.!

Coming Up at Soul Station Midweek Worship

Many of our Christian practices are rooted in the Jewish roots of our faith. As such, it can be very useful to take a good look at our theological roots to learn more about God by learning more about where we came from as a faith. This is exactly what we will be doing during Soul Station this Lent. We will use the lens of our Christian faith to examine several of the prophets from the Hebrew Scriptures and see how they can inform us about our Lenten path of growing closer with God. This study will start Wednesday, Feb. 24 and will inform our Lenten Path all the way through Holy Week. Soul Station meets at 6:30 p.m. (Tucson time) on Wednesdays, with the Zoom room opening at 6:15 to allow people to gather together and catch up with each other. If this is an opportunity that sounds exciting to you, please come and be a part of this wonderful time of worship. Send an email to info@umcstmarks.org or call the church office (520-297-2062) to receive the Zoom invite for this great time of learning and fellowship.

DRIVE-BY FAREWELL **For Linda Girard**

9:30 to 10 a.m. Saturday, Feb. 20

Many of us know Linda Girard as the kind-hearted friend who is always willing to help, whether that's taking more than her fair share of shifts at the Pumpkin Patch or participating in Sunday Dinner Sales to benefit an HIV/AIDS charity.

Linda and her husband, Jim, joined St. Mark's in 1991. As a nurse, Linda has used her skills and knowledge in many paths of service to her church. More than 20 years ago, Linda joined her friends Rev. Jerry Haas, Linda Walker, Pat Small and others in helping launch the involvement of St. Mark's in the beginning of the Tucson Interfaith HIV/AIDS Network. Linda has received TIHAN's highest honor, the Myron Morris Excellence in Caring Award. Jim has since passed away, and Linda will be missed by her St. Mark's family when she leaves Tucson.



Here is a note from Scott Blades, Executive Director of TIHAN:

Linda is one of the founders of TIHAN and a 26-year volunteer. She's served on our board, served on many CareTeams, helps with Poz Café, serves as liaison between TIHAN and her faith community St. Mark's, has helped plan Treasures for TIHAN and Swinging@AIDS, makes weekly phone calls to our CarePartners living with HIV, and so much more. She's probably devoted more hours to TIHAN and supported more CarePartners than any volunteer in our history. At the beginning of March, Linda is moving to New Jersey to be near her sister and brother-in-law.

We hope you will join us on Saturday, Feb. 20 to safely say goodbye to Linda. A drive-by parade will take place from 9:30 to 10 a.m. in the church parking lot. Please enter through the La Cañada entrance.

Let's make this a fun celebration. Make some noise, bring a sign or write something on your car window, tie a balloon, whatever will be festive—decorate your car with a message of love if you'd like. Most importantly, please stop by briefly (and safely) to wish Linda well and show some TIHAN love and appreciation as she relocates. We're asking everyone to stay in their cars and to wear a mask the entire time (we will have extras there in case you forget). Someone will be there to direct you and line up the cars to drive by our guest of honor, and you can roll down your window and briefly say hello and thank you from your car. We'll have a basket for you to place a greeting card in, if you wish.

St. Mark's Financial Update

Our St. Mark's finances are off to a good start in January. Income at \$103,050 exceeds expense at \$80,043 by \$23,007. Income for January 2021 is less than last year by only \$7,000, and of course this January St. Mark's had no in-person worship.

Like everyone else, we wish we could have worship in the Sanctuary. At the same time, we are thankful that St. Mark's puts everyone's safety and well-being first. Until the COVID-19 numbers are under control, we need to continue with only online worship. Hopefully, the numbers will soon come down to a point where we can resume in-person worship.

Until then, please keep sending your checks to St. Mark's UMC, 1431 W. Magee Road, Tucson, AZ 85704 or give online at umcstmarks.org/giving or by using the GivePlus Church mobile app. For questions or help with GivePlus Church, you can contact Ruth at ruthk@umcstmarks.org. Thank you for your continued support. St. Mark's is open and "Changing the world through Christ by caring for all people."

Bill Zermuehlen
Ruth Kester

Finance Committee Chair
Administration & Finance Coordinator

Adult Spiritual Growth

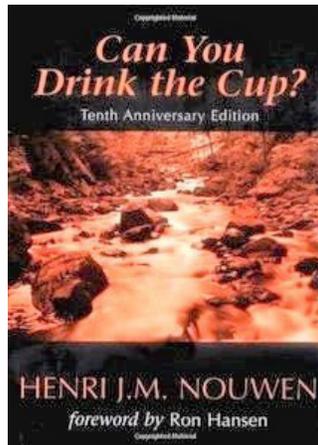
Faith is a journey!

Prepare For The Season Of Lent!

Lenten Study Groups

Groups begin on Ash Wednesday, Feb. 17, for the six-week Lenten season. This year, groups will study Henri Nouwen's *Can You Drink the Cup?*

Using the cup as a metaphor, Nouwen reflects on three images – holding, lifting and drinking – as ways to explore our response to this question of Jesus. With insight and clarity, Nouwen draws stories from his own life and ministry to illustrate that "Drinking our cup to the bottom is seen as the expression of the full freedom of the sons and daughters of God." As we enter the season of Lent, how can this question pierce our hearts so we can answer it in our own personal way as we seek to become Easter people?



Amazon: \$11.65 paperback; \$10.99 Kindle; also available on Cokesbury and Barnes & Noble.

Groups studying this book include:

Family Life/Sharing

Sundays, 1 p.m., begins Feb. 21. The six-week class will run about 1.25 hours each week. No class on Easter (April 4). Led by Terry Majewski, Rick Farnsworth

Lenten Study Group

Mondays, 6 p.m., begins Feb. 22. A five-week study. The sixth week will be free of study so people may participate in church Holy Week activities. Led by Kathy Narney, spiritual director

Wednesday Study Group

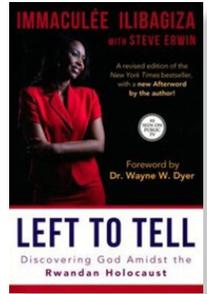
Wednesdays, 10 a.m., begins Feb. 17. A six-week class beginning on Ash Wednesday. Led by Alberta Farnsworth

Register at <https://umcstmarks.org/classes> and indicate which session you want.

Open Minds Book Study

Led by Celeste Pardee and Ann Reaban

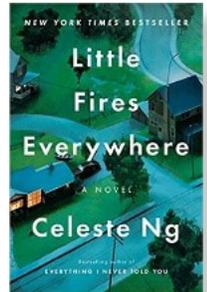
Left to Tell: Discovering God Amidst the Rwandan Holocaust, by Immaculée Ilibagiza (2014). Ilibagiza had an idyllic childhood in a loving family. But in 1994 her world was ripped apart as Rwanda descended into a bloody genocide. Her family was brutally murdered during a killing spree that lasted three months and claimed the lives of nearly a million Rwandans. Ms. Ilibagiza's survival, against all odds, is inspiring – a story of a young woman's prayerful journey through the darkness of terror and anger to the peace of love and forgiveness. Her memoir offers us hope of overcoming national divisions created by those with self-serving agendas and little thought for the good of all people.



The book is available from Amazon in paperback (\$13.93) or on Kindle (\$9.99) and from Barnes & Noble.

Upcoming:

● 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.



Register online at <https://umcstmarks.org/classes> and click "Adult Spiritual Growth Opportunities."

Pick up the Latest Devotionals

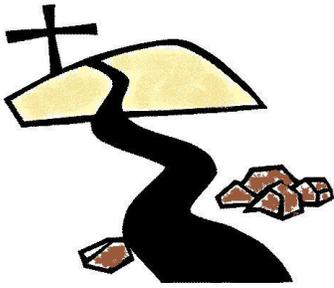


The March-April *Upper Room* devotionals are available in the black mailbox to the left of the church office door, as are the Lenten devotionals *The Road Back to God* and the most recent *Our Daily Bread*. Please come help yourself to one or all!

• Drive-Through Journey to the Cross •

Please join us anytime between noon and 2 p.m. **Palm Sunday**, March 28 for our Lent drive-through event, Journey to the Cross.

First, you will pick up your Easter-basket-themed Holy Week box. Each box has daily activities to guide us all through Holy Week as we take this journey together. Fun for all ages!



Next, you will be able to greet our pastors. This will be a special time for everyone.

Finally, you will journey through five stops on the Journey to the Cross where some of the events of Holy Week will be dramatized.

Lent is different this year, but this is a great opportunity to experience Holy Week in a different, yet very meaningful, way. Don't miss it. We look forward to seeing you there.

Holy Week – An Uncommon Celebration for an Exceptional Time

Siblings in Christ,

If you can believe it, the season of Lent is upon us already. It seems that just the other day, we were preparing for Advent and Christmas, and now we are looking toward Lent and the celebration of Christ's resurrection at Easter. This means we are busy at work getting ready, not just for Lent, but for Holy Week. St. Mark's is preparing for a special Holy Week that will be like none other. We are hard at work, with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to put together Holy Week celebrations that will be deep and meaningful while also being safe for all members of our community.

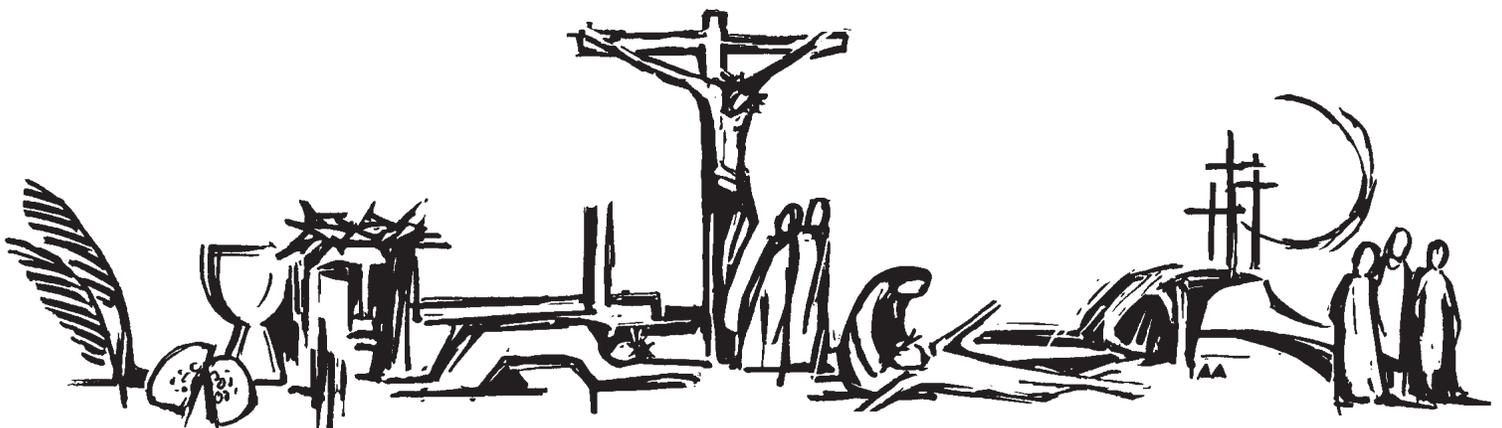
Maundy Thursday will be a new experience for many of us at St. Mark's. This service will tell the story of the last day of Christ's ministry before being put on the cross on Good Friday. We will explore the origins and meaning behind Christian foot washing. We will listen to the Last Supper and participate in Holy Communion. We will hear about Peter's struggles to stay true to Christ, and we will end with Jesus being taken by the Roman soldier while praying in the Garden of Gethsemane. *This service will be live-streamed at 7 p.m. Thursday, April 1 from the Sanctuary with people being able to watch from the comfort of their homes on the church website, Facebook and YouTube. There will also be a gathering of people on the Magee*

campus in the south parking lot to experience drive-in worship on our new giant screen.

Good Friday will continue where Maundy Thursday left off. In many ways, it will be as if Good Friday and Holy

Thursday are one contiguous service. This service will focus on the stations of the Cross. The artwork and poetry being used for this service are from the late Rev. Cynthia Langston Kirk, a former associate pastor of St. Mark's. Her beautiful art and the words of her poetry will lead us through this harrowing day as if we were there ourselves watching the events unfold before us. *This service will be broadcast at 7 p.m. Friday, April 2 through the church website, Facebook and YouTube.*

Many blessings,
The Pastors and Staff of St. Mark's United Methodist Church



Words from Counselor-in-Residence Lane Harmon, MC, LPC



Lane Harmon, MC, LPC

The Counselor-in-Residence program was created over 25 years ago to provide psychotherapeutic support, counseling groups and classes, referral sources and educational outreach. Most importantly the program (sometimes called the "quiet ministry") has thrived through these many years from the deep care and compassion of this vibrant church community and its pastors always listening. This attuned listening to the needs of our church and Tucson communities has guided the decision to invite a highly skilled and caring psychologist to join the program. I am pleased to introduce you to Susan Probsting, Ph.D, who will join me in continuing the work of the Counselor-in-Residence mission. The pandemic has delayed this formal introduction and her joining me at the Wesley House office (we are both telepracticing) – however we have been and will continue to be responding to the psychotherapeutic needs of the church community. Let me introduce you to Susan Probsting, Ph.D.

Words from our new addition to the Counselor-in-Residence program

I wish I could stand before you in the Sanctuary and see your faces for this introduction. So much of what we do as therapists and humans is communicated not through the written word, or language at all, but through presence, connection and deep listening.

That said, I'll do my best to tell you about me and my therapeutic approach through the words on this page.

I earned my doctorate in clinical psychology from Emory University in 1997. I've practiced in a variety of settings and had wonderful colleagues and supervisors, but perhaps my greatest teachers have been my experiences as a daughter, sister, wife, mother and friend. I'm excited to bring who I am as a person and a clinician to the St. Mark's CIR program and am honored to be a part of the St. Mark's quiet ministry.

The research-supported approach I use in counseling is called Internal Family Systems Therapy. The IFS approach is very positive and asserts that there is light and wisdom in each human but that this goodness can get obscured, forgotten and hidden away with the pains, challenges and distractions of life. IFS is a powerful method for helping people access compassion for even their most challenging and conflicting thoughts, feelings and behaviors. From this place of deep compassion, these "difficult" aspects of the personality can be transformed and one's light is able to shine though. The psychologist Carl Rogers famously described the transformative power of self-compassion as follows: "The curious paradox is that when I accept myself just as I am, then I can change."

I work with individuals 16 years and older and offer short and long-term counseling for the following issues: anxiety and worry, obsessive-compulsive behaviors, shame, depression, trauma, relationship issues, life transitions and changes, grief and loss, and body image issues. My hope, as a therapist, is to help clients gain freedom from the sorts of feelings, thoughts and behaviors that have them feeling stuck and to assist them in reconnecting with their fundamental goodness. I look forward to getting to know your community better and serving you and the program.

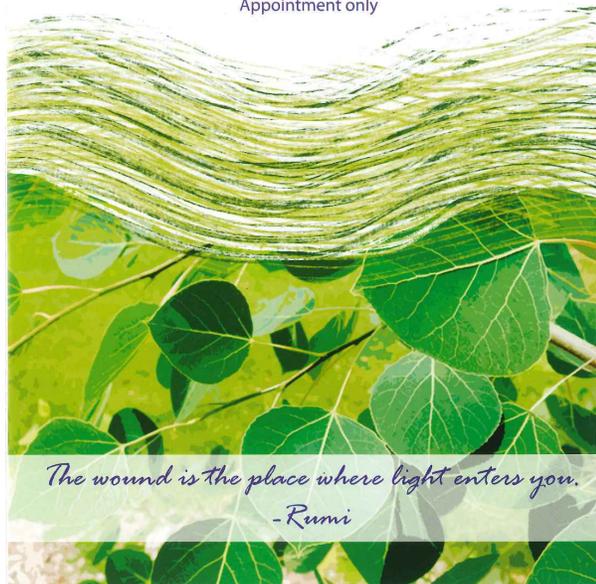
Lane Harmon, MC, LPC

(Counseling and Psychotherapy)

St. Mark's UMC

Counselor-in-Residence Program

Wesley House
1431 West Magee Road
Tucson, AZ 85704
520-297-6228
Appointment only



LOVED ONES IN THE MILITARY

Please keep these people in your prayers. Email additions or updates to messenger@umcstmarks.org.

Hank Bautzmann, son of Nancy Bautzmann
Alex Boettcher, grandson of Carla & Paul Boettcher
Jacob W. Boettcher, grandson of Carla & 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
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



Update from Worldwide Christian Support Task Force Christians in Myanmar Face Increased Pressure After Military Coup

According to recent media reports, on the morning of Feb. 1, the military in Myanmar, formerly known as Burma, conducted a coup and detained government officials and opposition party leaders, including Aung Sun Suu Kyn, the civilian leader of the country and a former Nobel Peace Prize awardee. Christians, among other religious minorities, have long been persecuted by Buddhist extremists who maintain that to be Burmese – the majority ethnic group – is to be Buddhist. Myanmar is No. 18 on the Open Doors USA World Watch List of countries that most persecute Christians.

Well-established churches have been attacked, and in some instances, Buddhist monks have invaded church compounds and built Buddhist shrines inside. Non-traditional church groups experience opposition, too, especially those located in rural areas and/or are known for evangelistic activity.

Myanmar is the scene of the world's longest civil war, which began in 1948. Although much media attention has been given to the plight of Rohingya Muslims, the ongoing war against insurgent groups – which affects, among others, the states of Kachin, Karen and Shan (all of which have a strong Christian minority) – have gone largely unnoticed. The predominantly Christian Chin State was also affected by fighting. Christians are vulnerable to persecution by insurgent groups and the army, and more than 100,000 Christians in the north live in Internal Displacement Camps, where they are deprived of access to food and health care. In 2018, the United We State Army arrested 120 Christian pastors and imprisoned them. The COVID-19 pandemic has brought added challenges, since many Christians are deliberately overlooked in the distribution of government aid.

One Myanmar Christian leader, Brother Lwin, observed, "Military rule could mean reinforced power for the dominant religion. The military government of the past has always been protective of the Buddhist culture and tradition. We are expecting restrictions upon the church to happen once again, though we are unsure of the extent and the form it will take as yet."

"The army is stationed in our area and we are very sad and praying for the situation," said Min, a Christian from Sagaing District.

"The churches are praying," said Maung, a pastor from Mandalay. "We are calm but scared at the same time."

Prayer for the Christians of Myanmar: ***Our Father, please have peace prevail in Myanmar and assist reconciliation between the military and civilian leaders. Keep the civilian leaders safe and help Christian believers to be strong, calm, wise and careful. Amen.***

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@umcstmarks.org.



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 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

Address Service Requested

Reflections

"Journey"

"I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you." Philipians 1:3

Here we are in Lent 2021. A year ago, we were in the middle of Lent when we moved the church outside the walls of the buildings and began to worship, meet, study and care for others in new ways. We've had few opportunities to see one another in person, let alone give a handshake or a hug. In the midst of a pandemic, racial injustices have become more clear and a need to address them more urgent. Our country remains deeply divided. The future of the global United Methodist Church remains uncertain. We've been on quite a journey.

When we've traveled to Israel, Jordan, Greece and other Mediterranean cities with people from our church, we've said we're on a journey or a pilgrimage rather than a trip or a vacation. A journey is a bit like a quest, a time of searching and noticing with the intent of growing and being changed. All of our travels to the places where Jesus and the apostle Paul walked and worked have led me deeper into the heart of God, a place of growth – a journey of faith.

This Lent we journey to Philippi, a city on the northern end of the Aegean Sea. While imprisoned elsewhere, the apostle Paul wrote a letter to the church he founded in Philippi. It is a letter of joy, friendship and encouragement, and it challenges the people to remember who they are as followers of Jesus and to live as examples of that. Above all, Paul expresses his own joy and his desire for joy for them, which is surprising because he is writing from prison. We'll focus in worship on the book of Philipians from now until Easter.

The words of the book of Philipians are as tender and appropriate for us now as they were 2,000 years ago. Many of you know by now that I will be retiring at the end of June. Until then we journey together through this Lent, finding joy in doing this together even as we may be physically separate. Will you join me on this Lenten journey?

I invite you to begin by doing this every day in Lent: Stop a few times each day and notice what is around you and say, "Thank you, God, for the blessing of" Then write down those blessings at the end of each day. I imagine this will lead you and me into the heart of God, where joy and peace reside.

Blessings, Sharon