

# Messenger

Changing the world through Christ by caring for all people.

Volume 61, Number 2

Feb. 3, 2021



## Get ready for a busy Lent!

Ash Wednesday is Feb. 17

An old joke goes like this: A Sunday School teacher asked a group of 8-year-olds if they knew about Lent. A boy piped up, "Lent is what comes off your socks and sticks between your toes." I smile whenever I think about "lint" and "Lent" because

I think in some ways Lent IS a bit about what sticks to you. Lent is the 40 days leading up to Easter (not counting Sundays) during which we get ready for the new life Jesus offers us on Easter. During Lent we have the chance to look at what sticks to us that we need to let go – sins, resentments, irritations and more – and what we need to receive from God for our lives to be more whole and loving. We've been working



on plans for Lent 2021 and share these with you:

→Take some time this Lent to stop over at church and walk the Labyrinth or the Way of the Cross in our Meditation Garden. The garden is always open.

→Watch for a mailing that will come to your homes on or around Feb. 6 that includes Lent info and a bookmark that you can use on Ash Wednesday and throughout Lent.

→Ash Wednesday, Feb. 17 – Join us for online worship at 6:30 p.m. in our usual formats. We'll celebrate Holy Communion, so prepare your bread or crackers and juice or another beverage. Also have a candle ready to light.

→"Lent at Lunch" – begins Feb. 17 and runs every Monday/Wednesday/Friday during Lent – Log on at noon to Facebook or Instagram for a 1½ -2 minute message on the Lent theme of the week.

See Lent on p. 2

## Board of Trustees deciding on new projects for 2021

The Board of Trustees is happy to welcome Anita Winslow and Dean Elledge as new members starting in 2021. We thank both Amy Gosla and Bill Fritz for their dedicated service to St. Mark's as they left the Trustees at the end of 2020.

The Trustees are already at work planning projects and improvements for 2021. The budget that the Covenant Council approved and submitted includes a reduction in spending over 2020 and a quarterly spending plan that is in line with the guidance provided by the Finance Committee. The Board decided at our January meeting to supplement reduced capital equipment spending with funds from the Capital Reserves account but to also not allow that account to dip below a certain level, so we are prepared for the unexpected expenses that will present themselves during 2021.

The majority of the Trustees' budget (68%) goes to supporting necessary services and utilities such as power, gas, water, cleaning services, landscaping, garbage & recycling, etc. Only 22% is earmarked for capital equipment and general maintenance.

The focus this year will be on continued infrastructure improvements and the Board has compiled a project list that is being prioritized for final decisions during the February meeting. Some of the projects under consideration include:

1. Repair/recoating of Wesley House roof
2. Recoating of Sanctuary roof
3. HVAC replacements for the Sanctuary
4. Next phase improvements for ECC classrooms
5. Carpeting replacement and painting in main office
6. Exterior painting for selected buildings
7. Parking lot and drainage improvements at loading area (south parking lot)

As always, there are more needs than there are funds and time to complete. While many of the projects funded in 2021 will not be readily visible, they are necessary to maintain the buildings and grounds of St. Mark's in good order.

John T. Cecilia, Chair, Board of Trustees

## Susan Putt retires from church staff

After nearly four years as the St. Mark's Music Ministries Coordinator, Susan Putt has chosen to retire, effective Jan. 31. (She initially planned to retire last spring but reconsidered her timing when the COVID-19 virus arrived. She didn't want to leave in the midst of such a confusing time for the church and its ministries.)



When Susan and her husband, Harold, retired from their faculty positions at Ohio Northern University in 2016, they chose Tucson as their retirement home. They also chose St. Mark's as their church home. Harold settled right into retirement, but Susan felt somewhat restless. She jokingly says she flunked Retirement 101!

When St. Mark's announced its search for a Music Ministries Coordinator in spring 2017, Susan found herself feeling called to the position. Since that time, she has applied her creativity, work ethic and organizational and communication skills to superbly coordinate the church's many musical groups and musicians and to support the mission statement of St. Mark's.

During Susan's tenure, a number of new tasks became part of her position. St. Mark's began a second site for worship (and music) at Dove Mountain, acquired a carillon at the Magee campus (which Susan has programmed each week), and with little notice, switched to online worship due to the pandemic (requiring many new methods of providing music).

Susan's influence was also widely felt through several other successful church programs. She arranged and promoted the Musical Musings concert series of 2018-19, as well as its 2019-20 successor – which was cut short by the pandemic. Additionally, she made possible the 2018 Advent devotional and the 2020 Lenten devotional, each consisting of many congregation-written submissions. Still, Susan feels the highlight of her position has been the opportunity to help the pastors plan worship, which she

### Lent, continued from p. 1

→Lent devotional books – This year's devotional booklet is "The Road Back to God" by Larry Neeb. Beginning Feb. 10, you can pick up this booklet from the mailbox right outside the church office. You can also order that on your Kindle or Nook, using the name of the book, or use this link: <https://tinyurl.com/road-back-to-god>. Ordering the book for Kindle/Nook is about \$2. If you want a paper copy and can't get to the office, call 520-297-2062 and the church will mail one to you.

→Worship during Lent – We are taking a journey through the book of Philippians during Lent around the theme "Love Is ... A Journey to Philippi." This joyful letter leads us to talk about overflowing love, having the mind of Christ, pressing on and giving up worry. Recorded worship continues at 9:45 a.m. in our usual formats. In addition, watch for info about upcoming drive-in worship.

→Classes during Lent – Look for info in this Messenger on how to join classes this Lent, studying the book "Can You Drink the Cup?" by Henri Nouwen.

Later in Lent, we'll have a Palm Sunday "Journey to the Cross" (March 28) and worship during Holy Week and on Easter. More info later on that.

*Blessings,  
Pastor Sharon*

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has considered an honor and a privilege.

Now Susan is ready to give retirement another try! While it's hard to make many plans during the pandemic, the Putts see a cross-country trip in their future to visit friends, family and notable sites. Our congregation sends Susan all best wishes and sincere thanks on a job well done. We are pleased to know that the Putts intend to remain a part of the St. Mark's family! If you'd like to send Susan a "thank-you," you can mail that to: Susan Putt, (see directory).

For now, some of Susan's responsibilities will be cared for by music staff members. We expect to hire a new Music Ministries Coordinator in a few months.

*Sandi Heilman  
Member, Staff-Parish Relations Committee*

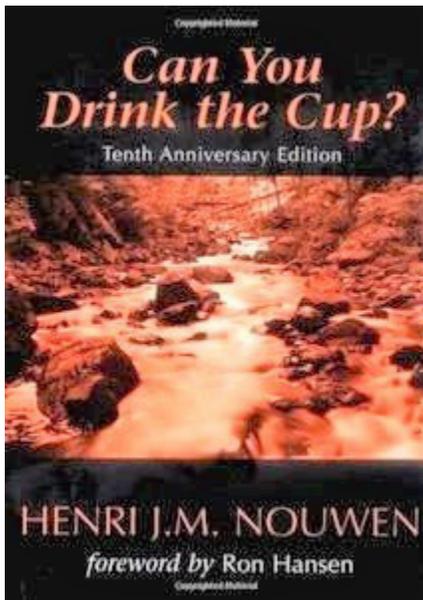
***There's a new task force in town!*** Most of you will remember that in response to racial justice issues that enflamed our nation last year, our Adult Spiritual Growth team offered a season of leaning about racism, equity and justice last fall. Many who participated in the three studies felt called to do more; as a result the Racial Equity Task Force was born. Co-sponsored by the ASG and Church and Society committees, the Racial Equity Task Force envisions a future where "St Mark's is a beacon of racial justice and compassion." You do not have to be a member of either of these committees to join the team; all you need is a heart that feels called to this work and willingness to participate (meetings are occurring via Zoom). If interested in participating please contact either co-chair, Art Ragland and Melinda Sims, or our staff advisor, Margaret Synhorst, via [margaret@umcstmarks.org](mailto:margaret@umcstmarks.org). We'd love to have you join us!

# Adult Spiritual Growth

Faith is a journey!

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.

## Lenten study begins Feb. 21 or 22 (you pick) – "Can You Drink the Cup?"



**Can You Drink the Cup?**  
By Henri Nouwen; facilitated by Kathy Narney, spiritual director.

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.

**A five-week study. The sixth week will be free of study so people may participate in any church Holy Week activities. Dates/times options: 4 p.m. Sundays or 6:30 p.m. Mondays, weekly beginning Feb. 21-22.**

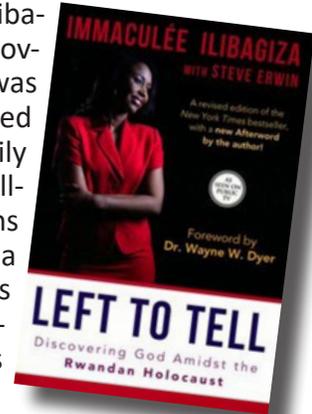
## Ongoing (see website for current studies) ...

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

9-10:30 a.m. Friday, Feb. 19 "Left to Tell: Discovering God Amidst the Rwandan Holocaust," by Immaculée Ilibagiza (2014). Ms. 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.



Group leaders are Celeste Pardee, ([see directory](#)), and Ann Reaban, ([see directory](#)). The book is available from Amazon in paperback (\$13.93) or on Kindle (\$9.99) and from Barnes & Noble.

Future offerings:



- 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.



- April 30: "The Girl with Seven Names: A North Korean Defector's Story," by Hyeonseo Lee (2015). At age 17, Ms. Lee escaped from North Korea and fled to China. This memoir offers insight to life in one of the world's most ruthless and secretive dictatorships as well as one woman's terrifying struggle to guide her family to freedom.

## Missions Update

The Missions Committee remains active in taking God into the world. Our committee members and liaisons are in contact with our mission partners while always maintaining safe practices. The Missions Committee takes very seriously our responsibility of being good stewards of the funds entrusted to us by our congregation. We are in the process of reviewing the status and needs of our ongoing mission partners. Our 2021 budget will be prioritized and adjusted based on need and available funds. Disbursements made to date in 2021:

\$300 – Primavera

\$2,500 – Pima Community Interfaith Council

Additional disbursements will be made in March.

In other news, Morgan Hunter, Cindy Brocious and Ellen Beene have represented St. Mark's very capably as liaisons to some of our mission partners and are now leaving the committee. Thank you for all you've done to share the St. Mark's mission with your represented partner agencies. We also welcome new member, Holly Celmer, who will be liaison to Emerge! and Tucson Metropolitan Ministries.

Peace,  
John Yost  
Missions Committee Chair

## Collections continue for ICS Food Bank

After a tremendous year in 2020 when St. Mark's donated almost 16,000 pounds of food to the Interfaith Community Services Food Bank, we continue collecting food donations in 2021.

Thanks so much to everyone in our congregation and our staff for supporting this wonderful mission project. St. Mark's is such a caring faith community.

There are almost 200,000 people – including thousands of children – in Southern Arizona suffering from food insecurity every day. They are not certain where their next meal is coming from. These numbers have increased in recent months because of the pandemic and the downturn in our economy. Supporting our local food banks has never been more important.

A reminder that our collection times are 10-11 a.m. every Tuesday and Saturday in the north parking lot of our church. A safe dropoff collection process is in place. Please continue to support if you are able.

Thanks again for your help and support.  
John Yost, Chair

## Thank you from Nash Neighbors

Friends,

"It's not about how much we give but how much love we put into giving." – Mother Teresa

Just saying "thank you" does not seem like enough to express how grateful Nash Neighbors is to be the recipient of your great generosity. Your gifts of \$15,629.38 to the 2020 Christmas offering will allow St. Mark's to continue our mission and partnership with E.C. Nash Elementary that began in 2002. We want you to know that, except for classroom volunteers, all our projects have continued to operate through the end of the 2019/2020 school year and into 2020/2021. With some major changes, the Mobile Food Pantry has grown into a true partnership and has flourished to help combat food insecurity within the Nash community. We often find St. Mark's volunteers, teachers and office and cafeteria staff working side by side for the same goals.

Your dedicated support allows this to continue, and we are humbled by and grateful for your generosity.

Sincerely,  
Carol Cecilia  
Chair, Nash Neighbors



## ***A letter from Nash Elementary principal Bob Hehli***

Through your generous donations of gift cards and cash, St. Mark's was able to give 252 \$25 gift cards to both Walmart and Target (valued at \$6,300) for the support of Nash families for Christmas and beyond. We presented these to Nash principal Bob Hehli, who has already thanked St. Mark's for this generosity. However, we'd like to share Bob's more recent letter in which he shares some news of what's going on at the school and with the families during these difficult times.

Thank you,  
*Sue Pierce*  
*Nash Neighbors Liaison*

Dear St. Mark's Family,  
Before Christmas we were able to get gift cards out to families and support 25 different kids. It was a little harder than in the past with COVID going on. We still have a good chunk of the gift cards – good problem to have. I anticipated that after the holidays it was going to be even harder for families, as there has not been any letup with the spread of COVID and how tough that has been on everyone.

We are using them now for a variety of things. For example, our social worker went to Walmart to purchase hotspots (temporary internet access devices) for several families to help with their kids' remote learning and lack of consistent internet access. I have used some as incentives for staff for the hard work they are doing during such unprecedented times and to keep their overall spirits up the best we can. You would be amazed at how grateful our staff members are when they receive a gift card, makes them feel appreciated. Remaining gift cards will continue to go out this month to families to help with "life." Sadly, with COVID still hitting our community so hard, we have families struggling to work, stay home with kids, make

ends meet, etc. Our next round of gift cards will be prioritizing the families/students who are really in dire need.

Our staff is very resilient overall, but there is no question, people are really exhausted. The winter break was a blessing for all and allowed for rest and rejuvenation. Like everyone in the world, the pandemic life is very taxing, so collectively we are really trying to focus on keeping people in an optimistic and positive state of mind. Safety is still our top priority each and every day. Some good news on the horizon is that educators are prioritized in the vaccination rollout. We should have all our employees, teachers, support staff – everyone – getting their first round of vaccination shots in the next weeks. So, there is some light at the end of the tunnel.



Due to the high number of COVID cases in Pima County, our school district, and most others in Tucson, have ALL students working remotely now through at least the end of January. This was how we started the year. We did the hybrid approach (two days of kids in school and 3 days at home) the second quarter – mid-October until before the holiday break.

It has been a surreal year, no question. We have been fortunate in our school community with very few confirmed cases of COVID overall. Just a few confirmed cases with students and a few staff members. All of them had little or no symptoms and have made a full recovery.

Thank you again for your support of our school community – it is making a positive difference for sure.  
*Bob Hehli, Principal*

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

## ***Got pain? Join Chronic Illness and Pain Support Group***

The St. Mark's UMC Chronic Illness and Pain Support Group currently meets the second and fourth Wednesday of each month via Zoom. We offer a time of prayer during each meeting and time to share personal joys and concerns, as you are comfortable. Our group is friendly and welcoming. We do not compare pain. We do not share, or ask questions about specific treatment options, doctors, therapists or other health care options during the meeting, but sometimes people discuss these things before or after, and that's OK. We want to help each other whenever we can, and we often make needed connections as we share together. At each meeting, we remind ourselves that we are meeting in a safe space as we listen and share, and everyone's confidentiality is respected and held.

For more info contact April DuBoce or Cliff Nystrom at [chronicillness@umcstmarks.org](mailto:chronicillness@umcstmarks.org) or call the church office at 520-297-2062. You do not have to be a member of St. Mark's to participate.

## Where on the St. Mark's campus were the Three Wise Men???

Over this past year of social distancing we've all missed visiting our church campus, but even though our campus is closed, St. Mark's the church is still open. During Advent and Christmas, we thought it might be fun to keep track of the Wise Men's journey around our St. Mark's campus. In the past, our carved wood Wise Men and their camels have traveled along the Sanctuary's bell choir rail following a giant tin star. They all followed the star a little each week on the rail until they finally reached the altar on Epiphany, when they joined the other carved wood members of our nativity set. This carved olive wood nativity has always been special because it was originally purchased in Israel years ago by a group of St. Mary's members.

So, if you missed any part of the Wise Men's travels, we thought their journey around campus was worth publishing again. Originally, the locations were pictured on the Pastor's Weekly Email as "Where in the world are the Three Wise Men on the St. Mark's campus???" and shown during recorded Advent, Christmas and Epiphany services. Could you guess their locations? We thought you might enjoy seeing the pictures again and learning where the pictures were taken on campus.

*Dana Bugbee, Worship Committee Chair*



Nov. 29 - First Advent Sunday



Dec. 6 - Second Advent Sunday



Dec. 13 - Third Advent Sunday



Dec. 20 - Fourth Advent Sunday



Dec. 24 - Lessons and Carols



Dec. 24 - Family Service



Dec. 24 - Drive-in Livestream Service



Dec. 27 - Sunday after Christmas



Jan. 3 - Epiphany

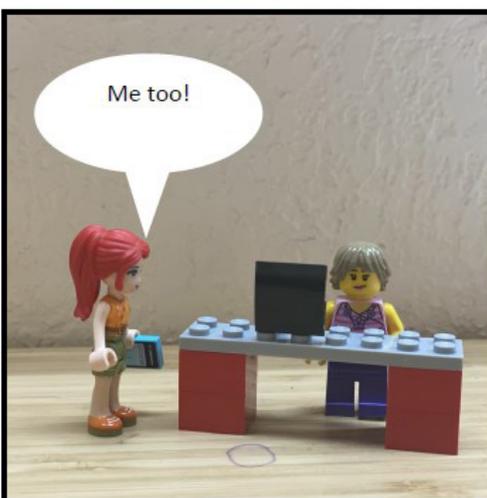
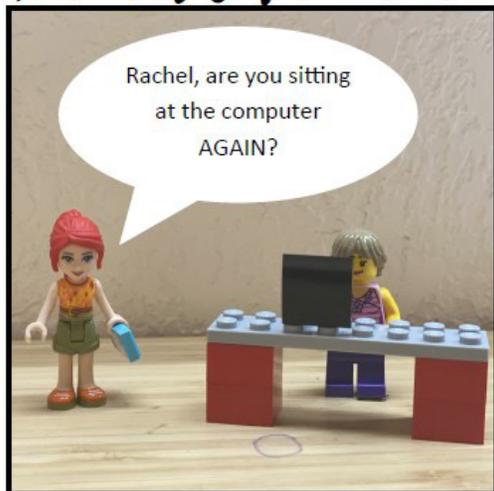
**Answers:** Nov. 29 - by the south wall of the chapel in the Meditation Garden;  
Dec. 6 - to the right of the entrance to the Meditation Garden Chapel, note the hole in the big rock;  
Dec. 13 - in the front yard of the Wesley House by the benches and facing Magee;  
Dec. 20 - in front of the big tree by the west office windows, note the aqua rock;  
Dec. 24 (Lessons and Carols) - at the curve of the curb area around the office, facing east with one wise man on the St. Mark's mosaic stepping stone; Dec. 24 (Family Service) - next to the tree by the sidewalk going into the back gate to the Early Childhood Center, note the colorful painted rocks; Dec. 24 (Drive-in Service) - nighttime picture taken by the small knotty tree west of the big grapefruit tree & north of the round tables on the east patio;  
Dec. 27 - another nighttime picture taken by the stucco wall surrounding the air conditioner units north of the sanctuary at the base of the large oak tree;  
Jan. 3 - on the altar with the star above the stable

# Youth Ministry

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



## Adventures of the Youth Directors



## February Birthdays

- Feb. 7—**Eli Mosher**
- Feb. 13—**Grace Howell**
- Feb. 15—**Tyler Drescher**
- Feb. 26—**Meghan Buckner**



## Sticker Challenge!

Rachel LOVES stickers. She loves stickers on her water bottles, notebooks – she even has one on her printer!

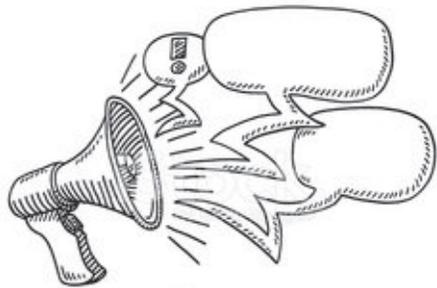
Do you love water bottle stickers? This is your chance to decide what our next youth group sticker will look like! Send Rachel your design by Feb. 15. A poll will come out where we can vote for our favorite sticker, and then you get your very own! Your designs can be hand drawn or submitted via Google Drawings (email or text Rachel for the Google account to share it with). I can't wait to see your designs!



Youth news continued on page 8



## Hear Ye, Hear Ye!



You don't want to miss out on all the great stuff Kim and Rachel have planned for you! Be sure to watch our Facebook Live at 4 p.m. every Sunday to find out about any upcoming events or announcements. And

bonus – Kim and Rachel are pretty funny!! Don't miss it!

## Confirmation News



Here at St. Mark's, our Confirmation class always has an emphasis on mission. One requirement for Confirmation is always to participate in a mission together. This was a little more challenging this year, but as always – you guys are amazing! Our eight Confirmation students are participating in the #PimaLoveLetters project and sending some happiness to residents and staff at La Cañada Care Centers. Kim and Rachel are so proud to be able to say they know such amazing young people.

## Zoom into Youth Group

What is your favorite part of Zoom Youth Group!? Rachel loves the silly games, and Kim likes actually SEEING you all. We get together on the third Sunday of every month, and we



look forward to those weeks alllllll month long! Can't wait to see you on Feb. 21.



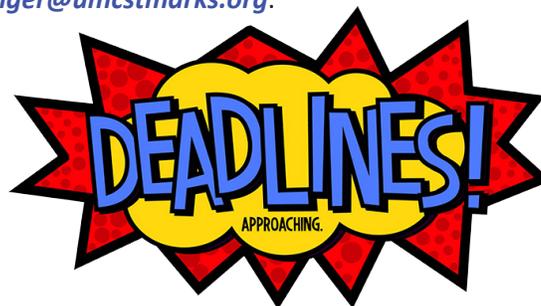
Wow, January is over, and we are already into February! It usually takes me a few months to adjust to a new year, but for some reason I seem to have adjusted fairly well to 2021. I am continuing to send weekly Preteen emails. So far this year, we have talked about Epiphany and the journey of the three wise men and hopefully some of you made the yummy King's cupcakes that I sent the recipe for. We have talked about love and specifically loving our neighbors. We have also looked at how much we have changed (and grown) from this time last year, set goals for ourselves and made vision/poster boards. In February, we will continue to talk about Jesus' love for each of us, loving our neighbors as ourselves and love as a gift as we prepare for Valentine's Day, Ash Wednesday and Lent. Wow, Easter will be here before we know it! The rodeo may be canceled this year, but we can still explore this great Tucson tradition. Be on the lookout for fun games or challenges, craft projects and the chance to win prizes in February!! If you are in fourth or fifth grade and would like to be added to the Preteen email list please send your email address to [\(see directory\)](#).

*Blessings,  
Julie*

## 2021 Messenger schedule online

The 2021 **Messenger** schedule is available on the website. On the home page, <https://umcstmarks.org/> scroll down to "Newsletters" and you'll see a button that says "Deadlines & Archived Newsletters." It's right at the top of the page when you click there!

A special Lent issue publishes on Feb. 17, and the deadline to submit information is noon Feb. 11. The deadline for the next regular Messenger is noon Feb. 25, and that issue comes out on March 3. Submit information for the **Messenger** to [messenger@umcstmarks.org](mailto:messenger@umcstmarks.org).



# St. Mark's financial update

This past year was a challenge. It was far from "normal" and had an impact upon the St. Mark's finances as well as its ministries.

2020 Financial Results			
	Income	Expense	Difference
Budget	\$1,239,699	\$1,239,699	\$0
Actual	\$1,221,730	\$1,123,390	\$98,340
Variance to Budget	(\$ 17,969)	(\$116,309)	\$98,340

Our financial results for 2020 were surprisingly good. Your generosity and the committees' ability to control expenses made this possible. Income included \$112,985 from the Payroll Protection Plan loan and \$10,000 from the Desert Southwest Conference loan, both of which were forgiven. Of the income from these forgiven loans, 10% went to Missions and the rest went into the Unrestricted Fund. These funds will be used to supplement the 2021 budget.

2021 Stewardship Campaign - "Anchored in Hope"			
	Cards Returned	Dollars Pledged	Avg \$ per Card
2021	307	\$847,361	\$2,760
2020	345	\$922,505	\$2,674
Variance	(38)	(\$75,144)	\$86

Thank you for your participation in the stewardship campaign. The response to "Anchored in Hope" reflects the difficult financial issues the economy is facing. The 2021 budget also reflects these issues.

## 2021 Budget

The Covenant Council approved this year's budget of \$1,153,779 on Jan. 19. This budget is less than last year's budget. We anticipate utilizing funds from the Unrestricted account to supplement contributions. The 2021 budget includes quarterly proposals. We want to keep expenses in the first part of the year as low as possible. The Finance Committee will review each month's activity and each quarter will review the budget to see if it should be revised – hopefully upwards. It is our hope that COVID will come under control soon and that St. Mark's can safely resume in-person worship.

Statements and pledge confirmations went in the mail Jan. 26. If you have any questions, please contact Sherry Walker at [sherry@umcstmarks.org](mailto:sherry@umcstmarks.org) or leave a message at 520-297-2062.

The Finance Committee thanks you for your contributions during the past, most difficult year. You have enabled the church to remain open and able to pursue its mission and ministries.

*Bill Zermuehlen, Finance Committee Chair*

*Ruth Kester, Administration & Finance Coordinator*

**Electronic giving** is an easy and convenient way to automate your regular offering or other donations to St. Mark's. For example, if you are currently giving on a weekly basis, you will no longer need to write out 52 checks a year. And if travel, illness or other circumstances, such as a pandemic, prevent you from attending services, this program will allow your payments to continue on an uninterrupted basis. Contributions can be debited automatically from your checking or savings account or processed using your credit or debit card. Also, you can designate when you would like your contributions deducted. **There is no additional cost for using this giving option.** To participate in electronic giving, **visit our web site** at <https://umcstmarks.org/giving> or click on the QR code in the bulletin. You can also **download our free mobile giving app, GivePlus Church.** With GivePlus Church, you can make weekly offerings, respond to special appeals or set up a recurring donation through your smartphone or tablet. Simply go to the App Store or Google Play and search for "GivePlus Church" to quickly find the app and download it for free. Then you can give anytime, anywhere, any day of the week. Contact Ruth Kester at [ruthk@umcstmarks.org](mailto:ruthk@umcstmarks.org) for assistance. Thank you for your generous giving!

## ***February 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/2021/02/monthlyprayerlist\\_web0221.pdf](https://umcstmarks.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/monthlyprayerlist_web0221.pdf)

✝ Ask God's blessings of the congregation's ongoing donations of non-perishable food items for the Interfaith Community Services Food Bank. Give thanks that this action assists some of the 200,000 people in Southern Arizona who suffer from food insecurity.

✝ Pray God's blessings for the continuing 2021 worship theme and sermon series titled, "Love is ... ." The current emphasis is to learn how we are "Grounded in Love," followed by "A Journey to Philippi" for Lent, which begins Ash Wednesday, Feb. 17.

✝ Pray God's blessings as Susan Putt retires as the St. Mark's Music Ministries Coordinator. Pray God's blessings for Susan and her husband, Harold, as they enjoy her retirement together.

✝ Pray God's blessings as we prepare our hearts and open our minds to receive a new understanding of God's great love for all people during Lent.

✝ Give thanks and ask God's blessings for a Lenten devotional that will be made available to us. Pray for all who register and participate in one of the all-church Lenten studies using the study book titled, "Can You Drink the Cup?" by Henri Nouwen. Various classes are scheduled on different days and times during Lent. Pray for all the Lenten study leaders, as well.

✝ Ask God's blessings and new strength and energy for all doctors, nurses and health care workers as they care for increasing numbers of COVID-19 patients. Pray for their individual health and safety and that necessary hospital beds, medicines and treatments will be available as needed.

✝ Give thanks for the COVID-19 vaccines. Pray they are safe and effective. Ask God's guidance and help as the vaccines are produced, delivered and made available to people. Pray God's help for people coping with various online registration processes, transportation issues and other delays and difficulties.

✝ Pray for pastors Sharon, Stuart and Kim as they continue to provide ministry, leadership and care for our congregation as the COVID-19 shutdown continues. Pray for their individual health and safety 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, friends and everyone around us, by wearing masks, staying socially distanced and washing our hands frequently when 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.

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

✝ Pray God's love and healing power will surround all those with COVID-19 and other illness or health conditions. Pray for St. Mark's members and friends who have had recent surgery or are waiting for surgeries/treatments to be scheduled, as well as those who are recovering at home or in care facilities.

✝ Pray God's wisdom and understanding for all our government leaders – for our new president, vice president and all members of the new administration. Likewise, pray for all members of Congress and all our state and local leaders to govern well; to seek peace, justice and the greater good, as we remember governments are God's idea, put in place for the protection and well-being of everyone.

✝ The Desert Southwest Conference encourages us to pray for other churches within our district each month. It is encouraging to know other churches are praying for and with each other. For February, we are asked to pray for South District churches Huachuca UMC in Huachuca City; UMC of Green Valley in Green Valley; Patagonia Community UMC in Patagonia; and First UMC in Safford.

## 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).

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

### ***Our heartfelt sympathy and prayers go out to:***

- The Blevins family on the death of Ed Blevins, who peacefully left this world Jan. 13 surrounded by his wife, Gale, and their children. Arrangements for services are being made in Texas, where Ed was from.
- The DeShong family on the passing Jan. 20 of Dale DeShong, who lost her battle with COVID-19.
- The family of longtime St. Mark's member Tom Spratt, who died Jan. 20 of complications from COVID-19. The family is planning a private interment of Tom's ashes to be held this month. His daughter, Sheila, asked that any cards of condolence be sent to her at Sheila Fix, P.O. Box 3204, Canyon Country, CA 91386.
- Betty Pickart, her husband and family on the passing of their son, Shawn, on Jan. 12. Shawn had suffered for many years and been in a care facility, so Betty and her family are grateful he is at peace.
- Thomas Proffitt's wife, Roberta, and their family on Thomas's death Jan. 22. The family is having a small memorial service due to concerns over COVID-19.



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Email:  
[info@umcstmarks.org](mailto:info@umcstmarks.org)  
Website:  
[www.umcstmarks.org](http://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](http://umcstmarks.org/live-worship)  
Facebook:  
St. Mark's Tucson  
YouTube:  
UMC St. Mark's Oro Valley

### ***Dear Church Family...***

Thank you pastors Sharon, Stuart and Kim, also our St. Mark's family, for surrounding us with prayers, cards and love on the passing of our son, Mark Higgins. Bless you all.

*Tom and Dalene Peters family*

Thank you so much to the Nash Neighbors Committee and St. Mark's for the delicious cookies and other goodies at Christmas. The "No Excuses" cookie was very cool. We really appreciate your support as always. We are so grateful for friends like you and the church.

*Lorena Cote, kindergarten teacher, Nash Elementary*

### ***Upcoming UMW Meeting***



The St. Mark's United Methodist Women will meet at 10 a.m. Tuesday morning, Feb. 9 via Zoom. All women of the church are welcome and invited to join us. You don't have to be a member of St. Mark's UMW or St. Mark's UMC to meet with us.

Our speaker will be our own Rachel Mosher. Rachel will tell us about the St. Mark's Common Grounds group and other aspects of our Young Adult ministry. (Most of you know, Rachel is Alberta and David Farnsworth's daughter. Both Rachel and Alberta are United Methodist Women. And, Rachel is also part of St. Mark UMC's staff.

Please contact Kay Hayworth at ([see directory](#)), if you have questions and/or to receive the Zoom link information you need to connect.



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## Reflections

The words and tune to the spiritual, "My Lord, What a Morning," are running through my head this morning. That was brought on by my opening the front door and catching a view of a pink and purple sunrise over the eastern mountains. "Thank you, God" for this new day, I prayed.

Then I began to think "my Lord, what a year!" Yes, it is coming up on a year since we first learned about COVID-19. We began to change things in early March and closed our buildings for in-person worship and activities in late March.

We've learned so much this year. We've learned about new ways to worship and how to put worship together to honor God and fill our spirits. We've learned how to have meetings and classes on Zoom. We even connect with one another for parties and celebrations on Zoom. We've learned quite a bit about COVID-19 and how to protect ourselves and others by wearing masks, practicing social distancing and staying close to home whenever we can.

The list of what we've learned goes on and on. Speaking for myself, I'm grateful for all the learnings and wish I hadn't had to learn some of them. Some days I long for "the way things used to be" and can't wait 'til things "are that way again."

The truth, though, is that many things are not going to be exactly the way they once were. Throughout human history we've adapted our practices and plans based on learnings. As we learned, we changed. Sometimes things we tried didn't work out and we adapted again. We've not always been great at adapting to new things in the church but this year

has moved us into new ways of doing this and some of them will remain.

We will be back to in-person worship and activities in the not-too-distant future. Some things will be different when we do that. Our Genesis Team looks at data every week and considers, based on our reopening plan, where we are and considers new ideas and plans to see how they fit with where we are. Of course, we all hoped that we'd be fully back in person by now, but when the COVID resurgence happened in November-December, we had to adapt.

Our next adventure will be drive-in worship in the south parking lot on Sunday mornings. The pastors and music leaders will be live and you will drive in, park in designated spots and tune your FM receiver to a specific station to hear the music, Scripture, prayers and sermon. Watch for info on when this will begin. We'll continue with recorded worship at 9:45 a.m. for the foreseeable future.

Meanwhile, lots of other learnings continue to take place. We've formed a Racial Equity Task Force that is looking at ways to help all of us learn and grow. Lent begins with Ash Wednesday on Feb. 17. As we journey through Lent this year, we have the chance to look at ourselves and with gratitude say, "My Lord, what a gift I have in life and mornings and the ability to learn and adapt." We get to learn more about what "love is ... " I give thanks to God for life and love and all of you.

*Blessings,  
Sharon*