

# Messenger

Changing the world through Christ, by caring for all people.

Vol. 61, No. 5  
March 31, 2021



## Easter Special Offering to Help ICS, Our Family Svcs.

As we celebrate Holy Week and Easter after a challenging year, we see signs of God's work bringing new life and possibilities out of struggle and difficulty. The St. Mark's No. 1 priority is to bring Christ to the world by taking church out into the world. Ten percent of our regular church offerings go to support mission efforts locally and around the world. In addition, our church's Covenant Council has approved a special Easter offering to support two of our local mission partners. This year's Easter offering will be split evenly between:



### Interfaith Community Services:

St. Mark's is one of the founding ICS faith community partners dating back to 1985. ICS is helping thousands of people in need

in our community to achieve stable, healthy and independent lives. It does this through a variety of programs including operating two food banks, providing emergency assistance with rent and utilities, offering caregiving and senior services, and administering self-sufficiency programs and community outreach.



### Our Family Services:

This is a local organization that relies heavily on community support. Its core mission is dedicated to the

elimination of homelessness for families and youth. It does this through a variety of programs with the ultimate goal of reducing dependency. It is experiencing a dramatic increase in requests for safe shelter and housing support.

If you would like to give to the Easter offering, you can mail a check to the church designating it for "Easter Special Offering" or you can give online at <https://umcstmarks.org/giving> or on our Mobile App – GivePlus. Again, look for the option for "Easter."

We pray you will draw closer to God in this Lenten season and experience new life in Christ at Easter.

John Yost, Missions Committee Chair

## In-Person Worship Resumes in April, Expands in May

Join us for in-person worship on the west patio at 9 a.m. Sundays, April 11, 18 and 25. We begin a new sermon series on that day, "According to Jesus, Love is ..." and look forward to having you join us.

Here's what you need to know to come for in-person worship:

→Park in the south parking lot. Follow signs to enter the west patio. You will be greeted, sign in, and directed to marked spots on the patio.

→You do NOT need to register ahead of time.

→Bring your own chair, such as a lawn or folding chair. Some chairs will be provided for those who can't bring a chair.

→Wear a mask at all times and expect to sit at a distance from others.

→We can accommodate about 70 people for the service, which will last about 40 minutes. The service will include live music, Scripture readings, sermon and prayer time. A song leader will sing hymns and encourage you to hum along quietly.

### Beginning May 2, we are planning on TWO in-person worship services at St. Marks!

At 8 a.m. we will hold an in-person worship service on the west patio, same as is listed above for the Sundays in April, but at 8 a.m. rather than 9 a.m.

At 10 a.m. we will hold an in-person service in the Sanctuary. This service will include live Scripture readings, sermon, prayers and some live music, as well as music that will be recorded and projected. This service will be similar to our current recorded service but will be held in person at 10 a.m. in the Sanctuary for up to about 70 people.

Masks and social distancing are required for both these services.

Watch for more info on our May services as the time gets closer. Our Genesis Team meets weekly and closely monitors COVID-19 data for our area. If we experience

See Worship, page 2

## Need a COVID-19 Vaccination Appointment? Help is Here!

Many wonderful things have been happening on the vaccination front to help get our society to the other side of this crazy event known as COVID-19. The good news about the fight locally continues to grow. At first there were many issues and delays with the rollout for the vaccine. There are now greater amounts of people who are vaccinated every single day. As of Wednesday, March 24, everyone ages 16 and older in Pima county can register to get the vaccination.



Even though more people are getting vaccinated, it can still be difficult to get an appointment. This is especially true if you are having trouble using the technology that many places use in getting people to register online. If this

is something you have been struggling with, we would love to help you get signed up so you can be safe sooner. If you would like help with this, call the church office at 520-297-2062 or send an email to Pastor Stuart, [stuart@umcstmarks.org](mailto:stuart@umcstmarks.org).

There are other options besides going online to register for a vaccination. Health officials know not everyone has access to the internet to sign up in that way, so there is a certain amount of vaccination time slots saved for this reason. Registering by phone is happening at sites all over the greater Tucson area.

The following places accept registration over the phone:

- TMC/TCC – 520-222-0119
- Banner/Kino – 520-509-0908
- The University of Arizona – 844-542-8201
- Marana Health – 520-682-4111

To get a full list of places where you can register to get a vaccine and get the most up-to-date information, please visit [pima.gov/covid19vaccine](http://pima.gov/covid19vaccine).

Please continue to stay safe. We are getting through this together.

*The Pastors and Staff of St. Mark's UMC*

### St. Mark's Office Reopening

As we begin our next phase of reopening the campus, the church office will be staffed to answer phones and receive deliveries from 8:30 a.m. to noon beginning Tuesday, April 6. The office door will remain locked, so please ring the bell to make deliveries or pick up items. Meetings with staff members will be by appointment only until otherwise noted, and masks are required.

*Worship, continued from p. 1*

an increase in cases and/or hospitalizations, in-person plans may change.

Recorded worship will continue at 9:45 a.m. Sundays on <https://umcstmarks.org/live-worship>; St. Mark's UMC Tucson on Facebook; and UMC St. Mark's Oro Valley on YouTube.

Send your questions to [info@umcstmarks.org](mailto:info@umcstmarks.org). We look forward to seeing you in recorded or in-person worship.

## Easter Weekend Happenings

### Harps in the Gardens



From 3-5 p.m. Holy Saturday, April 3, Kathy Narney and fellow harpist Vanessa Moxness will play music in the Meditation Gardens. The focus will be Lenten music, for meditation in preparation for Easter Sunday. Please come enjoy their music. Take time to meditate and reflect. For safety, we ask that visitors wear

masks and respect social distance.

### Eat IHOP Pancakes, Support Youth Group

Know what goes well with Easter? Pancakes. Here at St. Mark's, the youth have a tradition of providing a pancake breakfast on Easter morning. This pancake breakfast helps to fund mission trips for our middle and high school students. We are excited to announce that the Marana IHOP has agreed to partner with our youth group to have a COVID-safe pancake breakfast this year! **All** orders placed at IHOP, 8445 N. Cerius Strav., from 8 a.m. to noon Saturday, April 3 will have a portion of the proceeds donated to the St. Mark's Youth Group, to help fund our summer mission opportunities! It's easy to order food from the app and pick it up to take home and enjoy! No code is needed, simply order, pick up and enjoy!

### Easter Flower Recognition, Photo Opportunity

Celebrating a St. Mark's tradition, the Easter altar will be decorated with spring flowers. On Easter Sunday, April 4, a commemorative list of who the flowers honor will accompany the online bulletin; copies of the bulletin and list will be available by mail to the flower donors. Also on Easter Sunday, the spring flowers can be picked up between 12:30 and 5 p.m. from the courtyard outside the Sanctuary, or between 8 a.m. and 2 p.m. Tuesday or 8 a.m. to noon Wednesday, ring the bell at the office door to pick up the flowers.

Additionally, from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. on Easter Sunday, take advantage of a photo opportunity in the church courtyard close to the Sanctuary. The setup will include the Easter flowers from the Sanctuary and an Easter cross. Please remain socially distanced while waiting to pose for pictures. If families coming to take pictures are also flower donors, they may feel free to take their flowers. Be sure to leave the display arranged nicely and looking good for the next family!

# 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.

## Summer Book Discussions Are Back! 6:30 to 8 p.m. Mondays

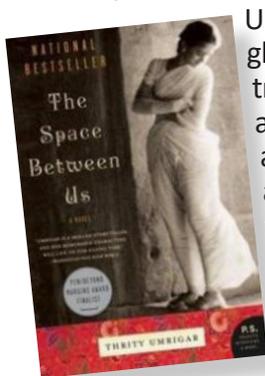
This popular format is returning to St. Mark's. Join any or all of our facilitators as they guide us through these books. The topics are varied to appeal to a wider audience. Tell your friends about them as well.

### May 17 – Learning to Walk in the Dark by Barbara Brown Taylor (2014) – led by Margaret Synhorst



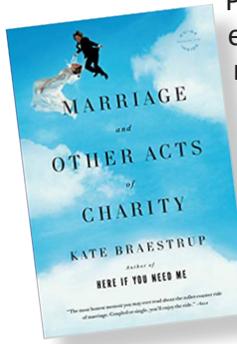
The author has become increasingly uncomfortable with our tendency to associate all that is good with lightness and all that is evil and dangerous with darkness. Doesn't God work in the nighttime as well? In *Learning to Walk in the Dark*, Taylor asks us to put aside our fears and anxieties and to explore all God has to teach us "in the dark" – to move away from our "solar spirituality" and ease our way into appreciating "lunar spirituality" (since, like the moon, our experience of the light waxes and wanes). Through darkness we find courage, we understand the world in new ways and we feel God's presence around us, guiding us through things seen and unseen. Often, it is while we are in the dark that we grow the most. Taylor provides a way to find spirituality in those times when we don't have all the answers, giving us strength and hope to face all of life's challenging moments. Available online from \$15; \$8 on Kindle.

### June 14 – The Space Between Us by Thrity Umrigar (2006) – led by Rev. Sharon Ragland



Umrigar vividly captures the social struggles of modern India in a novel of honor, tradition, class, gender and family. It is a portrayal of two women discovering an emotional rapport as they struggle against the confines of a rigid caste system. Set in modern-day India, it tells the story of two compelling and achingly real women: Sera Dubash, an upper-middle-class Parsi housewife whose opulent surroundings hide the shame and disappointment of her abusive marriage, and Bhima, a stoic illiterate hardened by a life of despair and loss, who has worked in the Dubash household for more than 20 years. Available online from \$13; \$10 on Kindle.

### July 12 – Marriage and Other Acts of Charity by Kate Braestrup (2010) – led by Sandi Heilman



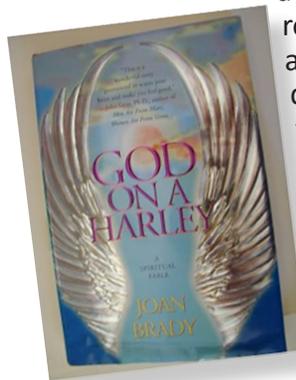
Part memoir, part observation of modern marriage and part meditation on the roles of God and love in our everyday lives, *Marriage and Other Acts of Charity* is an unforgettable look into why and how we love each other. Maine minister Kate Braestrup offers a relaxed, realistic and quietly awed reflection on the institution of matrimony. Widowed and remarrying while performing weddings for others, she is kind, funny and thoughtful, and her thorough explorations allow room for mystery and grace. From helping a newlywed couple make amends after their first fight to preparing herself for her second marriage, Braestrup offers her insights and experiences on what it truly means to share your life with someone, from the first kiss to the last straw, for better or for worse. Available online for \$16; \$10 on Kindle.

### July 26 – The Only Necessary Thing: Living A Prayerful Life by Henri Nouwen (1999) – led by Rev. Dr. Roger Pierce



Henri Nouwen, author of more than 40 books, was considered one of the premier spiritual writers of modern times. From his vast collection of spiritual writing, short excerpts have been gathered and put into this fine book, very readable and helpful thoughts about many aspects of the spiritual life that enrich our understanding of the practice of coming close to God. You will find the book to be inspiring as it flows from the compassionate heart of this remarkable man. Available only in paperback via Amazon, Cokesbury and Barnes & Noble.

### Aug. 16 – God on a Harley: A Spiritual Fable by Joan Brady (1995) – led by Susan Putt

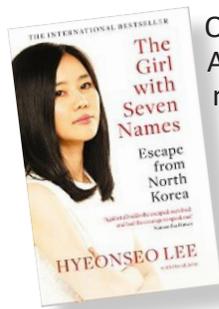


At 37, Christine Moore had a world-class case of burnout: a frustrating career, a few dead-end romances, no husband, no children and a less-than-perfect figure. Little did she know that her life was about to change completely. "God on a Harley" guides us on an inspiring odyssey of self-discovery and authentic, powerful love. As we follow this extraordinary fable, we join one woman's triumphant quest for healing and life-changing truths. Every woman who believes in her soul that hopes can be attained, real happiness can be found, and that each of us can be loved for herself will find in these pages the simple, profound secrets to an enlightened and enriched new life. Available online from \$14; \$12 on Kindle.

ASG continued on page 4

# Open Minds Book Group

9 to 10:30 a.m. Friday, April 23 (note corrected date)



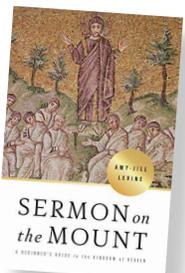
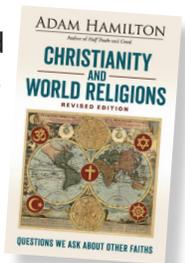
Our last meeting this spring: ***The Girl with Seven Names: Escape from North Korea***, by Hyeonseo Lee (2015). At age 17, Ms. Lee left her loving family in North Korea and fled to China. To protect herself as she created a new life, she assumed a new Korean-Chinese identity, the first of many during her life on the run. It would be 12 years before she was reunited with her family and much longer to establish a new home in another country. This inspirational memoir offers insight to life in one of the world's most ruthless dictatorships and reveals one brave woman's struggle to avoid capture/repatriation while guiding her family to freedom.

Led by Celeste Pardee, ([see directory](#)), and Ann Reaban, ([see directory](#)). The book is available from Amazon in paperback (\$13.99) or on Kindle (\$12.99) and from Barnes & Noble.

## Ongoing Spiritual Growth Opportunities ... ([see directory for facilitator contact info](#))

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, new study begins April 7.** "Christianity and World Religions" by Adam Hamilton. He examines the world's major religions – Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Islam and Christianity – helping Christian readers gain a better understanding of the similarities and differences between Christianity and the faiths of some of their next-door neighbors. Facilitation will be shared among Joylee Gathings, Joyce Flick and Alberta Farnsworth. This is the **revised edition (2018)** available through Amazon and Cokesbury. All are welcome.
- **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. The class is currently studying the Bible's book of Genesis.
- **Sharing & Family Life, 1 p.m. Sundays, new study begins April 11.** "Sermon on the Mount: A Beginners Guide to the Kingdom of Heaven" by Dr. Amy-Jill Levine. The author introduces the major topics in the Sermon on the Mount, explains historical and theological contexts, and shows how the words of Jesus echo his Jewish tradition and speak forward to reach hearts and minds today. Matthew 5–7 contains some of Jesus' most profound and most memorable teachings. What might these teachings have meant to his disciples, and to the others who first heard them? How do they enhance our reading of the rest of the Gospel of Matthew, and how do they speak across the centuries to listeners today? How, if we pay careful attention to his words, does Jesus provide us a road map to living as God would have us live? Please contact either of the co-leaders of the class, Terry Majewski ([see directory](#)) or Rick Farnsworth ([see directory](#)) with questions. A few books will be available for purchase, but you can order directly from Cokesbury (paperback) or Amazon (printed book and e-book). All are welcome.



## Learn About St. Mark's Membership!

Have you been thinking about membership at St. Mark's and wondering how to get more information and then join? From 6-7:30 p.m. Tuesday, April 6, Pastor Sharon and



Tricia Chester (administrative assistant for hospitality) will lead a Membership 101 class via Zoom. This is an opportunity for you to learn more about St. Mark's – our priorities and plans, as well as history and United Methodist beliefs. Please register on the website – <https://umcstmarks.org>, under "Latest Update" or "Classes," where you'll find a tab for Membership 101. If you have questions, leave a message at 520-297-2062 and you will be contacted.

## Host a Foreign Exchange Student!

Currently looking for host families for students arriving in August to spend a semester or school year in Tucson. Students are 15-18 years old and come with medical insurance and spending



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money to cover personal expenses. Host families provide room and board and welcome the student as a member of the family. There are many students waiting for a family, so choose one that shares your interests or faith, or one from a country you'd like to learn more about. Hosting is a fun and rewarding experience that brings people and countries together. For more information, contact Patricia Garza, local coordinator for International Cultural Exchange Services, 520-302-5146 or [pgarza@icesusa.org](mailto:pgarza@icesusa.org).

# Pray During 'Season of Change' at St. Mark's

Springtime is a season of change. We experience breezes, cacti blooming, trees budding and warming temperatures.

It reminds us that we at St. Mark's are beginning a season of change – a transition. During the coming months, let's remember to pray faithfully for Pastor Sharon and the Ragland family as she prepares to step into retirement.

We also lift up Pastor Lynn Bartlow, who will be our new lead pastor beginning July 1. We pray that God will provide guidance and comfort to the Bartlow family as they plan for a major life event, moving from Flagstaff to Tucson. Let us open our hearts as we prepare to welcome Pastor Lynn and celebrate her arrival. St. Mark's UMC is very blessed to have Pastor Lynn serve our church and to share her spiritual presence and gifts. We will share more about Pastor Lynn and her family in coming Messengers. Stay tuned!



Rev. Lynn Bartlow,  
incoming Lead Pastor

Sally Mettler, Staff-Parish Relations Committee Chair

## PLEASE Send in That Commitment Card if you Haven't Already

The Finance Committee expresses sincere thanks for your generous commitments and giving to the 2021 Stewardship Campaign. As stewards of the St. Mark's finances, our committee's role includes updating you on campaign results. Equally important is conveying budget-related concerns and the potential impact on St. Mark's, you, and those we serve externally.

Below is a comparison of commitments for 2020 and 2021:

2021 Stewardship Campaign	- "Anchored in Hope"	
	Cards Returned	Dollars Pledged
2021	309	\$855,821
2020	345	\$922,505
Variance	(36)	(\$66,684)

"Commitments" (\$ Pledged) comprise the principal component in the operating budget. The remaining portion represents "Other Giving" and "Loose Plate." Unfortunately, we've experienced a funding decrease in both categories, likely due to the pandemic and campus closure. But St. Mark's church remained open! We can thank our clergy and staff for their decisive and creative actions in response to the changing environment:

- Delivering outstanding worship services through enhanced live-streaming;
- Implementing "Zoom" technology for remote interaction by committees and Bible study groups; and
- Developing new initiatives to minister to our needs and engage constituents in activities.

These actions allowed us to stay connected with our church, do our work for God's kingdom and receive spiritual nurturing while remaining within our homes and participating without risk.

Naturally, St. Mark's church's operational expenses have continued. These expenses are closely monitored and adjusted to maximize the church's ability to fulfill its mission.

While still early in 2021, we are raising awareness of the current commitment funding shortfall of **\$66,684**. We critically need additional pledges to reach the 2020 level and our anticipated annual requirements. If you have not already made a commitment, we invite you to **pledge now** to the 2021 Stewardship Campaign. You can do so by emailing Administration and Finance Coordinator Ruth Kester at [ruthk@umcstmarks.org](mailto:ruthk@umcstmarks.org) or go to <https://umcstmarks.org/giving> to download and mail in a commitment card. Your response and others could prevent a substantial reduction in the budget and funds available to many important areas within our church.

Let's continue to invest in St. Mark's and its readiness in serving the body of Christ.

St. Mark's Finance Committee

## Missions Update

Our Missions Committee remains actively involved in our community. We are working with our mission partners and volunteering in many areas, while maintaining safe protocols during COVID-19. Ten percent of our regular church offerings is designated for missions. The Missions Committee is committed to being good stewards of these funds as we work to fulfill the St. Mark's stated No. 1 priority of taking Christ to the world by taking St. Mark's UMC into the world.

Our missions emphasis during the last year has been to focus on our local community, with so many people needing help as a result of the impact of COVID-19. As we begin to see daylight in a world beyond the pandemic, our committee will review our current work and mission partners as we look for new opportunities to take God and St. Mark's into the world in a fair and balanced way.

Thank you for entrusting the Missions Committee to continue to do God's work.

*John Yost, Missions Committee Chair*

## UMCOR Update

The United Methodist Committee on Relief appreciates very much the donation it received from St. Mark's UMC. Here are some things that have taken place since the COVID-19 pandemic began: UMCOR's Sager Brown Depot in Baldwin, La., has remained closed and cannot yet allow volunteers who assemble kits and supplies to respond to disasters in



the U.S. and parts of the world. However, in 2020, UMCOR distributed more than \$3.9 million in relief supplies to assist with disasters and COVID-19-related issues. For those familiar with Depot West in Salt Lake City, it has been permanently closed and all requests for supplies in the Western Jurisdiction will be fulfilled through Sager Brown and other affiliate warehouses. Again, thank you so much for your generosity.

*Sherri Wyland, UMCOR Liaison*

## Market on the Move off to a Great (Re)Start! Returns April 3

What a great day we had March 6 in our church parking lot. We supplied at least 175 people with fresh vegetables and FDA food boxes. We had great hard-working people who volunteered their time and energy to sort, bag and distribute these veggies – vine ripe tomatoes, zucchini, mixed pepper bags, spaghetti squash, grape tomatoes, broccoli and more. Next time we may have even more variety. In the past, when a farmer grew too many tomatoes or other vegetables for the market, any overage was sent to the landfill. Now we, through the 3000 Club, are distributing those rescued veggies at a low cost: just \$10 for up to 60 lb. A win-win! St. Mark's receives 10% of the gross received – another win-win!



**Come see what's available from 9-11 a.m. the final two dates this spring – April 3 and May 1 – in the St. Mark's south parking lot!**

*Lenna Burnham, Market on the Move Liaison*

## ICS Collection Update and Story

A little more than a year ago, COVID-19 was declared a pandemic, resulting in a lockdown and massive employment layoffs. We all watched long lines develop at food banks across the country with many individuals and families there for their first time. Millions of people were suffering from food insecurity.

With the help of our church leadership, St. Mark's recognized the growing need at our local food banks and we immediately got involved. Through our weekly food collections efforts, since last March, our congregation has donated more than 21,000 lb. of food to the food bank at Interfaith Community Services! That is an amazing number and once again, demonstrates the generosity of our wonderful faith community. ICS is very appreciative of our efforts as are thousands of recipients throughout Pima County. We are fulfilling our goal of taking our church into the world. Praise God!

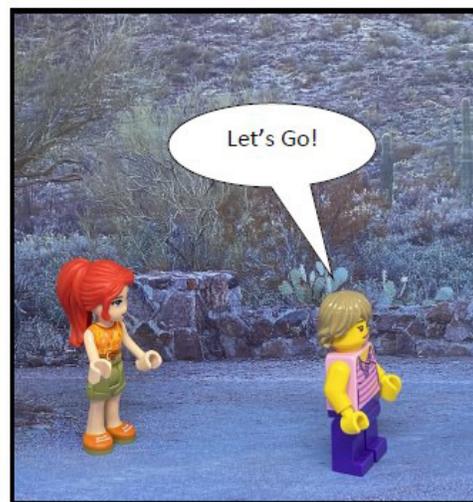
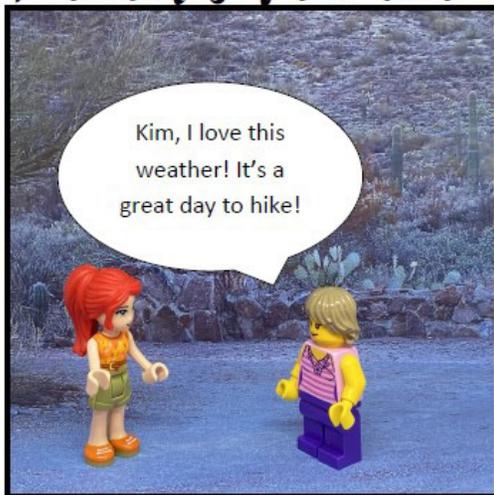
An interesting testimony about the impact of St. Mark's in our community: Pat Kittrell, who was collecting food donations on a recent Saturday, thanked a woman she had

# Youth Ministry

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



## Adventures of the Youth Directors



### April Birthdays

- April 6—*Jonathan Niemiec*
- April 14—*Gabby Morrison*
- April 20—*Maddie Martin*
- April 22—*Grace Carsten*
- April 22—*Kim Ogle (Youth and Outreach Pastor)*
- April 24—*Ray Trejo*
- April 24—*Riley Hussak*
- April 26—*Felicity Niemiec*



### Coming Soon ...

Exciting news!! The South District (that's the district our church is in!) is going to hold some mission opportunities this summer! They will be a little different than we are used to, but they will FOR SURE be a ton of fun, and a great way to meet youth from other churches in our district.



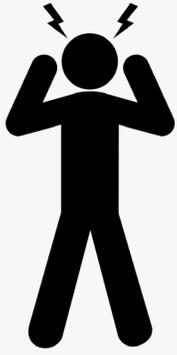
### Confirmation News

This year's Confirmation class is doing so well. The year has just flown by! Thank you, students, for helping us to record for the Good Friday service. As the year winds down, I look back and am amazed at your resilience and your dedication to sticking with this class, the first one to be offered completely online!

Youth news continued on page 8



## Stressed Out!



Change is hard. Change is stressful. You hear a lot of people say, "I don't like change," or "I can't handle change." What they mean is, "Change is stressful and makes me feel anxious." You all have had more changes this last year than we ever could have imagined, haven't you?!

First, school went remote, but don't worry, it's only for a bit! Then we finished the year online.

Then we started the new school year online. Some of you have returned to your campus, and some of you are still in virtual school, but all of you have had schedule changes, plus so many other changes!

So what can we do to help us not be so stressed!?! First, pray. Pray pray pray. Give your worries to God! After you pray, be sure you are getting enough sleep and eating healthy foods. It's surprising what a difference those two things can make! It is also super helpful and important to stay connected with people, even when we are all home and seeing each other through a screen. Let Kim and Rachel know if you need anything at all! We are here for you!

## Youth Group is April 18

Mark your calendars NOW for April 18. That is our next Youth Group meeting! Watch your emails for details as we get closer. In the past few months, we have had some



really fun gatherings, and it's been so nice to see all of your faces! In March, we all transformed into superheroes. The super powers in our group were amazing! We had one hero who had the power of omnipotence, and another who could wield a vacuum with some impressive strength. Thank you to everyone who came and played games with us! See you in a couple weeks!



Hi PreTeens,  
Just checking in and hoping you all enjoyed your spring break and you're ready to tackle the last quarter of this school year. Can you believe it's almost summer? Yikes! Don't forget to keep checking your Sunday emails. I have some fun and interesting activities and ideas to share with you. Hopefully, it won't be too much longer before we will get to meet in person. I really miss seeing you all and enjoy receiving your emails and pictures.

Blessings,  
Julie

## Register for Inequality Webinar

From 7-8 p.m. Thursday, May 6, the Desert Southwest Conference Economic Inequality Task Force of the Conference Board of Church & Society, will present the third



**Desert Southwest Conference**  
The United Methodist Church

webinar in the series for 2021. This event will discuss economic inequality and its impact on prison reform. The panel will include three knowledgeable and involved individuals in the criminal justice reform effort.

Attend the May 6 event to be better informed on the problem and what is happening legislatively. Registration is required to attend via Zoom. Click on this link to register, and then share the link to invite others from your community to register: <https://tinyurl.com/InequalityWebinar>.

Questions about this webinar may be directed to Bud Clark, chair of the Economic Inequality Task Force, at [budandmary2002@gmail.com](mailto:budandmary2002@gmail.com), or Billie Fidin, director of Justice and Outreach, at [bfidlin@dscumc.org](mailto:bfidlin@dscumc.org). See you then!

The livestream of this event will be available at <https://www.youtube.com/DSCCommunication>.





# Missions Ministry

## ICS Continued from page 6

seen numerous times bringing food, and Pat mentioned how appreciative she was of the continued support of our congregation after all these months. To which the woman replied, "Oh, I'm not a member of the church. I just saw the notice on your corner sign and decided to bring food. I used to donate food at the library site but since the building has been closed, I was searching for someplace to safely give. I live in the neighborhood and this is so convenient." We never know how broad our reach is as a church community.

Our food collection efforts continue in 2021. You can drop off your donations of non-perishable food items from 10 to 11 a.m. every Tuesday and Saturday morning in the north parking lot of our church. A safe collection process is in place. Hope to see even more of you there. Thank you so much!

*John Yost, Missions Committee Chair*

## National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day was March 10

In the 1980s and 1990s, many of us learned that large numbers of people (usually men and boys) had a "new" disease now called "HIV/AIDS." What some people don't realize is that many women and girls are also infected. The virus continues to spread. In 2018, 1,173,900 people in the United States were estimated to have HIV, and 261,800 of them were women. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control tells us that racism, discrimination and stigma sometimes affect whether or not women seek or receive high-quality health services and access to other support systems, such as the Tucson Interfaith HIV/AIDS Network and Southern Arizona AIDS Foundation. March 10 was National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day. St. Mark's has long supported women (and men) in our community through both of these agencies.



Tucson Interfaith HIV/AIDS Network

a compassionate interfaith response to HIV/AIDS



Southern Arizona AIDS Foundation

Has your family or a friend been touched by this disease? Join us as we work on behalf of people who are living with HIV/AIDS and their families. Please contact Pat Small at (see directory).

*Linda Walker*

## Rainbow Fellowship: We Are Family!



The additional yearlong delay of the UMC General Conference (now scheduled for late August 2022) is disappointing to those of us eagerly awaiting a resolution to the LGBTQ inclusion issue, which currently keeps our community on the "outs" with church rules. We share your disappointment. Although not everyone experiences this, we understand if you are angry, hurt or sad at the delay. In fact, the Rainbow Fellowship was created, in part, to be a support group allowing our LGBTQ congregants a safe place to vent those hard feelings amongst a group of friends. While we wait for the UMC to move forward to full inclusiveness, we gather together to share and pray and rejoice in our welcome at St. Mark's. If you identify as LGBTQ, we'd love to have you join our group.

We still meet at 9 a.m. the third Sunday of each month (sometimes via Zoom; we CAREFULLY met in person in February – see photo). For our April 18 meeting we plan to worship together at the 9 a.m. in-person service on the west patio, followed by a picnic brunch/meeting at a local park. If you'd like to join us, or for more information, please contact Melinda Sims at [rainbow@umcstmarks.org](mailto:rainbow@umcstmarks.org).

## From Restraint to Resurgence: Reflecting on Life in Lockdown and Picturing Possibilities Ahead

For many of us, the pandemic year kindled feelings of fear, anger, loneliness, grief, despair, boredom and relentless sameness. And at the same time, the lockdown afforded opportunities to slow down, get quiet and reflect. Join our new Counselor-in-Residence, Susan Proebsting, and other St. Mark's and community members to process and heal some of the ordeal of the last year. We will gather from 4 to 5:30 p.m. on three consecutive Thursdays – April 15, 22 and 29 – via Zoom. At each meeting, participants will be guided in a centering meditation, followed by time for written reflection and optional group sharing of these written reflections. **Participation is free, but registration is required.** Please email Dr. Susan Proebsting with any questions at [Susan@MaitriWellness.com](mailto:Susan@MaitriWellness.com). When you email to register, Susan will reply with the link for the Zoom meeting.

## ***April 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/2021/03/monthlyprayerlist\\_web0421.pdf](https://umcstmarks.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/monthlyprayerlist_web0421.pdf)

✠ Pray for St. Mark's hosting "Market on the Move" on Saturday morning, April 3, in the church parking lot. Ask God's protection as new COVID-19 safety procedures will be followed.

✠ Pray for St. Mark's Youth Group's fundraiser at IHOP restaurant (near Cortaro Road and I-10) from 8 a.m. to noon on Saturday morning, April 3. A percentage of all food sales that morning, including carryout, will benefit our Youth Group – you don't need a special code or flyer to participate.

✠ Pray God's blessings for St. Mark's planned pre-recorded Easter services on Sunday, April 4, including a 6:30 a.m. Easter sunrise service led by the 2021 Confirmation class and a 9:45 a.m. Sanctuary service that will include Communion.

✠ Pray for the safety and health of everyone as the St. Mark's church office reopens for morning business hours, beginning Tuesday, April 6.

✠ Pray for the St. Mark's "Membership 101" class via Zoom on Tuesday evening, April 6. May God bless Pastor Sharon and Tricia Chester as they lead, as well as everyone who participates in this class.

✠ Pray for St. Mark's ongoing Confirmation class members and their families, as well as Rachel Mosher and Pastor Kim Ogle. May God bless each student and help them learn about the United Methodist Church and what it means to believe and follow Jesus as their personal Savior.

✠ Pray for the ongoing drive-through collection of food items for Interfaith Community Services Food Bank on Tuesday and Saturday mornings each week. Give thanks for the generosity of the St. Mark's community that helps more than 200,000 people in Southern Arizona suffering with food insecurity.

✠ Pray God's blessings, and for all to be safe, at the planned in-person Sunday worship services at 9 a.m. beginning Sunday, April 11 on the west patio.

✠ Pray for Pastors Sharon, Stuart and Kim as they continue to provide ministry, leadership and care for our congregation during the COVID-19 shutdown. Some aspects of the shutdown are changing, so pray for their individual health and safety at all times. May they feel God's presence and know His love for them in all situations.

✠ Give thanks for the COVID-19 vaccines. Continue prayers that 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 difficult online registration processes, long travel distances, transportation issues, and other delays and difficulties. Pray God's help keeping people safe and healthy as they wait for their vaccine eligibility.

✠ Pray for the health, safety and protection of all teachers, students and school administrators going back to in-person learning. Include prayers for parents and others helping with ongoing virtual and hybrid learning sessions, too. May God provide help for any and all mental health needs of students.

✠ Pray for the new St. Mark's Racial Equity Task Force, that it will find meaningful ways to introduce our congregation to issues pertaining to racial justice and how we may advocate for racial equity. Pray that our brothers and sisters of color will be safe and well as they navigate the oppression and violence that has long plagued our country and world. Pray for an end to hate, remembering how Jesus called us to love one another.

✠ Pray God's healing power will surround all those with COVID-19 and other illnesses 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 and in care facilities.

✠ South District Superintendent Rev. Matt Ashley asks us to pray for other churches and pastors in our district each month. The request for April includes; St. Mark's UMC, Catalina UMC and the University of Arizona Campus Ministry – all in Tucson.

## 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  
Sondra Franks  
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:**

- Kathie Barrett and the family and friends of Jim Barrett, who died Sunday, March 7. Though Jim's passing is very sad, we are certain he is singing in the arms of Jesus. A memorial service will be livestreamed at 10 a.m. April 16.
- The daughters, family and friends of Dave Belt, who died Tuesday, March 9 after a battle with COVID-19. Please include prayers of thanksgiving for Dave's faithful service to Christ and the church.
- Elizabeth Schauer and her family on the passing of her mother, Betty Anne Schauer, on Friday, March 19.

## **Update from Worldwide Christian Support Task Force: Crisis in Myanmar (Burma)**



St. Mark's UMC  
1431 W. Magee Road  
Tucson, AZ 85704  
(520) 297-2062

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

**Lead Pastor:**  
Rev. Sharon Ragland  
**Associate 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 UMC Tucson  
YouTube:  
UMC St. Mark's Oro Valley

For the past five years, the Worldwide Christian Support Task Force has been calling attention to the fragility of the government and status of Christians in Myanmar (Burma). We have written articles of concern and included this country in presentations and prayers.

On Feb. 1, Myanmar's military detained pro-democracy leaders Aung San Suu Kyi and President Win Myint along with 22 high-ranking officials to protest alleged election fraud, even though the country's election commission has stated there was no fraud and Aung San Suu Kyi's party won in a landslide. Suu Kyi has been detained since the coup and faces various charges, including illegally importing walkie-talkie radios and infringing coronavirus protocol. Citizens peacefully protesting the military takeover have been shot in the streets. The coup has raised international and local alarm and increased worries for the country's persecuted church.

Efforts at establishing democracy and religious freedom have completely failed in 2021. The news footage is a sharp reminder of the painful protests in Tiananmen Square, Arab Spring, Viet Nam. Christian areas have suffered during Myanmar's ongoing civil war, and this is exacerbated by the military takeover. Amidst the political turmoil, the 4,000 internally displaced Christians fleeing in the jungles of Karen State, have now been further trapped by the political developments. Among the displaced are more than 500 believers including missionaries trapped in Kyaukkyi, Bago region. The trapped believers cannot move forward or go back to their homes. They need food, medicine and clothes, but access and communication are very difficult.

We have had a tough year. It is nothing compared with the suffering of these people. Persecuted Christians consistently report that their greatest encouragement comes from knowing people are praying for them. We are a people of prayer. Offer prayers of thanksgiving for our many blessings. Offer prayers for protection and support for the Christians of Myanmar as well as other groups being persecuted.

To contact or join the St. Mark's Worldwide Christian Support Task Force, email [christiansupport@umcstmarks.org](mailto:christiansupport@umcstmarks.org).

## Reflections

What it is like when you experience a lightening of your heart and spirit after a difficult time? That is just a glimpse of the new life that comes to us at Easter. Every time God brings us from dark or lonely or fearful places, we glimpse new life. God's longing is for us to always know that life, to know that death is never the final word and the worst thing is never the last thing. Through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus we have the promise of new life in this life and in the life beyond this one.

Join us for the remainder of Holy Week as we journey toward the cross and the new life of Easter. Log on to these services via the church website, <https://umcstmarks.org/live-worship>; YouTube UMC St. Mark's Oro Valley; or Facebook St. Mark's UMC Tucson.

Art and I, along with your other pastors, wish you the blessings of new life, hope and joy that will break forth on this Easter day!

Pastor Sharon

### April 1 – Maundy Thursday

- 7 p.m. service of worship, an experience of the last day of Jesus' life before his crucifixion, with music, readings and Holy Communion. This will be livestreamed from the Sanctuary with only worship leaders present. Join us on any of our three online platforms or drive in to the south parking lot to watch on our

large, inflatable screen as it is presented live from the Sanctuary.

### April 2 – Good Friday

- 7 p.m. recorded service – "The Way of the Cross." Walk our church's meditation garden's "Way of the Cross," narrated and led by our confirmation class. Includes poetry from the work of the late Rev. Cynthia Langston Kirk and drawings by Rev. Amy Barron Gafford, as well as music to guide us in this time of reflection on this somber day. Join us on any of our three online platforms to attend.

### April 4 – The Celebration of Easter!

Two recorded services for the celebration of new life at Easter, on the topic, *Love Is ... Accepting New Life!* based on John 20:1-18

- 6:30 a.m. Sunrise service with messages from our graduating seniors, plus leadership from other youth, along with music and Holy Communion and a message by Pastor Sharon.
- 9:45 a.m. A service of music, message by Pastor Sharon, children's time, prayer and the celebration of Holy Communion.

Take some time to stop over at church and walk the Labyrinth or the Way of the Cross in our Meditation Gardens, which are always open. Walk the stations of the cross virtually with guidance from our youth: Check for a video link on our website and on Facebook and Instagram.