

Messenger

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

Volume 63 No. 8
August 2023

St. Mark's
United Methodist

Special Worship with Bishop Carlo

Bishop Carlo Rapanut will be our guest preacher and worship leader on Aug. 13. On the occasion of our Rally Day Sunday, Bishop Carlo will join us to celebrate our newly combined church and will pray over our leaders as we prepare to launch worship at our Sanctuary Campus on Aug. 20.

Bishop Carlo began leading the Desert Southwest Conference in January after being elected to the episcopacy last fall. Previously, he served on the cabinet of the Greater Northwest Area as Conference Superintendent, Director of Connectional Ministries in the Alaska Conference, one of the deans of the cabinet, and then Assistant to the Bishop. He was born, raised and ordained in the Philippines and moved with his wife and family to Alaska in 2008. They moved to Phoenix after his youngest son finished seventh grade this June.



We look forward to Bishop Carlo's presence with us and encourage you to consider attending our Rally Day Sunday worship. The Sanctuary Praise Band will lead our 10 a.m. service while the first service will be led by the Summer Choir and organ. See you then!



St. Mark's Rally Day is Sunday, Aug. 13

The Magee Campus Sunday School classes are celebrating moving up to a new grade with pom poms, balloons and a cool treat. We invite children age 3 (and potty trained) through fifth grade. They will need a Sunday School registration form, which can be completed ahead of time on the St. Mark's website, <https://umcstmarks.org> (select RESOURCES at the top and then go to FORMS) or in person under the west patio ramada on Rally Day itself. Registration on the patio will begin at 9:30 a.m., with Sunday School starting at 10. Children will meet in their respective classrooms and walk together to the sanctuary for children's time. There, they will all receive a small gift for the new school year. Following children's time, the kids will gather together for a Bible story, music and a short video before returning to their classrooms for a Bible lesson activity craft and a chance to guess what is inside the Wonder Box! (Don't know what a Wonder Box is? Come to Sunday School to find out.) The celebration will end with a cool treat and parents will pick up their children from classrooms following worship. For the safety of all children, a parent or designated adult needs to come to the classroom to pick up all children. The Magee Campus has gates that children of all ages can easily wander out of, and it is located at a very busy intersection. The Sunday School teachers strive for consistency in the classrooms and ask that all children be signed in and out each Sunday by a parent or designated adult.

Classrooms for 2023-2024:

- Age 3 - kinder Rm 3
- Grades 1-2 Rm 6/7
- Grades 3-5 Rm 8/9

For more information about Sunday School or to volunteer please contact Julie Eblen at julie@umcstmarks.org.

Please note that on Aug. 6 during Sunday School, children who completed fifth grade in May will visit the Wesley House for a tour and to meet new friends and teachers.

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." Or sign up at the Adult Spiritual Growth board on the patio Sunday mornings. Please pre-register and acquire books from your favorite resource. (Bookshop.org, <https://bookshop.org>, supports local bookstores.)

August Summer Musical: Godspell

The last St. Mark's summer musical this year is "Godspell," starting at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, Aug. 15 in Room 17/18. "Godspell" is a

1973 musical film and a 1971 off-Broadway musical based upon the Gospel of Matthew. Set in contemporary times, John the Baptist gathers several youthful disciples to follow and learn from the teachings of Jesus. These disciples form an acting troupe and rove the streets of New York City enacting Jesus' parables. Familiar NYC locations in the movie include the Brooklyn Bridge, Central Park's Bethesda Fountain, Times Square, and the top of the North Tower of the yet-to-be-completed World Trade Center. The

musical numbers reflect the era's pop music of the time with "Day by Day" the best-known song from the movie.

Please join others for an enjoyable evening watching these familiar parables from the book of Matthew played out in an unexpected musical format. For some of us, we will remember the era, and how we dressed, quite well! Don't forget to bring your munchies.

Linda Walker, Movie Host

Adult Sunday School

"White Too Long: The Legacy of White Supremacy in American Christianity" by Robert P. Jones. 9:30-11 a.m. in Room 17/18 and via Zoom. Led by Rick Farnsworth and Carl Harrison. Please register to secure the Zoom link. Drop-ins are welcome!

(Continued from July)

Adult Sunday Bible Study

The book of Judges. 11:15 a.m. in Room 17/18 and via Zoom. Led by Brenda Hunter and Kelly Deyoe. The class reads this book of the Bible, chapter by chapter, to reflect on its meaning then and now. This class invites not only regular attendees but anyone who can only occasionally attend. Bring your Bible or there are Bibles in the classroom. Please register to secure the Zoom link.

New Class Leader Orientation Aug. 19

Adult Spiritual Growth always needs new class leaders for short-term or ongoing classes. Many of you have attended classes and have expressed a need for more offerings but class leaders have become scarce. Please consider leading a class! To help prepare you, ASG is presenting a two-hour Class Leader Orientation from 9:30 a.m. to noon Saturday, Aug. 19.

This class will instruct you on how to select a topic, how to obtain study resources, the necessary forms needing completion, and publicity. There will be open discussions regarding the various ways to lead a class, how to encourage discussion, and keeping a class on track. An experienced class leader will be present to help answer questions and to share experiences.

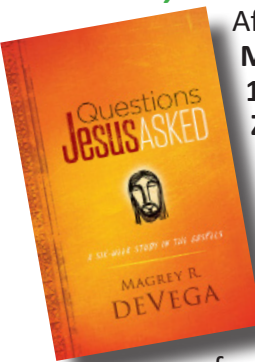
Leading a class is different from teaching a class. A leader learns along with the other participants but has the additional role of overseeing the process. Leading a class can be very enriching as you hear and consider other perspectives and get to know each other in a relaxing, informal setting. In a short time, many classes evolve into enjoyable gatherings eager to continue their spiritual development.

Never underestimate your ability to lead a class! Many resources are available, including the ASG Resource Library in Room 23 and access to Amplify Media, an online service. If you wish, sit in on an established class to observe. Or request a mentor to help you lead the first session. Please consider leading a class and registering to attend this orientation. You will be richly rewarded by the experience.

Marcia Rostad, ASG Chair

Wednesday Morning Study to Resume in September

After a summer hiatus, the **Wednesday Morning Study will resume from 10-11:30 a.m. Sept. 6 in Room 17/18 and on Zoom.** This class will meet every Wednesday through May, with short breaks over Christmas and during Holy Week. Each study usually lasts six weeks.



Our first study is **"Questions Jesus Asked" by Magrey deVega.** Jesus was

fond of asking questions, many of which cut right to the heart of what it means to be human. Why are you terrified? What do you live for? Who do you say that I am? Asking these and other questions takes courage. Not only do they reveal what Jesus really cares about, they open a window into our hearts. We all have questions for God, but growth happens when we turn things around and ask what Jesus wants to know about us.

No book is required, but it is helpful. Scholarships are available by contacting Pastor Kim, kim@umcstmarks.org. Please register especially if attending by Zoom.

Marcia Rostad, Leader

Staff Planning Retreat



The St. Mark's annual staff planning retreat is scheduled for Aug. 15-16. The staff will meet off campus during this time and will have limited access to phones and email. If you have an emergency while the office is closed, please call the church office (520-297-2062) and leave a voice message.

During the retreat, the church office will remain open and staffed by volunteers during its summer business hours: 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Monday through Thursday, and 9 a.m. to noon Friday. If you have questions, please contact the church office.

Office Reminders

- No need to ring the doorbell during office hours.
- To request facilities use or have an item added to the church calendar, email calendar@umcstmarks.org.
- To submit an item for the Sunday bulletin, use bulletin@umcstmarks.org. (The office will choose what goes into the weekly e-blast.)
- Submissions for the monthly *Messenger* newsletter should go to messenger@umcstmarks.org.
- Direct general inquiries to info@umcstmarks.org.

Mark-a-ritas Potluck is Aug. 14

The Mark-a-ritas will have a **Mexican-themed potluck** at 6 p.m. Monday, Aug. 14 in the Magee Campus Fellowship Hall. This is our chance to share a favorite Mexican dish or try a new recipe. Appetizers, salads, main dishes, and desserts are all welcome! After our dinner, we'll share travel adventures and stories from our trips south of the border. Those with Mexican heritage could share a family custom that originated in Mexico.

If you plan to attend, please **RSVP by Friday, Aug. 11, to Celeste Pardee**, (see church directory), so we'll know how many paper products to buy and tables to set up. Carol Fouch has graciously agreed to provide table decorations, but if you can help with setting up, cleaning up, or providing background music (such as Mariachi), please let Celeste know. Thank you!

Sanctuary Relaunch is Aug. 20

St. Mark's is pleased to invite you to the launch of contemporary worship on the Sanctuary Campus, 7620 N. Hartman Lane, at 10 a.m. Aug. 20. The Praise Band will lead us, Pastor Kevin will speak to us, and God will be glorified! See you then!

Call for Artists and Artisans

The St. Mark's Fine Arts and Craft Guild will host its annual **Masterpiece Festival** on Nov. 4 and is now accepting vendor applications. If you or someone you know are interested in selling handmade art or crafts, contact Clay Thompson ([see church directory](#)) for more information. We have indoor, covered patio, open patio and parking lot spaces available.

Vendor application forms are available at the St. Mark's website, <https://umcstmarks.org>, under the RESOURCES dropdown menu, then click on FORMS. We look forward to hearing from you and having another very successful show.

Learn About 'Methodism 101'

Just what is a Methodist? Who is John Wesley? What's this thing about three kinds of grace? What's the history of St. Mark's and the future of the UMC? Does it really matter today? Join us at Soul Station Aug. 2 and 9 and discover the answers to all of that and more! These two weeks will serve as a new members class, but it's geared for new and old members alike! See you at Soul Station! Wednesdays, 5:30 p.m. for dinner, program at 6 p.m. If you wish to attend online, contact Pastor Kim for the Zoom link: kim@umcstmarks.org.



Mark-a-ritas at the Movie, Dinner

On July 25, a small group of Mark-a-ritas, a group of mid-life women from St. Mark's who like to socialize and have fun, donned their best Barbie pink and hit up the hugely popular movie and then went to dinner together.

Virtual Coffee with Pastor Lynn

Get some "face time" with Lead Pastor Lynn Bartlow starting at 11:30 a.m. Aug. 27 via Zoom. Watch the weekly e-blast for Zoom connection information as the date gets closer! Grab your favorite coffee or lunch and come with questions or issues or just be social! You can also submit questions or concerns in advance to lynn@umcstmarks.org.





Church & Society

Racial Equity Advocates Annual Audit Request

Two years ago, the St. Mark's Covenant Council committed to continuing our work on racial equity by convening an advocate team to promote racial equity through education and activities. Led by the Church & Society Committee, in August each year the advocates complete a self-assessment to ensure we are furthering our commitment to racial equity. It has come to our attention that we don't have representatives or visibility into all potential St. Mark's activities. If you belong to a group that has done a study, had a guest speaker, or had other activity focused on a different culture or ethnic group, please email Joylee Gathings at ([see church directory](#)) to pass along what you have done. You can find the results of last year's racial equity assessment on our website at <https://umcstmarks.org/racial-equity>.

Did You Know: Gun Violence Edition

While many of us joyfully celebrated Independence Day this year with traditional American food and spectacular fireworks, others were experiencing the horror of gun violence. On July 3 and 4, there were 13 mass shootings (4 or more killed/injured in each) in the United States.

July 15, Day **196** of 2023

| | As of 07/15 | As of 06/15 |
|---|----------------|----------------|
| So Far This Year in the U.S.: | | |
| Mass Shooting Incidents (4 or more victims killed/wounded in each) | 382 | 296 |
| Children (0-11) killed by gunfire | 154 | 124 |
| Teens (12-17) killed by gunfire | 825 | 689 |
| All Youth (0-17) injured by gunfire | 2610 | 2131 |
| Unintentional Shootings | 892 | 727 |

Please visit gunviolencearchive.org to see more statistics and learn more about the organization's background, methodology, and sources of information.

Rainbow Fellowship News



At its July meeting, the Rainbow Fellowship overwhelmingly determined that it wishes to remain a vital part of the St. Mark's family! Everyone agreed the fellowship meets a need our LGBTQIA folks have as church people and so it will continue, pretty much as we have for the last 3+ years, just under different leadership as group founder Melinda Sims steps down.

Although the team will be group-led for meeting planning purposes, Kitty Tobin agreed to be the main point of contact for RF business.

The fellowship also looks forward to working with Pastor Kevin to become visible to Sanctuary Campus members as well. We are delighted to add them to our family!

Thank you, St. Mark's pastors, for the great gift of making the group available on campus as part of the ministry of our church. We all commented on how important that is to our faith journey. It is a brave and bold step in the right direction. Well done!

Melinda Sims

Rainbow Fellowship founder and former chair

Care Team Formation

As part of our continued commitment to caring for all people, St. Mark's is assembling a team of volunteers who will work closely with Pastor Kim to visit and reach out to church members who need a visit, a call, or a card. We need compassionate, caring people who can keep confidences and meet monthly with the rest of the team. Whether you've been on this team before or are new to the idea, contact Pastor Kim, kim@umcstmarks.org, to learn more about the team's time commitment and responsibilities.

Who Are We? An occasional series about one of the many groups at St. Mark's UMC

By Evy McDonald

United Women in Faith

United Women in Faith has 91 members and 9 associate members. Its roots run deep, all the way back to March



United
Women
in Faith

1869 when eight Methodist women in South Boston formed the Women's Foreign Missionary Society. In this initial year, these women

decided to live out their commitment to service by sending Dr. Clara Swain and Miss Isabella Thoburn to be medical missionaries to the women in India who could not receive medical care from a man. No church funds were used because each woman gave two cents per week to finance the work. This initial act of compassion has led to more than 150 years of education, mission, service, justice, and advocacy. This is all carried out independently of local or national church funds.

The Women's Foreign Missionary Society became United Methodist Women and now United Women in Faith. Each name change took place to indicate the broader evolving work of this amazing organization. Some of its past work has involved opposing female infanticide in China, sheltering young girls fleeing forced marriages, and rescuing abandoned children. In the late 1800s, they infiltrated brothels to expose sex trafficking. They reached out to struggling immigrants, opened the first kindergartens and even founded charity hospitals. The list of their accomplishments could go on and on. From the beginning these women have lived out their commitment of Micah 6:8: *What does the Lord require of you? To act justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.*

These women always have worked alongside the church to further the teachings and mission of Jesus. They pay

yearly dues, which ALL go toward their commitment to expand the concept of mission and to develop creative and supportive friendships. Each year, every penny pledged or earned goes back into the local, national, and world community. The women pray, study, and work together to feed the hungry, clothe those in need, help the sick, and welcome the stranger or sojourner.

So what did the St. Mark's United Women in Faith do this past year? To begin with, there are three unique circles of women: Grace Circle does hands-on mission work at nonprofit groups in the community; Elizabeth Circle is a powerful group of woman prayer warriors; and Craft Circle is women who gather to learn and share their skills to make items for sale or to give away to those in need. Some women are in all three. At the church itself, you will see these women serving on committees, working in the kitchen, lending a hand at Vacation Bible School, helping out at memorial services, providing food for special events, and so many other things. As an organization, it stands alongside the local church to work together to serve members and our larger community.

In the last year plus these women have donated time and/or money to Diaper Bank of Southern Arizona, Sister Jose's Women Center, The Inn of Southern Arizona, GAP Ministries, TMM Family Services, Springboard Home for Girls, Youth on Their Own, TIHAN, Ronald McDonald House, The Free Store, Primavera Women's Shelter, Salvation Army, The Haven, St. Mark's Youth – and that is not all of them. In addition, they have conducted home visits, given loaves of love for members who cannot get out and about, written letters to senators and representatives to help make a difference, and so much more.

There is more to do than they have time or hands. Would you like to be involved? All women are invited to come and check them out, watch them in action, experience their friendship, and join an event. And I bet you will want to become part of this dynamic, active, mission-oriented supportive group. See you there! The next meeting is 10 a.m. Tuesday, Sept. 12.



Just Breathe - Inspired by Holy Yoga™ resumes Aug. 11! Just Breathe provides an opportunity for fellowship with others while stretching, practicing controlled breathing techniques, reflecting on scriptures, building flexibility and strength, and once in a while, breaking a sweat! Come as you are; we have mats, straps, and blocks available to borrow. You can also choose to sit in a chair.

Misc. Missions

The Missions Committee is embarking on a path forward with a combined Sanctuary and Magee campus meeting that took place Aug. 1. If you are interested in joining us, please contact Mary Beth Barone at 520-668-9639. We continued to volunteer at the Community Food Bank in June and July. We also disbursed \$2,500 each to TIHAN (Tucson Interfaith HIV/AIDS Network) and Tu Nidito in July. Market on the Move has taken a break for the summer. Nash and Estes elementary school supply collections were very successful. Our contribution to the Interfaith Community Services peanut butter drive totaled 1,880 jars as of July 30, with two days left to collect.

Mary Beth Barone, Missions Committee Chair

Food Collection Continues for ICS

On July 24, we surpassed 10,000 lbs. of food donated to Interfaith Community Services in this year alone.

St. Mark's began collecting food donations for the northwest food bank at Interfaith Community Services in early 2020 when the COVID pandemic began, bringing with it massive job losses and historic lines at food banks across our country. Nearly 3½ years later, we have donated more than 70,000 lbs. all together! Those donations came from hundreds and hundreds of individual contributions, sometimes one jar, box, or can at a time. Our wonderful congregation's generosity has provided thousands of additional meals to those needing supplemental food assistance in Southern Arizona. Praise God!

We have wrapped up the July Peanut Butter Party, but the ICS Food Bank continues to need our help. You can bring donations between 10-11 a.m. Tuesdays and Saturdays to the Magee Campus north parking lot, or drop them off in the church office during its business hours.

Most-Needed Food Bank Items

- ✓ Peanut Butter (14-16 oz. jar)
- ✓ SpaghettiOs, Chili or Ravioli in Pop-Top Cans
- ✓ Canned Meat, Tuna, Chicken
- ✓ Instant Mashed Potatoes
- ✓ Rice/Dry Beans
- ✓ Dry Pasta (Spaghetti, Macaroni, Macaroni and Cheese)
- ✓ Spaghetti Sauce
- ✓ Breakfast Cereal
- ✓ Stuffing Mix



TIHAN Receives Annual Check

HIV/AIDS Committee Chair Pat Small delivers a St. Mark's donation of \$2,500 to Scott Blades, executive director of the Tucson Interfaith HIV/AIDS Network. In addition to the annual donation, St. Mark's also helps sponsor one "POZ Cafe" for the organization's clients.

2 Steps Forward, One Step Back

It has been 42 years since the Centers for Disease Control published information about a new virus that would come to be known as HIV/AIDS. Thus, the beginning of the AIDS epidemic. And a rocky road it has been these 40-some years for the people who contracted the disease and their allies and families. HIV testing is now available for all and, though the stigma continues, science has also made some major strides in medications to help people cope with the virus and even a pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) is available. A Hutch News story tells about a new strategy involving B and T cells that may lead to a vaccine. It's complicated – too complicated for this space. If you want to learn more, let me (Pat Small) know. One possible step back is taking place here in Arizona. Attorney General Kris Mayes has pledged to "fight like heck" to overturn a mandate from a federal judge in Texas that would mean health insurers would NOT have to "provide HIV-preventative medication without charge." (Arizona Daily Star, June 10, 2023) So, we keep on caring, along with our local agencies TIHAN and the Southern Arizona AIDS Foundation and our fellow faith communities and others, doing what we can to be "influencers" for good! St. Mark's continues to be a blessing to the HIV/AIDS community in Pima County. THANK YOU!!! The HIV/AIDS Committee's next meeting is at 9:30 a.m. Aug. 5 in Room 20 on the Magee Campus. **Join us please** to become part of this 25-year ministry at St. Mark's. --HIV/AIDS Committee

Youth Ministry

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



Youth Group Calendar



Aug 6

August 13



Aug 18-19

Aug 27



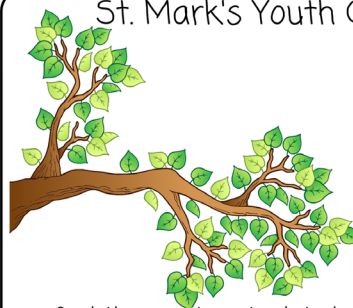
Aug 27

Sept 3



Happy Labor Day!

St. Mark's Youth Group LinkTree



find the most up to date links for all things youth!

St. Mark's Youth has so many fun things going on, we started using a LinkTree to organize all of the most up-to-date links! Check this out for event signups, online payments, and social media pages!



United: A Ministry for 4th-7th Grade Students

Being a kid is tough. There is a lot going on! We have formed an awesome new group, United, that will meet periodically for some super fun events, designed especially for students in 4th-7th grades. Bring a friend and be ready for some crazy fun times. Watch this youth page for details about events throughout the upcoming year. PreTeens will have its last meeting Aug. 6, and United will launch Aug. 27 – check out the details below!



MOVIE FIELD TRIP! MORE DETAILS TO COME.
QUESTIONS? EMAIL SPENCER@UMCSTMARKS.ORG



Youth Ministry

Latest news for High School, Middle School, and Preteen Students!



WHAT'S COMING UP

St. Mark's Messtival

4-6 p.m. Aug. 13

What's better than a festival? I'm so glad you asked – why, a messtival of course! There will be messy games, tie-dye, and of course friends. You will get your 2023-2024 St. Mark's Youth Group T-shirt, so you do NOT want to miss this!

South District Youth Take Over Defy!

8 p.m. Aug. 18 to 7 a.m. Aug. 19

Wesley House then Defy, 4861 N. Stone Ave.

It was a blast in 2022, so let's do it again in 2023! Kick off this school year by taking over Defy!! Meet at 8 p.m. at the Wesley House for a pizza party with First UMC, Gilbert. At 10:15, we will drive to Defy (we may need parent drivers). We have all night at Defy to play, sleep (if you want), do some big group games, and have some devotion time. All of this for only \$40 – but as always, scholarships are available. Sign up with Rachel today! Friends are definitely welcome with permission slip, and EVERYONE needs a Defy waiver!

United (Grades 4-7)

11:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Aug. 27

Ready to check out our new United program!? Come feed some ostriches, goats, donkeys and more at Rooster Cogburn's! Meet at 11:30 at the Wesley House. First we will feed our faces (bring some money for a fast food lunch), then we will feed all the fun animals! Friends are welcome, with a signed permission slip. Don't miss this awesome new program!

Photo Scavenger Hunt

4-6 p.m. Aug. 27

Say cheese! We've got a wild photo scavenger hunt ready for you on Aug. 27. Bring your running shoes, and if you have a phone, bring it! We will print out the pictures before you leave. There is something for everyone.

Labor Day – No Youth

Sept. 3

Since 1894, Americans have celebrated Labor Day, which is a national holiday intended to allow the workforce to rest. Rest well on Sept. 3. See you next week!

SPECIAL NOTES

WELCOME

Aug. 13 formally kicks off a new ministry year for St. Mark's. The beginning of August has always been an exciting time to me (Rachel). When I was younger, I never could sleep the night before school started – I knew the year would be new and different, and I was beyond excited. Turns out as an adult, I'm no different. I am so excited to see what this year will bring! Our program may look a little different than in years past, and that is OK! From launching our new Unity program for 4th-7th grades, to youth group having one Sunday per month that we split by ages, to meeting once a month at the Sanctuary campus – it'll be an adventure and we can't wait to see where it takes us! See you for Sunday School (10-11 a.m.) in the Wesley House and youth group (4-6 p.m.) in the Wesley House or at the Sanctuary Campus! Have a program or event you would love to see in our youth program!? Contact me or Spencer!

SUMMER RECAP

Whew, what a summer! I felt like I never stopped, and I loved every minute of hanging out with you all. We kicked off the summer with a great Middle School Mission, with the theme "At the Well." Sixth- through eighth-grade students participated in local missions and fellowship and some awesome worship led by Pastor Kevin. Our high school students got their chance to participate in mission at Sierra Service Project, serving on the Navajo Nation, where they got a letter from Bishop Carlo! That was a really special experience that we will not soon forget. Finally, we wrapped this summer up with a phenomenal trip to Florida for Youth 2023. Twenty-six students and five chaperones met up with about 2,200 of our closest friends for amazing worship, workshops, concerts and of course the beach! Wow. Reading that here, I understand why I am so tired! What was your favorite part of the summer?

YOUTH 2023

Thanks for the great week in Florida, friends! **Save the date** for our Thank-You BBQ for the congregation: Sunday, Sept. 17. We need you all there!



August Youth Birthdays

Aug. 12—**Velasco**

Aug. 18—**Jay R Trejo**



News from the Desert Southwest Annual Conference

Bishop Carlo Rapanut called the 39th session of the Desert Southwest Annual Conference to order the morning of June 15 in Mesa. St. Mark's was represented by Don Booth, Kelly Deyoe, Brenda Hunter, Diane James, Rachel Moser and Josh Smith as your elected lay delegates, as well as our three pastors Rev. Lynn Bartlow, Rev. Stuart Salvatierra, and Kim Ogle. Alberta Farnsworth was there by virtue of her position as conference lay leader. Those attending the conference from St. Mark's were able to sit with Zach Rhein, the lay delegate from Sanctuary, as well as with Rev. Kevin Lester, and start to get acquainted.

As you know, Rev. Lynn Bartlow and Pastor Kim Ogle were re-appointed to St. Mark's. Rev. Kevin Lester joins us to serve as the Sanctuary Campus pastor. We said a fond farewell to Pastor Stuart, who went on to serve Lakeview UMC in Sun City. The conference also recognized and celebrated the merger of St. Mark's and Sanctuary UMCs along with other church starts.

At this year's DSAC we were trying to define who we are at both the conference and local church levels. The theme of the conference was #WeAre: Wrestling, Engaging, Rising. We grappled with our past harassment and discrimination against pastors who identify as female, minority, and LGBTQ. The conference addressed the issues and how we will right those wrongs going forward, which needs to include education and a continuous examination of how we continue to be biased. The commitment was formalized in a Culture Covenant that we are to share with our congregations and can be found at <https://tinyurl.com/CultureCovenant-DSAC>.

We passed resolutions that will guide our actions. We resolved to be deliberate in including LGBTQ+ people in leadership positions at all levels from the local church up through the conference hierarchy; we supported the removal of discriminatory language in our Book of Discipline such as the prohibition against ordaining "self-avowed practicing homosexuals"; and we approved supporting the Central Conferences (United Methodist Churches outside of the United States) via the Christmas Covenant, which allows more flexibility in ministry depending on the cultural context.

We listened to stories from transgender and nonbinary people and others who struggle to be seen as they are, and we learned how using their preferred pronouns helps them to feel like they are recognized. It is respectful to use alternate pronouns like they/theirs when an individual asks. We also need to think about using words that do not indicate gender, like siblings instead of brother and sister, or spouse instead of husband or wife.

We addressed other issues affecting our society by passing resolutions that state Christian Nationalism is incompatible with both the United States Constitution and our United Methodist heritage; that affirm the United Methodist stand against capital punishment and ask us to write to our governors to commute all death sentences; and that we work toward net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. The final resolution passed asked those who intend to leave the United Methodist Church to step away from positions of leadership within the church.

Kelly Deyoe was the guest speaker for the laity session on Thurs-

day morning that centered on reaching out to the community. Kelly delivered a reprise of his sermon on evangelism given at St. Mark's. Speakers and videos highlighted conference-wide, laity-led service projects that reach out into the community and can also provide a platform for talking about why we do what we do as well as talking about God.

We approved a conference budget (just over \$5.5 million) for the next year, which is paid for by our apportionments. The budget includes administration costs, as well as funding for conference ministries such as Justa Center and denomination-wide ministries including UMCOR disaster relief and aid for refugees and scholarships. St. Mark's apportionments are the fourth-largest item in our church budget.

New church starts such as Iglesia Alien-to and Fresh Expressions were celebrated. It is good to be reminded of these celebrations because we also acknowledged the closure of a number of

churches. Bishop Rapanut offered us a new way to think about church closures – not as failures, but instead to think of them as having faithfully completed their tasks. The faithful completions included Primera Iglesia, City Square Church, San Pedro Valley UMC and Spirit Song.

Whenever there was a pause for vote counting, we watched videos that shared work done by our various partners in ministry such as United Methodist Historically Black Colleges and UM Global Ministries (which taught us about its work in health and humanitarian relief). We participated in a couple of mission projects: writing postcards with prayers to be sent to all of the United Methodist conferences and participating in a prayer run/walk exercise one morning.

We were greeted one morning with a bag of candy handed to each of us by the youth who accompanied their parents to the conference. It was a joy to see Kate Bartlow among those handing out the treats. Worship at the conference is always special, but it was heartwarming to see Rev. Kevin Lester share a high-five with his son after being commissioned as a Provisional Elder during the Ordination Service.

We also looked to the future. We were surprised that DSAC will be doing a new thing, and rotating the Annual Conference meeting to places outside the Phoenix area. Next year's Annual Conference will be in Tucson! In addition, we learned the delegates elected to attend General Conference in 2020 will be representing us in 2024. If necessary, there will be a special General Conference in 2026, with the next regularly scheduled assembly in 2028.

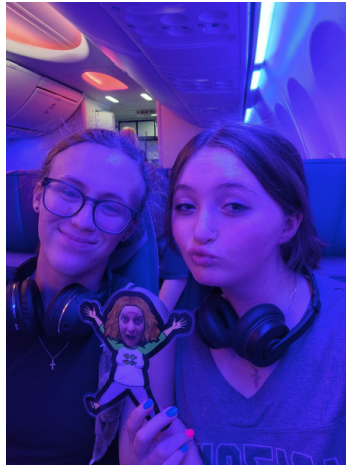
We accomplished a lot at the DSAC and if you want to know more details on the happenings ask any of your delegation or learn more at the conference website: <https://dscumc.org/annual-conference>.

Respectfully submitted,
Kelly Deyoe
Brenda Hunter



Scenes from Youth 2023, July 23-28 in Orlando, Florida

Early the morning of July 23, 26 youth and five adults set out from St. Mark's to experience Youth 2023! They traveled with a group of more than 130 from the Desert Southwest Conference and had a wonderful time of growing in faith and fellowship. A big thank you to everyone who made this trip possible for our students!



PRAYER CORNER

We are a praying community at St. Mark's. You may submit prayer requests by email to prayerchain@umcstmarks.org or on our website at <https://umcstmarks.org/prayer-request>.

Glenn Brechbiel

Tom and Holly Celmer

April DuBoce

Ed and Jayne Hendricks

Ann Henson

Ron Hill

Tom and Dalene Peters

Vernon and Shirley Stedronsky

Rev. Laszlo Vega

Mark and Wanda Wagner

Teachers and students

returning to school

CONDOLENCES

We extend our heartfelt sympathy and prayers to ...

... The friends and family of Mary Sanders, who died July 16. Her husband, Jim, died a few years ago. Their son, Darren, plans to bring Mary's ashes back to Tucson for her service and to be buried next to Jim. We will announce a date when we have it.



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

Email:

info@umcstmarks.org

Website:

www.umcstmarks.org

Lead Pastor:

Rev. Lynn Bartlow

**Associate Pastor/
Sanctuary Campus Pastor:**

Rev. Kevin Lester

**Christian Formation
and Outreach Pastor:**

Kim Ogle

Sunday Worship

Magee Campus
8:30 a.m. and 10 a.m.

Livestreamed

10 a.m.

umcstmarks.org/live-worship

YouTube:

UMC St. Mark's AZ

Music Opportunities

All are welcome to join the St. Mark's Celebration Singers and Chancel Choir to sing God's praises, enhance the worship experience, and create fellowship through song. Both choirs sing three Sundays a month on the Magee Campus and prepare special music during the Lenten and Advent seasons.

- Celebration Singers offer Southern gospel/folk music, rehearsing from 6:15 to 7:25 p.m. Wednesdays in the Choir Room, Magee Campus. For more info, please contact Jane Anderson at Jane@umcstmarks.org.
- Chancel Choir offers moderate/challenging traditional choral music, rehearsing 7:30 to 9 p.m. Wednesdays in the sanctuary (worship space), Magee Campus. For more info, please contact Jordan Shomper at Jordan@umcstmarks.org.
- The Bells of St. Mark's rehearse 6:30 - 8 p.m. Mondays, Magee Campus, ringing the third Sunday of each month at both services. For more info, please contact JoAnn Luther at ([see church directory](#)).

Come join in the fellowship, and celebrate God's praises!

A Note From Jane ...

Martin Luther said it best: "Next to the Word of God, music deserves the highest praise. The gift of language combined with the gift of song was given to man that he should proclaim the Word of God through music."

If you haven't already met me, I'm the lady at the organ on Sunday mornings. I'm so happy to be a part of this congregation; thank you all so much for the warm welcome. I love making music for the Lord and also love sharing it with others, and with that, I'd like to invite singers of all abilities to join the Celebration Singers. This group enjoys singing upbeat music, loves to have fun and make up a great "family" within the church. If you've ever considered singing in a choir, plan to attend our first rehearsal at **6:15 p.m. Wednesday, Aug. 23 in the Magee Campus choir room**. If evening rehearsals don't work for you, please contact me and we can consider a daytime rehearsal schedule so you can join us on Sunday mornings.

I'm also looking for instrumentalists who would be willing to accompany the choir/piano or organ for selected anthems. *Jane Anderson, Organist and Celebration Singers Director*

Reflections

Choices and Preferences

What do you listen to in the car? I splurge on paid radio, and our presets are saved for our favorite 15 channels. However, there are only a few channels that we listen to when my kids are in the car. I am that mom who knows the pop songs that all the cool kids know. I know Victoria's Secret, I know what happened Last Night, and I know not one, but two songs that invite me to Calm Down. I've also learned all the songs from the Disney Channel. From animated films to the descendants and zombie movies, I've got it covered.

After they leave the car, I get to choose my own music! 90s country, show tunes, 80s hits, and even Elvis and the Beatles are the presets that I choose.

Listening to their music seems like such a little thing, but it is a big thing. I set aside my preference, and I let them have control. I set aside my preference for music and allow my children to choose the songs that will speak to them. I set aside my preference, knowing that my time will come. Paul writes to the church in Corinth that he sets aside his preference so that others might hear the gospel. To the Jews, he becomes a Jew. To those under the law, he becomes under the law. To those who are weak, he becomes weak. He does all of this for the sake of the gospel. He does all of this so that others may hear the gospel of Christ and come to believe (see 1 Corinthians 9:19-23). This is our task. Our task is to spread the gospel in any way possible so that others might believe in Christ.

As we prepare to relaunch worship on the Sanctuary Campus, we are choosing a specific style of worship that may be different from your preference. Contemporary music may speak to you less than choirs and organs, but it will reach other people who aren't interested in traditional worship. It increases the number of people we can reach with the gospel at this time and place.

As we prepare to relaunch worship on the Sanctuary Campus, it is essential for us to have a critical mass in the service from the very first week. As we invite the community to join us for worship, they cannot come to an empty space. We need people willing to set aside their preferences to create a welcoming environment for new people to enter. We need people who will set aside their preferences to allow others to connect with God authentically through contemporary worship.

Can you be one of those people? Would you consider attending contemporary worship on the Sanctuary Campus for the next six months? Would you set aside your preference for both place and style so that others can meet Christ through our worship? Volunteer to greet or serve the community in other ways, or commit to show up, to give to the church with your presence.

Let's join Paul in sharing the gospel with anyone who will listen. Let's join Paul and set aside our preferences so that Christ may be glorified.

*See you soon,
Pastor Lynn*