

EXPERIENCING CHRISTMAS

Things just look, smell, and taste different during the **Advent and Christmas seasons**. These differences are a sign to us that God is about to do something radical and different. During this Advent season, we will explore the sights, sounds, tastes, and other signs of Christmas and how they point to the coming miracle of Christ's birth. We will light the Advent candles, experience moving music, and be invited to use our senses to experience Christmas together.

- ◆ **Nov. 26:** "Do you **see** what I see?" We moved from anticipation to expectation as we began the season with HOPE.
- ◆ **Dec. 3:** "Do you **hear** what I hear?" We will celebrate the importance of music and hearing the cry of our neighbor as we light the candle of PEACE.
- ◆ **Dec. 10:** "Do you **taste** what I taste?" We will celebrate the commonality of our need to eat and ponder this as holy, lighting the candle of LOVE.
- ◆ **Dec. 17:** "Do you **feel** what I feel?" We will ponder the intimacy and the responsibility of touch as we light the candle of JOY.

Christmas Eve Services

Sunday, Dec. 24

This year, Christmas Eve falls on a Sunday, presenting even more opportunities to worship on this special day. Each service will be different, so plan to attend in the morning and again at an afternoon or evening service. On Christmas Eve and every Sunday in Advent before that, be sure and stop by our "selfie gallery" that the youth have built in Room 8/9. It's a great opportunity to take photos with your family and friends while reinforcing the themes of Advent.

Magee Campus

Lessons and Carols — 8:30 and 10 a.m.

Features a reading of the Christmas story beginning with the prophets. Music will include congregational hymns, special music by Hannah Eblen, and more. Our youth will lead the 10 a.m. service, *which will also be livestreamed on YouTube*. Then at 11 a.m., a soup lunch will be offered for anyone who would like to attend. It's not a true potluck lunch so if you're willing to bring a pot of soup, let the office know! Child care will be available for each service, but Sunday School children are encouraged to attend worship with their families.

Blessing of the Children — 4 p.m.

Features an interactive telling of the Christmas story and ends with the pastor's blessing of children and families who would like a special blessing. Children will receive a special ornament to take home.

Traditional Candlelight — 8 p.m.

Led by the Celebration Singers, ending with Silent Night. *8 p.m. will be livestreamed in addition to in-person.*

Traditional Candlelight — 10 p.m.

Led by the Chancel Choir, ending with Communion and Silent Night.

Sanctuary Campus

Sunday Worship — 10 a.m.

Join us for our typical morning worship flow, as our Praise Band leads us in song, we light the Advent candles, our pastor preaches, and we pray together. *A recording will be posted to the Sanctuary Facebook page.*

Modern Service — 5 p.m.

Blessing of the Children service features a "no-rehearsal pageant" for our kids of all ages and ends with the pastor's blessing of children and families who would like a special blessing. Children will receive a special ornament to take home and we will share the light of this night as we sing Silent Night. *A recording will be posted to the Sanctuary Facebook page.*

'Unplugged' Service — 7 p.m.

A service with classic carols, responsive readings, and a message. It will end with a candlelight singing of Silent Night. Children who are present can also be blessed and receive a special ornament to take home.



Adult Spiritual Growth

Faith is a journey!

ALL REGISTRATION IS ONLINE AT <https://umcstmarks.org/classes/adult-spiritual-growth-opportunities>. Or sign up at the Adult Spiritual Growth board on the Magee Campus patio Sunday mornings. Please pre-register and acquire books from your favorite resource. (<https://bookshop.org> supports local bookstores.)



Open Minds Book Group This book discussion group meets via Zoom on a Friday in the latter half of each month from 9-10:30 a.m. New members are welcome! Please register online to obtain the Zoom link. Led by Celeste Pardee and Ann Reaban. We invite you to join us Dec. 15 to discuss *The Book of Lost Names*, by Kristin Harmel in remembrance of the Holocaust. Inspired by true events, this historical novel follows Eva, a graduate student who leaves Paris in 1942 after the Nazis arrest her father, a Polish Jew. Finding refuge in a small town in the free zone, she helps the Resistance by forging identity documents for Jewish children fleeing to Switzerland. But erasing people comes with a price, so Eva finds a way to preserve the real names of the children who are too young to remember their true identities. The records she keeps in the Book of Lost Names become more vital when the Resistance cell she works with is betrayed. This is a tale of enduring hope, survival, and heroism in the midst of adversity.

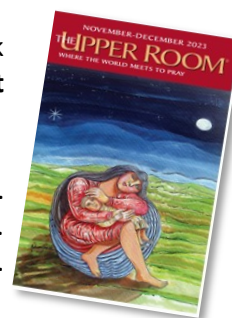
Adult Sunday School - Experiencing Christmas Advent study (began Nov. 19 with no class Nov. 26). 9:30 a.m. Sundays in Room 17/18 and via Zoom. Please register online or contact a study leader to obtain Zoom connection information. Led by Rick Farnsworth and Carl Harrison.

Seekers Sunday Bible Study – Book of Exodus. 11:15 a.m. Sundays in Room 17/18 and by Zoom. Seekers will begin a study on the book of Exodus on Dec. 3. If you would like to join us, please bring your favorite Bible and a curious mind. Please register online or contact a study leader to obtain Zoom connection information. Led by Brenda Hunter and Kelly Deyoe. NO MEETING DEC. 24 OR 31.

Wednesday Morning Study - Experiencing Christmas Advent study (began Nov. 29). 10-11:30 a.m. in Room 17/18 and by Zoom. Please pre-register to obtain Zoom connection info if you are new. Led by Marcia Rostad.

Bible and a Bite Bring a sack lunch and the latest copy of "The Upper Room" to discuss and break bread together just as Jesus and his disciples broke bread in the upper room. 12:30 p.m. Thursdays at Sanctuary Campus. Chris Shafer, (call church office).

Roadrunner Book Club 9:30 a.m. Wednesdays at Roadrunner Coffee, Linda Vista and Thornydale. What started as a pastor's Bible study has evolved into a book club that reads a little of everything. Participants enjoy terrific fellowship. The group began the *Experiencing Christmas* study on Nov. 29. For more information, contact Carol Witherspoon, (call church office).



Theology Pub 6 p.m. fourth Wednesdays at rotating locations. Drink and think (and eat) while discussing life and faith. We will meet Dec. 27 at Chili's in Arizona Pavilions. Contact Pastor Kevin for more info, kevin@umcstmarks.org.

Advent devotionals are available wherever you usually pick up your monthly devotionals on either St. Mark's campus. From Cokesbury, it is simply titled "Advent 2023" by Rev. Sam McGlothlin. Suggested donation is \$1.

Christmas Offering 2023



We invite you to give generously to the work of St. Mark's to support education in our community. We partner with two local elementary schools that are both economically challenged. Nash Elementary School and Estes Elementary School appreciate the ways we help them educate our children through giving school supplies, gift cards, and food through the Community Food Bank, giving our time through volunteering in classrooms or at special events like their fall Trunk or Treat, and supporting them in countless other ways.

Our Christmas offering this year will be split between our work at Nash (75%) and Estes (25%). Look for a special email in your inbox the first of December with the complete information for this offering, including a link to give online. Christmas offering envelopes will not be sent by mail, but you can find them in our worship spaces on Sunday.

Thanks for your support of these vital ministries!



In the Bleak of Mid-Winter: A Service of Longing
Christmas can be a painful time for some. It may be the first Christmas without a loved family member. It may be a time that has always been difficult. World events can weigh us down and rob us of our joy.

The constant refrain on the radio and television shouts to us about the happiness of the season, about getting together with family and friends, and it reminds many people of what they have lost or never had. The anguish of broken relationships, the insecurity of unemployment, the weariness of ill health, the pain of isolation, the heaviness of news headlines – all these can make one feel very alone in the midst of celebrating and spending going on around us. We need the space and time to acknowledge our sadness and concern and be reminded we are not alone.

St. Mark's offers a special "Service of Longing" at 6 p.m. Monday, Dec. 18 in the Magee Campus sanctuary to acknowledge our feelings. Join others in sharing and hearing prayers, Scripture and music that acknowledge God's presence with those who mourn and those who struggle.

FREE Photos with Santa!

Come to Sanctuary Campus from 2-4 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 9 for a special family Christmas event! We'll have crafts and cookie decorating and snacks and the big man himself. That's right, Santa Claus!

Even better, kids of all ages will be able to tell him what they hope for Christmas and have their picture taken with him, at no cost. All are welcome, so tell your friends and neighbors!

Can you help out at the event? Sign up here <https://umcstmarks.breezechms.com/form/92b416>

Adult Spiritual Growth

Faith is a journey!

Advent Study Classes

Advent 2023 has begun and ASG is pleased to announce several studies of our Advent book, ***Experiencing Christmas - Christ in the Sights and Sounds of Advent*** by Matt Rawle. The primary content of this book is part of Advent sermons while the study itself is being discussed in several classes throughout the four weeks leading up to Christmas.



- ✦ **Adult Sunday School** (more info on page 2)
- ✦ **Wednesday Morning Study** (more info on page 2)
- ✦ **Roadrunner Book Club** (more info on page 2)
- ✦ **Wednesday evening group** (began Nov. 29), 6 p.m. at Sanctuary Campus. Contact Kerry Powers at (call church office).
- ✦ **Monday morning group** (began Nov. 27), 10:30 a.m. at Mountain View Retirement Village, 7900 N. La Cañada Drive, second floor. No book required. Led by Marge Sogn.
- ✦ **Monday evening group** (began Nov. 27), 7 p.m. at the home of Marge and Bob Sogn in Saddlebrooke. Call the church office for address.

Holiday Hours

The church office will be CLOSED Monday, Dec. 25 and Tuesday, Dec. 26 to allow our pastors and staff some time with their loved ones after the "busy-ness" of this season. On Dec. 27—29, the office will be open 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. The Early Childhood Center will be closed Dec. 25—Jan. 1.

United Women in Faith Craft & Bake Sale

Don't miss the annual Craft & Bake Sale sponsored by St. Mark's UWF. Stop by the church library after both services on Sunday, Dec. 3 to do a little Christmas shopping and pick up some home-baked goodies. Money from the fundraiser supports mission projects.

Christmas Poinsettias/ Ornaments Order Form

To place a poinsettia or a special ornament in the church for Christmas, please fill out the form below and return it to the church office with your payment. **Orders and payment should be received in the office by Dec. 10. Checks should be made out for \$16 to St. Mark's UMC with "poinsettia/ornament" written in the memo line.** Keep the top portion of this form for your information.

Poinsettias will be in 6-inch pots and wrapped in foil. They will be ordered from a local florist. Ornaments will decorate a tree in the sanctuary. Names will be listed in the church bulletin Dec. 17. Poinsettias/ornaments are available Dec. 17 – 24. You may order online at

<https://umcstmarks.breezechms.com/form/07ea07>

Cut here



Your Name: _____

Phone number: _____

Email: _____

Poinsettia: ☐ Ornament: ☐

In Honor of ☐ **OR** In Memory of ☐

Name: _____

This order form, along with your \$16 payment, should be received in the office by Dec. 10. Checks should be made out to St. Mark's UMC with "poinsettia/ornament" written in the memo line.

You Are Invited!

St. Mark's United Women in Faith will meet at 10 a.m. Tuesday, Dec. 12 in the Fellowship Hall for their annual Christmas party and potluck luncheon. Lunch will start around 11:30.



The program will include installation of officers, as well as music provided by our own LaVerne Lawrence. If it is not convenient for you to bring a food dish for the potluck meal, please plan to come anyway. There is always an abundance of food, and we very much want to share Christmas greetings with you. If you have questions or need a ride, contact UWF President Clara Campbell (see church directory).

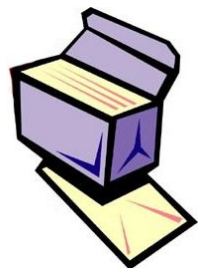


United
Women
in Faith

All women are welcome. You do not have to be a member of any church or of United Women in Faith.

Year-End Notice for Donors

Please wait until you've received your year-end statement of giving from St. Mark's to file your income tax return. Some donors may not be able to deduct certain contributions if they file a tax return before receiving their church contribution statement. For contributions to be deducted in 2023, they must be received **at the church** by Dec. 31, 2023. This means that a check deposited in the church offering in January of 2024 cannot be deducted in 2023, even if it is backdated to 2023. This also includes online donations that are not deposited into our account prior to Dec. 31, 2023. Please plan a couple of days ahead when making an electronic contribution for this year. One exception—checks that are written, mailed **and postmarked** in 2023 are deductible in 2023 even though not received until 2024. Thank you!



Questions Linger About Pastor Compensation

By Lois Britton, St. Mark's Bookkeeper

There was interest in pastor compensation at our recent Church Conference, so as the person who works with numbers, I'd like to offer additional background information.

Referencing the Conference's Equitable Compensation Form (<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1xLsMimsX-CR9QldUGoUprGmPm-b6N5Ea/view>) will show that we have three basic categories of pastors: Elders in Full Connection, Provisional or Associate Members, and Full-Time Local Pastors. We have one in each category on our staff.

Referencing the above form will also indicate that the compensation packages for all three of our pastors are well over the amount their years of experience require. As for why St. Mark's pays more than the required minimum, we have come to expect the very best and a large church will require more from cleric than a small church. The average UMC in the United States has membership of 212; St. Marks has a membership of 942.

Elders in Full Connection – have earned a Master of Divinity degree and are assigned and appointed by the Cabinet (Bishop and District Superintendents). They are ordained, voting members of the annual conference and perform all the duties in the life of the church at the local and conference level.

Provisional (or Associate) Member – are in a residency program designed by the annual conference after completing seminary. They are gaining experience and fulfilling conference requirements, which takes a minimum of two years. At the end of this time, they may be ordained. (Associate Members are from non-United Methodist clergy.)

Full-time Local Pastor – are not ordained and are not required to have a Master of Divinity. They do meet conference requirements including theological study. They are licensed to perform pastoral duties in a particular church setting. They are not subject to the itineracy requirements of other United Methodist clergy.

The designations of Elder, Provisional, and Local Pastor are often used at the denominational level. At the local church, we often refer to our clergy as Associate Pastor or Lead Pastor (formerly Senior Pastor).

From the pew on Sunday, it may appear that all of our clergy are the same. They all preach, they all do baptisms and memorial services, but their experience and responsibilities are different.

Associate Pastors may have served the church in many capacities, but they often have fewer years' experience as a pastor than the Lead Pastor. Not always, some prefer a role with less responsibility or a role that concentrates on one particular area within the church. Associate Pastors preach, they teach, they administer sacraments, they lead, and they serve.

The **Lead Pastor** in a large church typically has many years of experience. While not the direct supervisor of an Associate or Local Pastor (all clergy are accountable to the Cabinet and Staff-Parish Relations Committee), the Lead Pastor is ultimately responsible for all areas of life in the church. The Lead Pastor is accountable for all of the above as well as administrative leadership in all areas of church life and function. To quote a well-known Baptist, "the buck stops here."

So much more could be said on this subject. Hopefully, this will begin to explain differences in the compensation packages that were presented at our Church Conference.

Finance Committee Report By Don Brown, Finance Committee Chair

Through Oct. 31:

	Period Activity	YTD Balance	Budget YTD	Previous YTD	Annual Budget	Annual Budget Remaining
Income	95,466	902,601	995,330	936,830	1,194,405	294,687
Expenses	95,898	967,711	1,069,132	838,058	1,291,514	324,128
Difference	(432)	(65,109)	(73,802)	98,772	(97,109)	

Year-to-date income is still down compared to 2022. Last year at this time we had collected \$936,830 by the end of October. This year we have collected \$902,601.

The treasurer's report shows less of a monthly loss in October. The difference in income and expenses was only \$432. Expenses have increased, as expected, since the addition of the Sanctuary Campus. Average monthly expenses have increased from \$93,912 to \$102,447. The average monthly income has increased from \$88,924 to \$92,262.

We still hope to make up some ground on our total yearly deficit in November and December. Our monthly average monthly deficit is \$7,067.

Generosity Campaign

To date, we have received 182 pledges totaling \$666,514.23. This is a 5 percent drop in pledges from last year's campaign. We still anticipate more pledges to be submitted in the next few weeks. These pledges are critical to our budget preparation for 2024. If you have not submitted a pledge card, we urge you to do so. Thanks to all those who have already submitted their pledges for 2024.



Missions Ministry

A Word from the Chair ...

It has been a busy month for the Missions Committee. We have sent \$1,500 donations to the remaining organizations on our list for the year – Stand Up for Kids, the Wesley Foundation (Frontera Wesley), and Our Family Services. To learn more about what these wonderful organizations do, please see the St. Mark's Missions brochure.

We just wrapped up Thanksgiving and the special offering collection in honor of that holiday. It is being split between the Tucson Refugee Ministry (75%) and the Pascua Yaqui Tribe Charitable Organization (25%).

The special offering collections for Christmas have been designated for 75% to Nash Elementary in Tucson and 25% to Estes Elementary in Marana. Please see more about these on page 3 of this newsletter.

Watch future *Messenger* newsletters for totals from these two special holiday offerings.

Mary Beth Barone, Chair

Mark your calendars! **Market on the Move** will start its sixth year of supplying 60 lbs. of prepackaged produce for still only \$10! On Jan. 6, Feb. 3, and March 2, we are open from 8-10 a.m. Then April 6, May 4 and maybe June 1 we will be open 7-9 a.m.

Come into the Magee Campus south parking lot off La Cañada; follow the signs; pay the volunteer; follow

instructions from more nice people. Your purchase will be put into your trunk, then you exit onto Magee. Any questions? Text Lenna Burnham at 305-923-5362.



For the remainder of the year, we are focusing on **holiday side dishes** in our collection for the **Northwest Food Bank at Interfaith Community Services**. This could include boxed potatoes, stuffing mix, cans of cranberry sauce or sweet potatoes, noodles, soup, canned vegetables, etc. You can bring your donations between 10 -11 a.m. Tuesdays or Saturdays to the north parking lot of the Magee Campus, or if it is more convenient, you can drop them off in the church office during its business hours.



Thank you to all who contributed to the HIV/AIDS Committee's Angel Tree for children of parents who are living with HIV.



The Sanctuary Campus Angel Tree for children at Estes Elementary School continues. Please return wrapped gifts by Dec. 10.

Many thanks to the Grimsey family for **preparing an evening meal for the Primavera Men's Shelter** in November! Their dedication to this effort over many years has made, and continues to make, an important difference!

You too can help prepare one of the monthly meals for Primavera! Whether you're part of an existing group, a family that loves to work together, a group of friends, or an individual who would like to get involved, there's a way for you to be involved. Interested in working together to prepare a warm, nutritious meal for these folks? Please call Kathy Howard, 660-441-1885, for more information.

Youth Ministry

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



Youth Group Calendar



Sundays in December

Dec 3



Dec 10



Dec 17



Dec 24

Dec 31



SWISH!

Check out the sweet basketball/pickleball court!

Our awesome court was well loved and well worn. This fall, our awesome Board of Trustees took on the task of not only resurfacing the court, but adding lines for pickleball!

Many thanks to the Trustees here at St. Mark's for re-finishing the court. I, for one can't wait to use it! I'm going to need to learn how to play pickleball!



St. Mark's Link Tree

Youth Group

Scan here to find links to our social media, this year's permission slip, our Amazon Wish List and MORE!

Youth Praise Band

6th-12th Grade Students
Dec. 30 and 31
Sanctuary Campus



It's like America's Got Talent. But without the mean judges. And everyone is in. So I guess it's nothing like it. Except for the talent! Rehearsal will be Dec. 30, and we will be at the 10 a.m. service on Dec. 31 at the Sanctuary Campus! Questions? Email rachel@umcstmarks.org.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Goosechase in the Park

December 3

1:15-4:30

Join us as we travel to Ft. Lowell Park for a super fun Goose Chase with other churches from the South District. Come take some silly pictures, eat some delicious snacks, and have a ton of fun in the mean time. We will meet at the Magee campus at 1:15. Need a ride from Sanctuary campus? Contact Rachel.

Service Sunday

December 10

4-6, Magee Campus

Time for another Service Sunday! Meet from 4-6 at the Magee campus. We will be helping to fulfill the Angel Tree benefitting Estes Elementary. Don't worry...there's always a twist...come find out what it is this time!

Chopped! Gingerbread Edition, Season 2

December 19

4-6, Magee Campus

Last year's gingerbread house chopped was a hoot. We had cheez-its, hot Cheetos, all kinds of crazy ingredients on our gingerbread houses, trains, and villages. Come see what crazy ingredients and twists we have in store this year!

Christmas Eve

Youth lead Lessons and Carols

December 24

10:00 AM, Magee Campus

This year, the youth will be leading the 10AM Lessons and Carols at the Magee Campus. This is one of my favorite services, and bonus— there is a soup luncheon afterwards! If you did not get a chance to sign up to help at Sunday School, contact Rachel to find a spot today.

Winter Camp

MLK Weekend

Mingus Mountain

6th-12th Grade Students

Sign up today for this year's Winter Camp at Mingus Mountain! We will leave Friday afternoon and return Monday afternoon. We are hoping for snow, and guaranteed fun! Cost is \$75 each, and scholarships are always available!

Confirmation 2024

8th-12th Grade

Confirmation for 2024 is scheduled and planned in a new format this year, so that students from both campuses can attend. For more information, contact Rachel, or go to the Sign-Up-Palooza!

ADVENT 2024

SELFIE GALLERY

EXPERIENCING Christmas SELFIE GALLERY

Advent is a time of anticipation. A time of preparing for Christmas, and it is my favorite season in the church! This year, in Youth Sunday School, we will be using Experiencing Christmas curriculum. Not only will we be learning along side the congregation, we will have a really fun Selfie Gallery that goes along with the lessons! We are inviting the congregation to come experience our Selfie Gallery, so I will need help greeting and assisting. And of course, I want you to take AMAZING pictures yourself! There is also a sign up to help on Christmas Eve.

SIERRA SERVICE PROJECT

We got our SSP dates! So exciting!! We will be serving on the Navajo Nation from July 7-13. Our fun trip will be immediately after our work week this year, with the exact adventure and dates to be determined soon!



Students currently in grades 8-12 are invited to attend Sierra Service Project. St. Mark's has participated in SSP since 1985. If you are interested in being a part of this tradition, sign up today! See the Sign-Up-Palooza website below to sign up.

Sign-Up-Palooza!

St. Mark's Youth is full of so many opportunities! Here is a link to everything that is currently available to sign up for (Selfie Gallery, Praise Band, Winter Camp, Confirmation, SSP, and Middle School Mission). There is also a great space for parents to sign up to help out now and then!

<https://tinyurl.com/Sign-Up-Palooza-24>

December Birthdays

Nathan Peters	12/01
Landon Tate	12/19
Micah Mitchell	12/23
Norah Mosher	12/27





MAGEE CAMPUS
1431 W MAGEE RD

KIDS NIGHT OUT DROP AND SHOP

**FRIDAY, DROP OFF AT 5:30 PM
DEC 1 PICK UP AT 8:30PM**

SIGN UP HERE



**Polar Express
Movie & Activities
Cookies with Santa
Advent Crafts
Pizza dinner**

St Mark's
United Methodist

New Member Class! New Member Class!

**DECEMBER 2 is the
next New Member Class!**

**New Member Class
DECEMBER 2, 2023
9 a.m. - 1 p.m.**

RSVP to
Tricia@umcstmarks.org
OR use the QR Code!




Membership 101
Registration




Help Wanted

We are looking for folks to serve in these often-forgotten areas of the church. Read the short description and let Tricia know if you want more information! (tricia@umcstmarks.org)

Christian Formation Team — Help dream and implement ways we connect more with God and one another through formation events and opportunities for children, youth and adults!

Worship Design Team — Help us visually connect with God through our decor and altar designs.

Church Care and Hospitality — Help us connect with one another as we enjoy a cup of coffee after services, as we gather after a memorial service, or as we come onto campus for worship each Sunday.

Sunday Coffee Time Committee — Come a little early or stay late once a month to welcome everyone, replenish cookies, and/or help clean up. Takes 30 minutes or less.



Invitations – Please Come!!

- ✦ **Join us at Soul Station** for a fun-filled Advent season exploring Christmas traditions through carols and Scripture. For the first three Wednesdays of December, Rev. Jeanne Jones will lead us. We will share Christmas stories and Holy Communion. Each week you will be invited to bring something to share. On Dec. 6, please bring a favorite Christmas card to share around the table. A light meal will be served at 5:30 p.m. Arizona time, and the program will begin at 6:10 p.m. Bring a friend. All are welcome.
- ✦ **The Mark-a-ritas will continue their longtime holiday tradition of gathering for a Christmas Tea Potluck** at 6 p.m. Monday, Dec. 11 in the Fellowship Hall. Bring a dish to share (table service provided) and enjoy an evening of fun and fellowship. Kathy Narney has again volunteered to provide festive dinner music on her harp! (We'll take a free-will offering for Kathy, if you'd like to be prepared.) Wearing your church nametag is highly encouraged, as it helps us all get better acquainted. Continuing another tradition, we'll collect children's books to donate to Interfaith Community Services, where books are provided for the entertainment of children during their parents' appointments – and they're allowed to take a book home to keep. Books can be new or gently used. But you're welcome to attend, even if you don't bring a book to donate! RSVPs are requested, so we can set up and plan accordingly. Please email or text Sandi Heilman to indicate your plans to attend (swheilman@comcast.net). *The Mark-a-ritas is an informal social group for the women of St. Mark's (both campuses). We have no agenda, dues, or slate of officers. It is open to all who are interested in fellowshiping with other women from the church.*
- ✦ **Save the date! Sonoran Bells will present their 2023 Holiday Concert titled "Hallelujah!"** at 7:30 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 16, in the Magee Campus sanctuary. Bring a friend and get in the holiday spirit!



Church & Society

UMC Special Sunday Offerings

This year our Covenant Council voted to reinstate two of the UMC Special Sunday Offerings at St. Mark's: Peace with Justice and Human Relations

Sundays. These offerings support social justice organizations and concerns and are coordinated by our Church & Society Committee. They are separate from and in addition to our general giving and existing holiday and missions offerings.

Our next special offering is Human Relations Day, which will be celebrated Jan. 14. On that day we will come together with United Methodists around the world to help bridge the gap between church and community. This special offering is taken each January on a Sunday around Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday in honor of his vision to build "the beloved community." Human Relations Day Special Offering supports neighborhood ministries through community developers, the United Methodist Voluntary Services, and the Youth Offender Rehabilitation Program. Such ministries give us the opportunity to make a lasting difference in our world. We hope you will give generously!



Smoking Guns?

Merriam-Webster defines a "smoking gun" as something that provides proof or evidence. Consider these:

- ⇒ A mother finds that she starts worrying about her young children's safety even before they reach the school drop-off.
- ⇒ A child watches televised footage of a school shooting and experiences ongoing nightmares.
- ⇒ A witness to gunfire in the neighborhood becomes fearful of going outside.
- ⇒ A mass shooting survivor can no longer attend large gatherings without suffering panic attacks.

These and other much more graphic illustrations are "smoking guns" pointing to an unaddressed, lamentable tragedy of senseless and correctable gun violence in the United States. How long can we, as followers of Jesus, turn away from taking action to solve a monstrous problem of suffering? Are we willing to let gun violence be a normal part of our lives?

Every day, 120 Americans are killed with guns. Visit Everytown for Gun Safety, <https://www.everytown.org>, to learn more about this problem and what you can do.

November 15, Day **319** of 2023

	As of 11/15	As of 09/25
So Far This Year in the U.S.:		
Mass Shooting Incidents (4 or more victims killed/wounded in each)	603	518
Children (0-11) killed by gunfire	259	223
Teens (12-17) killed by gunfire	1238	1067
All Youth (0-17) injured by gunfire	4081	3504
Unintentional Shootings	1381	1177

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

LOVED ONES IN THE MILITARY

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

Hank Bautzmann, son of Nancy Bautzmann
Alex Boettcher, grandson of Carla & Paul Boettcher
Jacob W. Boettcher, grandson of Carla & Paul Boettcher
Jon Chytka, nephew of Donna Severson
Zachary Dojaquez, grandson of Donna Severson
Patrick Emmett, son of Julie Wiens
Mike Freeman, son of Ken & Ann Freeman
Matthew Hughey, son of Julie & Billy Morrison
 and grandson of Joyce Flick
Rachel Kester, daughter of Don Kester & Ruth Kester
Don Lauver, Son-in-law of Linda Connolly
Allison Shafer Ledesma and Teo Ledesma, daughter
 and son-in-law of Bill and Chris Shafer
Sam and Nathan Lennarson, grandsons of John &
 Sherri Lennarson

Chad Long, grandson of Pat Long
Jake Newton, son of Robert & Cheri Newton
John O'Regan, husband of Ashley O'Regan
 and grandson-in-law of Janet Krug
Brian Osborn, pastor in the DSW Conference
Philip Pelphrey, son of Ruth & Gary Pelphrey
William Putt, son of Harold & Susan Putt
Geoffrey Shafe, grandson of Mary Langemeier
Clint Staschke, son-in-law of Cliff & June Young
Jacob Szczygiel, grandson of Joyce Flick
Michael and Karisa Szczygiel, son-in-law and daughter
 of Joyce Flick
Brianna Walker, granddaughter of Barbara Fradenburgh;
 niece of Joan Fradenburgh



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

Dave Camp

Ruth Machtley

Helen Swanson

Mary Ann Glazier

Lillian Porter

Mary Wald

George and Darcy Halvorson

Greta Roberts

Cal Young

Susan Zimmerman



St. Mark's UMC
 Sanctuary Campus
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 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

Sanctuary Campus Pastor:

Rev. Kevin Lester

Associate Pastor:

Kim Ogle

Sunday Worship

Magee Campus

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

Sanctuary Campus

10 a.m.

Livestreamed

10 a.m.

umcstmarks.org/live-worship

YouTube:

UMC St. Mark's AZ

December Concerts

The St. Mark's Concert Series has two fabulous performances to end 2023. Here's what's in store for the remainder of the year to get you in the mood for Christmas.

- * Concert Series veterans Elena Galbraith, soprano, Sandy Schwoebel, flute, and Marie Sierra, piano, of **Nota Bene** will bring the melodies and joy of the holiday season on **Dec. 10**.



- * And 2023 will culminate in our combined choirs' **Christmas Cantata**, featuring the Tucson Arizona Boys Chorus and a chamber orchestra, led by Jordan Shomper, on **Dec. 17**. This concert will also feature a commissioned work, written by C.J. Madsen, specifically for our St. Mark's combined chorus and accompanying ensemble.



- * Kicking off the new year are the **Blue Prairie Dogs on Jan. 14**. No stranger to St. Mark's, Pete Fine is a member of this "spicy, southwestern folk" ensemble! Please come out to enjoy this classic country, western, folk, and soft rock music.

All concerts take place at 3 p.m. in the Magee Campus sanctuary.

Christmas Eve Courtyard Music

Please join us for holiday music in the Magee Campus courtyard before the 8 p.m. service and between the 8 p.m. and 10 p.m. services on Christmas Eve!



1431 W. Magee Road
Tucson AZ 85704-2116
info@umcstmarks.org

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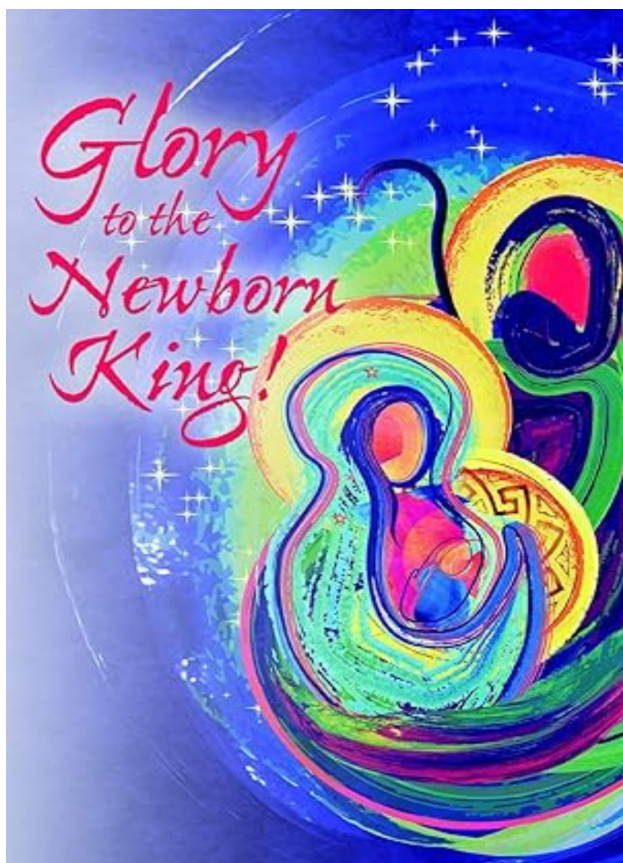


Open hearts. Open minds. Open doors.

The people of The United Methodist Church®

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Reflections



Christmas blessings from the staff at St. Mark's!

Jane &

Lise Gully

Lynn Rachel

Tricia

Lora

Emmal

Kevin
Lois
Johnny
Spencer
Jordan
Tony
Zach

Janet

Sherry ☺

Jim