

Messenger

Volume 64, Number 1
January 2024

We gather, connect, and serve so all may experience the love of Christ

St Mark's
United Methodist

New Year, New Opportunities

The new year energizes each of us to reflect on how we can give back to St. Mark's and our community. This month, we have the chance to not only reflect but act on how we can serve in new ways. On Jan. 21, we will kick off a new "Discover" tool where you will be able to learn about all the volunteer opportunities we have at St. Mark's. Whether you have volunteered here for many years or are new to our church, our discovery tool will help match your gifts and interests. Questions? Contact Church Care Coordinator Tricia Chester, tricia@umcstmarks.org.



This Month, God Moves into the Neighborhood



What happened after the incarnation? What happened after Jesus was born in the manger in Bethlehem? Why, God moved into the neighborhood! Join us this month as we focus on the encounters between God-in-the-flesh and the people from the neighborhood. We will read the stories of his cousin John, of the disciples who joined him in his ministry, a man he met in the temple, and Simon's family. We will ponder how these stories help us find God in our own neighborhood! See you in worship this month!

2024 Brings Change in Faces

With a new year, we have a change in elected leadership here at St. Mark's. We offer a big THANK YOU for these leaders who are ending their time as chairs of their committees. Please express your gratitude to them next time you see them or send them a card of thanks! Being a chairperson is often a thankless job, and we appreciate all they have done to serve Christ and the church in this way.

- Marcia Rostad, Adult Spiritual Growth
- Melinda Sims, Church & Society
- Lynn Nystrom, Staff-Parish Relations Committee

And let's welcome those committees' incoming chairs!

- Rev. Deborah Christine, Adult Spiritual Growth
- Sheli Gray, Church & Society
- Jeff Dimond, Staff-Parish Relations Committee

Adult Spiritual Growth
Faith is a journey!

A list of the administrative committees is available in the church office if you wish to see all the

elected leadership for the coming year. Thank you for your prayers for the work these committees do!

If you would like to serve on a committee or chair a committee, let us know. You can contact the office at 520-297-2062 or info@umcstmarks.org. We invite you all to pray for the leadership of the church, committee chairs as well as committee members.



*Church
&
Society*

We Need Your Help with Attendance Tracking

Starting this month, we are keeping track of everyone who attends classes, groups, and worship with our new church management system. We ask that every group leader take attendance *by name* and turn it in to the office so we can track who is attending. We have big goals and this is one way we are working to meet them. We appreciate your help with this. *Please do not submit numbers only.* As we move forward this year, we can add in electronic attendance if you are interested in that. Contact Lora in the office for info.

Renovation Team Update

"We gather, connect, and serve so all may experience the love of Christ."

This is the new **St. Mark's mission statement**, adopted at the Oct. 30 Church Conference. The process of developing this new mission statement as well as four core ministry values began at the Vision Summit that took place over two days at the end of September. About three dozen members and staff of St. Mark's attended the summit. There was nothing wrong with our old statement, but the feeling is that the new mission statement and ministry values better represent St. Mark's with its two-campus status.

Ministry Values

- ☯ Loving: We actively love Christ and our neighbors as we worship, learn, and play together.
- ☯ Serving: We serve our church family, our neighbors, and the world with our time, energy, and prayers.
- ☯ Giving: We support our church family and our neighbors with abundant generosity.
- ☯ Embracing Diversity: We celebrate the variety of God's creation and learn from each other as we follow Christ.

Our new mission statement is ALL-inclusive. All are welcome. YOU are St. Mark's. You are the church. St. Mark's is blessed to have each of you as a member. We can all learn from each other as we worship and play together.

Your Renovation Team:

Sarah Dimond, Maryann Nuckolls, Diane Hiratsuka, Bill Zermuehlen, Linda Martino

renovationteam@umcstmarks.org

Generosity Campaign Update

The 2024 generosity (stewardship) campaign is nearly complete. As of Dec. 21, we have received 218 pledge cards from both campuses, totaling \$807,227. This usually represents about 75% of our annual income. Last year at this time, our two campuses had 240 pledges for a total of \$829,230. **There is still time to submit a pledge if you haven't done so already.**

The number of pledge cards returned has steadily decreased from 345 cards (just for Magee) in 2020, even as the average giving has increased.

The Finance Committee has been working on the 2024 budget. **We are grateful for your support for our church and its missions!**

From the Finance Committee ...

Year-to-date income is still down compared to 2022. Last year at this time we had collected \$1,013,318 by the end of November. This year we have collected \$997,987. (This information reflects both campuses combined.)

	Period Activity	YTD Balance	Budget YTD	Previous YTD
Income	95,286	997,987	1,094,863	1,013,318
Expenses	110,254	1,077,966	1,171,364	926,417
Difference	(14,968)	(79,978)	(76,501)	86,901

Change in Online Giving

We are moving our online giving platform from Vanco to Breeze as we change our church management software. If you give online (Magee Campus), **we need you to cancel your recurring online transactions via Vanco and set them up again using Breeze.** Beginning Jan. 1, the online giving link on our website will be connected to Breeze.

Then, as Breeze records your electronic giving, it automatically records your gifts in your giving records, which you can see and double-check via the Breeze app.

To assist in this process, our bookkeeper, Lois Britton (who has used Breeze previously), will be available in the courtyard after services to help you create a Breeze account Jan. 7, and between services only on Jan. 14.

Even if you're not giving online, stop by the courtyard to see Lois for help in setting up the Breeze app. It gives you access to the church directory, the church calendar, and your own giving and pledge records.

The treasurer's report shows a much higher loss than expected. We were hoping to see a surplus in October, November and December. That would have helped to cut our deficit.

The Finance Committee met Dec. 20 and passed a budget for 2024. This budget is also projecting a deficit.

A Celebration of Generosity

While we have declared that our giving to local, national, and global missions will equal 10% of our budgeted contributions, as of this writing (Dec. 21, 2023), our external giving from our budget and donor directed giving is 16% of our unrestricted contributions.

Animal Ministry	762
Youth Missions	159
AZ Justice for Our Neighbors	500
Forums on Social Issues	500
Pima County Interfaith Council	3,500
World Service/Africa University/Black College Fund	64,932
Emerge	2,500
Interfaith Community Services	2,300
Misc. Missions	3,354
Primavera	1,200
Stand Up For Kids	2,500
Tucson HIV/AIDS Networks	2,500
Tucson Metropolitan Ministries	2,500
Tu Nidito	2,500
Youth on Their Own	2,000
Change the World Fund (Service Sunday/Food Packing)	9,867
Nash Neighbors	16,660
Counselor in Residence (Grief/Illness Groups, Indiv. Counseling)	6,165
Estes Elementary School	900
Heartworks	580
Easter offering	7,462
Marksmen	1,560
Middle School Mission	711
Peace with Justice	1,133
Pastor's Discretionary	7,022
Sierra Service Project (Youth Mission)	7,037
UMCOR	23,286
Total	\$ 174,090

Soul Station

Soul Station this month kicks off with a Methodist tradition of renewing our covenant to live faithfully with God. Pastor Evy will lead us in a version of the Covenant Renewal Service on Jan. 3. In the coming weeks, we will look at some trends from the year past. Rev. Ron Bartlow and Rev. Lynn Bartlow will lead a conversation and reflection on the word, movie, person, and show of 2023. Join us in Soul Station for dinner, music, Communion, a sermon, and, of course, conversation around the table! Dinner begins at 5:30 p.m. and the program begins at 6:15. The Zoom room opens at 6 p.m. The link is always the same: <http://tinyurl.com/SoulStationZoom>.

See you there!

2024 Messenger Deadline Reminder

Beginning in 2024, the **Messenger** will have a standard deadline of the 20th of every month. Submit information for the **Messenger** to messenger@umcstmarks.org.



Publication dates are: Jan. 3, Jan. 31, Feb.

28, April 3, May 1, May 29, July 3, July 31, Sept. 4, Oct. 2, Oct. 30 and Nov. 27.

You might want to cut this out and put it on your refrigerator! If you forget, you can always find this same information on the website at <https://umcstmarks.org/newsletters>. ✂ ✂

Ben's Bells Shares Kindness at ECC

The St. Mark's Early Childhood Center is dedicated to cultivating kindness in the children we serve. In August 2017, the ECC and the St. Mark's Bits and Pieces mosaic group collaborated to create and install a mural promoting kindness that is located in the ECC's breezeway. We



are excited to announce that on Jan. 30, Ben's Bells will install an additional kindness mural on the school playground as a reminder of the importance and need for kindness in our day-to-day lives. Ben's Bells was founded in the early 2000s to encourage kindness and connection in the Tucson community.



Come Sing With St. Mark's!

If you enjoy singing, even if you haven't done it in a while, consider joining our choir family. The Celebration Singers rehearse from 5:15 to 7:25 p.m. Wednesdays in the choir room. We truly are more than just a group of singers; we are a caring group of friends.

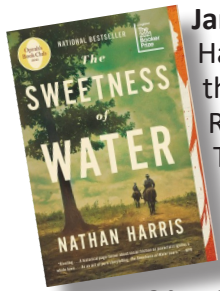
A couple months ago, Pastor Lynn challenged your church staff to find ways for our ministries to reach out into the community. The Celebration Singers set aside two afternoons in December to go caroling. We went to an assisted living center in the Catalina Foothills and sang for the residents' Christmas party. On another day, we went to the home of our former director, Dave Camp, and sang for him – he smiled and sang along with us. What joy this group brings to me and to all those they surround.

We have exciting music planned for the spring; consider becoming part of this wonderful group. You'll be glad you did.

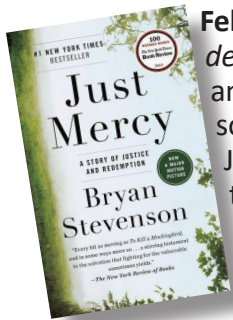
For more information, contact Jane Anderson at jane@umcstmarks.org.

Open Minds Book Group Early Spring Lineup

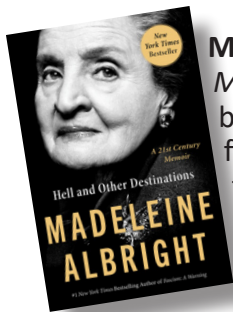
Do you enjoy discussing the books you read? The Open Minds Book Group is for you! We meet in the latter half of each month from 9-10:30 a.m. via Zoom. You can register for one of or all meetings on the St. Mark's site, <https://umcstmarks.org/classes/adult-spiritual-growth-opportunities>. Co-leaders Celeste Pardee and Ann Reaban are pleased to present our spring lineup, celebrating some of the national heritage months.



Jan. 19: *The Sweetness of Water*, by Nathan Harris. This beautifully written novel depicts the Deep South during the volatile time of Reconstruction at the end of the Civil War. Two brothers, freed by the Emancipation Proclamation, seek refuge on the homestead of George and Isabelle Walker, who hire the brothers to work their farm, and an unexpected friendship develops. Parallel to this story runs another about a forbidden romance between Confederate soldiers who've just returned to the nearby town. When the young men's secret is discovered, it has explosive repercussions. Harris reveals the range of responses of Black and White Americans under harrowing circumstances struggling to remake their world.



Feb. 16: *Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption*, by Bryan Stevenson. This poignant and powerful true story begins when Stevenson, as a young attorney, founded the Equal Justice Initiative, a legal practice dedicated to defending the poor, the wrongly condemned, and those trapped in the complexity of our criminal justice system. One of his first cases was that of Walter McMillian, a young man sentenced to die for a murder he didn't commit. This case drew Stevenson into a tangle of conspiracy, political machination, and legal brinkmanship, transforming his understanding of mercy and justice in America.



March 15: *Hell and Other Destinations: A Memoir*, by Madeleine Albright. In 2001, Albright concluded her service as America's first female secretary of state. Instead of retiring, she launched a new career as an author, professor, businesswoman, speaker, and activist in support of democratic institutions and values. She clashed with pres-

idents and prime ministers, warned against the potential revival of fascism, championed the cause of women and labored relentlessly on behalf of people who lack the power to be heard themselves. Albright, who described herself as "an optimist who worries a lot," shares stories that are at times blunt, self-deprecating, and humorous about her post-government life.

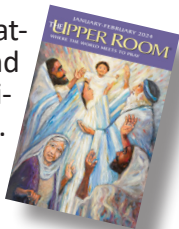
Other Social and Fellowship Opportunities

Adult Sunday School - 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. 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.

Wednesday Morning Study - 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, ([see church directory](#)).



Roadrunner Book Club - 9:30 a.m. Wednesdays at Roadrunner Coffee, Linda Vista and Thornydale. For more information, contact Carol Witherspoon, ([see church directory](#)).

Theology Pub - 6 p.m. fourth Wednesdays at rotating locations. Drink and think (and eat) while discussing life and faith. Contact Pastor Kevin for more info, kevin@umcstmarks.org.

Marksmen - 8 a.m. the first and third Wednesday of each month in Magee Campus Room 17/18. Friendly semi-retired and retired men meet for a program, breakfast, and fellowship. Paul Boettcher, marksmen@umcstmarks.org.

Common Grounds - 6 p.m. the third Saturday of each month, usually in the church library. Individuals or couples mainly in their 20s, 30s & 40s meet for fellowship, fun & prayer. Rachel Mosher, rachel@umcstmarks.org.



Keep an Eye Out for These Family Events in 2024!

New Year's greetings from the Children's and Family Ministries Committee and the Sunday School teachers. Each year, our dedicated Sunday School teachers and volunteers take great joy in working with your children each week and to see them having so much fun at the Children's and Family Ministries events. In 2024, be on the lookout for information and registration for the events below.

- February – Kids' Night Out for Valentine's Day
- March – Community Easter Event
- June – Vacation Bible School at Sanctuary Campus
- July – Evening VBS at Magee Campus
- August – Sunday School Rally Day
- October – Fall Event
- December – Kids' Night Out for Advent, Photos with Santa

Wishing you all a peaceful 2024!

Julie Eblen, Children's and Family Ministries Coordinator



Russia Update from Worldwide Christian Support Task Force

The head of Global Christian Relief has warned Russia is conducting religious persecution in Ukraine. A report by Global Christian Relief told about Russian forces in Mariupol. Clergy at the Ukrainian Christian Evangelical Church of the Holy Trinity were ousted by 30 troops. Also, around 500 religious buildings, and sacred sites have been looted, damaged or completely destroyed by Russians since the attacks began.



Russian authorities have increased Christian persecution within Russia. In July, the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom wrote a report on religious freedom in Russia. It says Russia continues with religious repression at home as well. Russians have used the war in Ukraine to make more laws that end religious freedom and independence.

A Russian Orthodox priest was sentenced to seven years in prison for allegedly spreading "false information about the military." This was because he posted a statement on social media asking the Lord's forgiveness for the country killing women and children. Another Orthodox priest was held for posting videos saying, "If you are not disturbed by what is going on in Ukraine, this outrage – you are not Christians."



United Women in Faith

St. Mark's United Women in Faith meetings for January:

Grace Circle – will collect baby diapers and adult incontinence supplies for the Diaper Bank of Southern Arizona Sundays, Jan. 7 and 14, at both campuses. Bring donations to the Magee Campus courtyard or the lobby at Sanctuary. The group will meet at 9 a.m. Tuesday, Jan. 16, in the church library for devotions and then carpool to the diaper bank to deliver donations and help package diapers for needy families.

United Women in Faith – will meet at 10 a.m. Tuesday, Jan. 9, in Magee Room 17/18. Come at 9:30 for refreshments and fellowship. Our speaker will be from Wings for Women, which provides support, food, and clothing as well as mentors and guides women to independent living. All women are welcome at our meetings. You do not have to be a member of UWF to attend. Need a ride? Contact Clara Campbell (see church directory).

Craft Circle – will meet at 9 a.m. Tuesday, Jan. 23 in Magee Room 17/18 to start another year of designing and making crafts. We finish some projects and start some new ones. Bring your ideas and projects and join in the fun. You do not have to be crafty since there is always a project you can join in and share your talents.

Special Meeting – UWF will meet from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 30, in Magee Room 17/18 to help Bev Sechrist in her mission project of making quilts from painted squares. She will provide all the supplies. Bring a sack lunch and a drink if you like since we will work in the afternoon as well. You can come whenever is convenient and spend as much time as you like. We use fabric paint to paint the various squares. You even get to pick your own design. No talent is needed so come and enjoy the fun and fellowship. Bev has donated two of these quilts to the craft fair in the past. All are welcome.



Thank You from the Chair

We mailed 523 Christmas cards to active military personnel stationed all over the world. Thank you to everyone who took time to write a holiday message. On Dec. 11, we delivered the Angel Tree gifts to Estes Elementary School. We helped six families and 23 children ranging from newborns to 18 years old. A total of 126 presents were donated, plus each family received a \$150 gift card to Fry's for food. We are a very generous congregation and thank you for your support!

Mary Beth Barone, Missions Committee Chair

Sign Up NOW for Jan. 7 Meal Packaging Event

We're kicking off 2024 by serving. This time, we're *not* serving our local community. We will be serving people in other countries, whom we will probably never meet. Partnering with **Rise Against Hunger**, we will assemble dehydrated meals and box them up to be shipped and distributed to an area where hunger is prevalent. With your help, we can package enough meals to feed a whole community. Plus, it's fun! You'll be working shoulder-to-shoulder with people who you probably don't share a row with in church. The job goes fast and the laughs happen organically. Come to the Fellowship Hall at 11:30 a.m. Jan. 7, and start the new year by serving. Times for setup, shifts, and cleanup are listed below or you can register at <https://umcstmarks.breezechms.com/form/c6618d>. Contact Pastor Kim, kim@umcstmarks.org, with questions.



Shifts:

10 to 11:30 a.m.

11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

1 to 2:30 p.m.

2:30 to 3:30 p.m.

Set up

First shift to pack meals

Second shift to pack meals

Clean up

Market on the Move is Jan. 6



Market on the Move is ready for another season of community service beginning Jan. 6 and continuing the first Saturday of every month through April. We offer 60 lbs. of fresh produce delivered to your car for only \$10, in the Magee Campus south parking lot. Hours are 8-10 a.m. Volunteers need to be ready at 7:45 a.m. New recruits are always welcome. Text Lenna at (see church directory) for further info.

Stand Up for Kids

Executive Director Kim Sisson receives a check from St Mark's on Nov. 27 in front of "The Center" for Stand Up for Kids, an organization helping to end the cycle of youth homelessness.

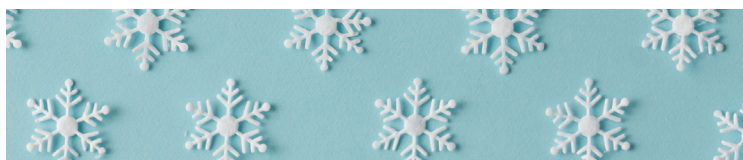


End of Year ICS Food Update

As we wind down 2023, we give thanks to our amazing St. Mark's family for another great year of food donations to the Northwest Food Bank at Interfaith Community Services. We donated more than 17,000 lbs. of food this year, helping thousands of people in Southern Arizona in need of supplemental food assistance. ICS and its clients are very appreciative. St. Mark's is one of the founding faith community partners of ICS dating back to 1985. Relationships like this help St. Mark's to serve those in need in our community just like Jesus has called us to do. 2024 will be our fifth consecutive year of support for this ministry. We continue to collect non-perishable food donations from 10-11 a.m. every Tuesday and Saturday in the Magee Campus north parking lot. You can also drop off your donations at the church office during its business hours. if you are able.

GOT CITRUS??

The food bank is happy to receive donations of quality, ready-to-eat citrus that may be available to you. Maybe from your neighbors' trees too! Thanks for your help!



Youth Ministry

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



Youth Group Calendar



Sunday School Series

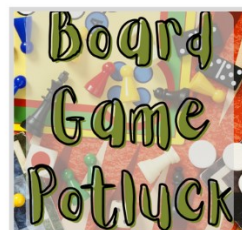
Jan 7



Jan 12-15



Jan 21



Jan 26-27

Jan 28



Abigail Chester and Maddie Martin in 2023



Branching Out at SSP

When I first came to SSP I thought "how could this place possibly change who I am?" Along with the no phone rule, I thought I was destined to have a miserable time. On the first day, that quickly changed, although the awkward team bonding times were difficult to get through, being there with these new people really helped me branch out.

Anybody who knew me before SSP may have known me as a little shy and maybe even a little quiet. Throughout that week, I really got to know my group and bond with my fellow Youth Group members. I was talkative and loud and on the last day I did something that I would never have done before. I danced at the end of the week dance party.

SSP was such a unique experience that honestly changed me for the better. While I thought it would be a rough week, I now will be returning to the place that branched me out.

-Maddie Martin, 9th grade

Interested in SSP and other opportunities? Check out our Link Tree!





UPCOMING EVENTS

Alternative Talent Show

January 7, 4:00-6:00

Sanctuary Campus

We all have talent! Some of us have talent we don't even know about! So....Rachel and Spencer picked a ton of amazingly great talents that we just KNOW you all have! Show up on January 7, and you will have PLENTY of time to master the talent you are given. ENCORE!!

Need a ride from Magee Campus? Reserve your seat today!

Winter Camp

MLK Weekend

Mingus Mountain

6th-12th 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!

Board Game Potluck

January 21, 4:00-6:00

Magee Campus

Some potlucks have delicious Jell-O salad, with all of the mayonnaise, lunchmeat, and vegetables you can handle! But THIS Potluck is deliciously FUN! Instead of food, everyone bring their favorite board or card game! We won't be able to play them all, but we will play as many as we can. The more

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. Our first retreat weekend is planned for January 26-27, at the Sanctuary Campus. We will have time for meals, learning, games, and more! If you are interested in signing up, contact Rachel or go to the Sign-Up Palooza today!

Service Sunday

January 28, 4:00-6:00

Magee Campus

While we talk about God moving into our neighborhoods. We better love our neighbors, right!? Show up to the Magee Campus on January 28, and we will make some wonderful handmade valentines for some of our church members that don't make it to church often.



St. Mark's Youth Group. A group for you.



GOD
moves into the
neighborhood

In church the time between the Christmas season and Lent is called Ordinary Time. (There is another Ordinary Time, after Pentecost, but we'll talk about that...after Pentecost!) This season, this Ordinary Time,

in Youth Sunday School, we will be using talking about the series "God Moves Into the Neighborhood" I hope to see you in rooms 8/9 on the Magee campus on Sundays from 10-11! (We will not be meeting on January 14)

SIERRA SERVICE PROJECT 2024

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! 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>



January Birthdays

Liam D	1/02
Saafir M	1/12
Soren L	1/22

Find Grief Support Here

by Liesl Scalzitti, Ph.D.

"Grief is the price we pay for love." – Queen Elizabeth II

Love and loss are an inherent part of human life. Our hearts were created for the sole purpose of love and love we need for meaning, purpose, and survival. How lucky we are as humans to love so deeply. Yet where there is love, lies the inevitability of loss. The combination of the two defines the very essence of what makes life so bittersweet.

Imagine the parents who fall in love with their adorable baby. The baby is so unbelievably cute that they can't take their eyes off of their bundle of joy! Or the happily married couple who fell in love at first sight. They are each other's "Funny Valentine, their favorite work of art!" No words can begin to capture the level of endearment that rests in either the parents' or the married couple's hearts. In both instances, they feel not only the warmth of deep love but also the natural sorrow knowing that time is moving along.

Moving along in life and watching the subtle changes our loved ones go through is one thing. Losing a loved one forever is a whole other experience. There are no words for it. It simply takes your breath away. What are we to do when our loved one leaves us? How do we survive knowing we can't possibly recreate those precious moments we treasured with that special someone?

Survive you will in one way or another. And, perhaps you may come to accept that grief is here to stay for as long as you live. Looking ahead, there are no road maps or explicit directions. You just take it one day at a time, sometimes one hour or even one minute depending upon the degree to which the grief takes hold. When the pain becomes relentless, you may wish for someone to tell you how to hurry up and get on with it to make the grief pass more quickly.

But do you want that? Think about it! How would you feel if someone else told you how to get over it? How could anyone possibly know when they don't know the anguish your heart feels? The bottom line is that the grief is yours and yours alone. Comfort is all anyone else can offer.

So how do we find that comfort? Family members or close friends may not always be the best choice because they might think they know what is best for you. Sometimes reaching out to others who are also in the midst of grief can be quite helpful as they may be able to relate to what you experience without saying anything that negates what you feel. They simply listen, support, validate, and honor your lived experience.

If you are looking for that kind of support, St. Mark's offers a weekly grief support group from 4-5 p.m. Mondays in the church library. If you are interested in learning more please contact me, Liesl Scalzitti, Ph.D., at 520-365-0058 or contact the church office.



Church & Society

UMC Human Relations Day Special Sunday Offering, Jan. 14

Human Relations Day is designed to highlight the message Jesus demonstrated during his life: All of God's children are important. It celebrates and raises awareness to further the development of better human relations by involving congregations in community and youth outreach. Celebrated the Sunday before Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday, gifts recognize King's vision of "the beloved community" through programs such as Community Developers and United Methodist Voluntary Services and Youth Offender Rehabilitation Programs.

One of the wonderful aspects of the United Methodist Church is that we can do so much more together than we ever could do on our own. Our gifts are part of building "the beloved community."

St. Mark's will collect this special offering at both campuses on Sunday, Jan.14. You can use special envelopes available that day or contribute online at

<https://umcstmarks.breezechms.com/give/online/YN82>



Peace Pole Dedication (also Jan. 14!)

On Human Relations Sunday, Jan.14, we will dedicate our new Peace Pole, which is near the office on the Magee Campus. The Church & Society committee is teaming with our Church Care & Hospitality Committee to host a celebration after worship. We invite our St. Mark's family and friends at both campuses to bring an international snack or treat from your family's heritage to share (no peanuts please). Drop them off at the welcome center on the Magee Campus or at the table set up in the gathering area on Sanctuary Campus. We will have cards available on Jan. 7 to use in identifying your treat.



Sanctuary's Inaugural 'Photos With Santa' Event a Success

At the Sanctuary Campus we have been looking for new, creative ways to engage the families in our community, and we came up with an idea: "Free Santa Photos"! If you've taken children to get their photo taken with Santa over the last few years, you might have noticed that the cost for photos has risen higher and higher – to the point where some families have not been able to afford it. Well, we, thought: "Since our worship space will already be decorated for Christmas, it will look GREAT for photos, AND since there's minimal cost for us to host, we can offer the photo opp for free!"

So, on Saturday, Dec. 7, we opened up the church from 2-4 p.m., set up the stage with a "throne" for Santa, put out some yummy treats and some cool crafts, and invited all the families we knew to come over! "Santa" volunteered his time for free (a huge blessing!) and volunteers came early and made it a great event! We had over 25 families come from both inside and outside our congregation, and everyone agreed it was a really fun, successful event.

We're already planning for next year, so, if this sounds like something you would like to be part of, contact our Growth & Outreach Committee or Pastor Kevin to get involved!



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. You may also submit via our online form at <https://umcstmarks.org/prayer-request>

Dave Camp
Ruth Machtley
Helen Swanson

Mary Ann Glazier
Mary Wald
George & Darcy Halvorson
Greta Roberts

Glenn Brechbiel
Dottie Snyder
Susan Zimmerman

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



St. Mark's UMC
Sanctuary Campus

7620 N. Hartman Lane 85743

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

Thank You, St. Mark's

Thank you for your generous partnership! We are so grateful for the space we are able to use for our Northwest location, and for your beautiful sanctuary for our performances! We are so appreciative of your church's sharing spirit. Happy holidays from Tucson Girls Chorus!

-Jess Edelbrock & team



St. Mark's Magee Campus had a highly successful blood drive on Sunday, 12/3. This was our first blood drive since 2019. The American Red Cross lead stated that St. Mark's exceeded their expectations! They expected to collect 18 units but collected 27 units of blood! We had 3 Power Red and 21 whole blood donors. These included scheduled and drop-in donors. Most blood types were given. The community at large and St. Mark's participated. Your blood donation saved 81 lives. Great job! Thank you!

-Cheri Schwartz, organizer

Thank you to our wonderful church family for all the wonderful crafts and bake sale items you bought. Because of you, we raised \$856 from the bake sale and \$1,169 from crafts. Those of you who baked and made craft items, I thank you for that. I also want to thank all the wonderful United Women in Faith who have worked so hard to make the crafts, bake the goodies, and help set up and take down both days. You are a very wonderful group of women and our men.

-Clara Campbell, St. Mark's United Women in Faith president

The Worship Committee thanks all those who came on Christmas workday to help decorate the sanctuaries for Advent. Many hands make light work and fun was had by all. We are blessed to have such a loving, caring extended family at St. Mark's.

-Darcy Halvorson, Linda Sterling, Rick Farnsworth, Don Booth, Worship Committee members

A big thank you to St. Mark's for again showing compassion and generosity for the families of Nash Elementary School. I delivered to the principal, Ms. Jessica Jarrett, gift cards worth \$2,750. These were distributed to those most in need to help with Christmas gifts and food. Speaking with the principal, hearing stories of the needs that arise in the Nash community always leaves me with a desire to do more.

-Carol Cecilia, Nash Neighbors chair

The St. Mark's Concert Series has many fabulous performances in 2024!

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.

In February, we are looking forward to three amazing concerts. **Feb. 4:** Jim Sorensen on piano; **Feb. 18:** returning artists in the Sandoli Trio; and **Feb. 25** the UA Symphonic Choir in a final presentation before its spring tour and Western-ACDA performances.

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



For more details on these and future concert events this spring, be sure to pick up our 2023-2024 Concert Series brochure in the narthex or church office!

For more information, contact Music Ministries Coordinator Jordan Shomper, jordan@umcstmarks.org.