Advent and Christmas at St. Mark’s

Calm and Bright: 200 Years of Silent Night
December 2 - 30
Advent—Christmas Sunday Worship Series

In honor of the 200th birthday of the beloved Christmas Carol, Silent Night

December 2, 4—7 pm
Advent Celebration
4 pm—Advent wreath making

5 pm—potluck
(bring a main or side dish. Dessert is furnished)

Program afterwards

December 16 9:30 am
St. Mark’s Christmas Cantata

Christmas Eve Services
4 pm
50-Minute Family Service for all ages
Carols & Candlelight

11 pm
Traditional Lessons & Carols Chancel Choir & Candlelight

Silent Night!
Holy Night!
Dear St. Mark’s Church family,

A blessed Advent to you and yours! I am thrilled to spend my first Advent and Christmas as your pastor. I trust these last six months have been a time of spiritual growth for you as much as they have been for me. As we move forward, I believe we are beginning to live as a church that truly believes in the Promise Fulfilled. We are beginning to fear less and believe more. We are having good, fun times together. We are beginning to comprehend what the angels said: “For unto you is born this day...a Savior, which is Christ the Lord.” This is good news! Hallelujah!

Advent and Christmas will be extra special this year as we join other churches across the country and world in commemorating the 200th birthday of the beloved carol, “Silent Night.” From the website bearing its name, we read:

“For centuries, the song has crossed borders and overcome crises. It connects people no matter their origin, age or [even] religion, and provides a link back to the time during which it was created. 200 years ago, Joseph Mohr, a priest from Salzburg, and Franz Xaver Gruber, a teacher from Upper Austria, sang the song for the very first time at the St. Nikola Church in Oberndorf near Salzburg. The original poem was authored by Joseph Mohr, whereas Franz Xaver Gruber added the melody on his request. Only a few years later, singing families from the Zillertal valley carried the song from Austria into Europe and the rest of the world. Today, the song is performed in over 300 languages and dialects.”

I would be hard-pressed to think of a song more beloved than “Silent Night.” So, in honor of this anniversary, our theme for Advent and Christmas this year is “Calm and Bright, and will be based on the carol’s words and music. With a star as our focus, our worship and sermons will be based on this theme.

Plus, in keeping with this same theme, on December 16 our choir will be presenting the cantata, “Silent Night! Holy Night!” by Russell Mauldin.

The year 2018 has brought me a new community, a new church, and new friends. This has been a good new beginning for both Linda and myself. I look forward to spending this new beginning by honoring the 200th birthday of this old, beloved carol with you.

If you haven’t worshipped with your church family for a while, I pray that you will join us this Advent. I am always ready to meet more new friends.

You pastor and friend,

Rev. Joseph M. Payne

Administrative Committees

Nominations and Leadership Development

- Pastor: Joe Payne
- Lay Leader: Sue Luken
- 2019: Ruth Ritenbaugh, Gail Hartwig
- 2020: Jim Beckett, Debbie Bryant
- 2021: Mary Pierson, Jim Jones

Staff / Parish Relations

- 2019: Beth Ewald, Jerry Hartwig
- 2020: Erin Theodor (Chairperson), Kym Nguyen
- 2021: Kristy Theiss, Jenni Hensler

Finance

- 2019: Tim Mislansky (Chair), Doug Ewald, Tom Tierney
- 2020: Jennifer Rinker, Janice Chaney, Bud Aydlett
- 2021: Gale Goodman, Cheryl Creach

Trustees

- 2019: Don Stewart, Don Menke, Shirlene Norris
- 2020: Don Hegner, George Peters, Lee Brinkmeyer
- 2021: Jeff Gering, Marilyn Stewart

Administrative Council

- Pastor: Joe Payne
- Chairperson: Ray Smith
- Lay Leader and Lay Member Annual Conf.: Sue Luken

Nurture Ministries

- Dir. Children / Family Min.: Peggy Smith
- Family Ministry: Jennifer Marshall
- Nurture and Care: Pam Guynes

Outreach Ministries

- St. Mark’s Cares Chairpersons: Karen Smith, Julie Mislansky

Administrative Support

- SPRC Chairperson: Erin Theodor
- Finance Chairperson: Tim Mislansky
- Trustee Representative: TBD

Members At Large

- 2019: Julie Dichtl
- 2020: Charlotte Tierney
- 2021: Steve Nguyen
Sunday, November 4th was a special day at St. Mark’s -
Remember, Receive, Renew, Reignite

**New Professing Members are:**

**Shane Becker** - Graduated from Miami with a BS in Exercise Science & UC with an Associate of Applied Science in Physical Therapy Assisting. He has been a Home Health Physical Therapist for Physician’s Choice Home Health since 2014. Likes Working Out & Cleveland Browns.

**Brooke Becker** - Graduated from Miami with a BS in Education and from Xavier with a Master’s in Educational Administration. She has been a 2nd grade teacher at Taylor Elementary in the Northwest Local School District since 2004. Brooke is a Thirty-One Gifts Consultant and a Hallmark Store Associate. Likes Family time, reading, & shopping.

**Pam Finfrock** - Pam sings in the choir. She is retired and volunteers at the Animal Shelter. Loves to garden.
**Greg Pullem** - Greg is retired and lives at Parkside Community. He was married on Oct. 13th to Charlene Sims. Greg is a regular attender of the Tuesday Morning Bible Study.

**Wes Flannery** - Transferred from Ross UMC. Wes is retired. Sings in the choir.

**Debbie Flannery** - Transferred from Ross UMC. Debbie is retired. Sings in the choir and she is a quilter.

**New Baptized Members**
(Pictures of Owen and Alice are with the family photo on page 4)

**Owen Michael Becker** - He is 7 yrs old and a 1st grader at Sacred Heart. Likes flag football, all things Pokemon & Legos.

**Alice Grace Becker** - Alice will be 2 yrs old on Feb. 22 and attends Kids R’ Kids for Daycare. Likes animals, singing, dancing & cleaning up.

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**In Memoriam**

We remembered those of our St. Mark’s family who passed away in the past year.

Marilouise Carr  Albert Miller  Gracie Goebel
Rosalie Morris  Rita Johnson  Jerry Hughes
Lindsay Hungler  Fred Winkler  Albert Fenzel
Eleanor Fitzpatrick  Jean Cress  Charles Jeffers
SENIOR’S CHRISTMAS POT-LUCK LUNCHEON

Saturday, December 8
1 pm in Fellowship Hall

Bring a covered dish.

There will be good food, games and lots of fellowship.

ALL SENIORS WELCOME

CHURCH CHRISTMAS POSTOFFICE

The mailboxes are set in the church Narthex for you to bring cards to your St. Mark’s family. A basket will be available for giving donations to the Youth Fund.

MERRY CHRISTMAS
DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

2 - Paul Schutte
3 - Phyllis Tunning
4 - Tari Wolf
6 - Bob Mendenhall
8 - Charles Bryant
8 - Cheryl Creach
9 - Michele Leyrer
10 - Cory Stewart
14 - Ben Gallihugh
14 - Flo Moore
14 - Jennifer Rinker
14 - Joyce Zugelter
17 - Glenn Mason
17 - Linda Prohaska
18 - Rick Broshear
19 - Cody Sines (Age 14)
20 - James Kuertz
21 - Pam Finfrock
22 - Bob Janosik
23 - James Omer Sanan (Age 5)
24 - Charlene Miller
27 - Cindy Brown
27 - Nancy Bumpus
29 - John Best
29 - Pat Sena
29 - Tom Tierney
30 - Ira Begley
30 - Katie Luken

DECEMBER ANNIVERSARY

8 – Chuck & Karen Hungler
14 - Bud & Shirley Aydlett
27 - George & Belinda Peters
28 - Marty & Gay Kubik
29 - Tom & Charlotte Tierney

Thanks to the Ruth Circle

The October Walk for the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) was successful and a big thank you goes to St. Mark’s Ruth Circle for being a sponsor once again this year. This is the only fundraiser for the entire year and $63,000 was raised with over 450 walkers participating. NAMI’s mission is to assist families who have a loved one with a mental illness, including ADHD, depression, anxiety, PTSD, bipolar, or schizophrenia. Free-of-charge classes are offered to family members and presentations are made at schools, churches, universities, the Butler County Police Academy, and health fairs. Thank you again, Ruth Circle, for your support each year.

NAMI
St. Mark’s annual Church Conference was held in the sanctuary and led by the Rev. Dave Mack. The Conference began with singing and prayer. Reports by our ministry & administrative teams were then shared.

**St. Marks Cares, Karen Smith and Julie Mislansky**

Julie and Karen thanked the members of the committee for their outstanding work and dedication, and reported the following accomplishments:

- $12,000 to the 10 organizations and missionaries that we support, almost $700 more than our giving in 2017.
- $4,565 to UMCOR in monetary donations and flood buckets.
- Over 113 individuals participated in some mission outreach opportunity in 2018, many serving more than once.
- The seven organizations we support are: The Broken Bus, The Caring Closet, Serve City, Living Waters Ministries, Salvation Army, Fairfield Food Pantry, and Matthew 25 Ministries.
- The three missionaries we currently support are Christy and Jose Luis Sanchez in Mexico, Brian and Tara Vinson, Methodist ministers in Africa and The Jubilee Project in greater Cincinnati.

Goals for 2019 include continuing our support of the missions mentioned above. Good Neighbor Sunday is set for May 5th, and a mission trip will be planned. New ideas for 2019 include offering love and care to the community at the trailer park off of River Road, starting a Whiz Kids tutoring program for a Fairfield elementary, a joint event with the Big Brothers and Big Sisters, taking meals to the home-bound and others in need, finding a way to better support the NA group that meets at St. Marks and helping to serve the needs of the residents of Parkside Nursing Center.

**Children and Family Ministries, Peggy Smith**

Peggy invited everyone to an “Advent Wreath Making” event on Dec. 2nd at 4:00. This is a church-wide event for all ages where we will make advent wreaths to take home, share a potluck dinner and a program. Peggy also shared that she will be forming a Visioning team for children and family ministries in 2019.

**Trustees, Ray Smith**

Ray recognized and thanked the members of the committee. Goals for 2019 include upgrading to LED lighting throughout the church, continuing to address security issues within the church and the parking lot, and making repairs to the parking lot and sidewalks. Saturday work parties will also continue.

**Staff/Parish Relations Committee, Erin Theodor**

Brenda Smoot has been hired as Administrative Assistant, Peggy Smith as Director of Children and Family Ministries and the position of Youth Director has recently been advertised.

Erin submitted a recommendation from SPRC for Pastoral Compensation in the amount of $55,092 for cash compensation (this includes a 1% cost of living increase), $18,000 for a housing allowance (no increase) and $6,000 for accountable reimbursement (no increase). Motion passed.

**Nominations and Leadership Development, Pastor Joe**

The 2019 leadership roster and nominations were presented by Pastor Joe. All members of the slate were elected.

**Membership, Pastor Joe**

Pastor Joe has gathered a task force to assist in compiling an audit of our membership, both active and inactive. The plan is to contact all inactive members and encourage them to return to regular attendance as growing disciples of Jesus Christ. We currently have 290 professing members, with an average Sunday attendance of 135.

**Finance, Tim Mislansky**

Tim thanked the members of the committee. He also gave a special thanks to Ruth Ritenbaugh for her hard work and dedication and those helping her; Brenda Smoot, Cheryl Creach and Gail Hartwig. He reported that giving in 2018 was down about $30,000 from last year. Positives he shared as we move towards a new year: we are one check away from paying all 2018 conference and district apportionments and the number of giving pledge cards is up by 39 cards and $64,200 from last year. The 2019 budget process is underway. All committees and leaders were asked to share their hopes and dreams and the current number reflecting that is at $450,000 so it will require some adjusting. Tim also reminded the congregation that there is a finance report in a narrative form in the monthly newsletters and the finance committee (and several others) are posting their meeting minutes on the bulletin board by the kitchen.
Pastor Joe requested that one more leadership nominee be formally elected. Ruth Ritenbaugh has stepped in following the retirement of Ethel Stanifer and has done good work. Ruth was elected by acclamation.

VISIONING
Pastor Joe shared the administrative council’s 2019 goal 165 average worship attendance. Another goal for next year is organizing the congregation into smaller care or shepherding groups. The vision is to form small groups of 8-10 families under the care of a lay leader or couple. The group members would offer care for one another, above and beyond the Pastor’s care. Groups would have a mix of younger and older families and include one or two of our homebound members. Groups would commit to care for one another in times of crisis, sickness, times of change, spiritual care and prayer. The vision is that these groups would also commit to ministries of mission and community outreach. Those in attendance were very positive about this idea.

Pastor Dave Mack closed our Conference with an inspiring message of hope for the future of St. Mark’s based on the greatest commandment “love the Lord your God with all your heart and all your soul and all your strength and all your mind and love your neighbor as yourself.”

Our time together concluded with reciting the Covenant Prayer in the Wesleyan Tradition and singing the chorus of “Blessed Assurance.”

Highlights from St. Mark’s Administrative Council November 18, 2018 3:00 p.m.

The St. Mark’s Ad. Council met briefly prior to the annual Church Conference.
In attendance: Karen Smith, Missions co-chair; Sue Luken, lay leader/delegate; Julie Dichtl, member at-large; Ray Smith, Admin Board chair & Trustees chair; Tim Mislansky, Finance chair; Erin Theodor, SPRC chair; Joe Payne, Pastor; Julie Mislansky, Missions co-chair

Sue opened the meeting in prayer.
Pastor’s report
Joe shared the order and agenda for today’s annual charge conference. The Rev. Dave Mack from Grossbeck UMC will be presiding.
Discussion was held about what our attendance goal for 2019. Average attendance for 2018 has been 135 in the past four months. It was decided to make a goal of a 25% increase, or 165 people average attendance, for 2019.

Joe shared his vision for St. Marks to create “shepherding groups” in the new year. Details of this vision may be found in the Church Conference Notes.

2019 Administrative Council meetings
It was decided that we would move to meeting every other month next year unless there is an immediate or urgent need.

Admin Council/Task Force meeting
A possible date of December 10th was announced for our first meeting with Tony Mosely to start addressing his recommendations. Ray will check with Steve Nguyen to confirm.

Meeting adjourned at 3:52.
Greeting St. Mark’s Family,

Total giving for the month of October was about $26,600. Total expenses for the month were about $22,700. There were no abnormal expenses during the month. Our cash position continues to be very low.

Once again, we paid our monthly amount for both conference and district apportionments and continue to be on track to pay our full apportionments for the year. As of November 12th, we have paid all but $3,500 towards our $48,000 total for 2018. We will make our final payment in December.

We continue to make payments on our two loans. We now owe the bank $12,700 on the line of credit and about $70,600 on the loan against the church building.

And finally, we have about $6,300 towards the parking lot repair. This is part of the special fundraising request of $35,000 to repair the sinkhole in the parking lot and provide funds for additional lighting in the parking lot for safety. We continue to ask that you prayerfully consider contributing to this special fund.

The finance committee continues to work on the 2019 budget. We invited staff and committee leaders to submit requests to be inclusive all the groups and ministries of the church. Our process focuses on us helping the church meet its mission statement, which is:

*The Mission of St. Mark’s United Methodist Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.... A world of justice, love, and peace filled with people growing in the likeness of Jesus Christ.*

Consecration Sunday resulted in 67 pledge cards for total pledges of $225,200. This compares favorably to 2017, when we only received 39 pledge cards for $161,000. We expect to receive more pledge cards before the end of this year, and are hopeful this will result in increased giving for next year.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>Change</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pledges</td>
<td>$225,200</td>
<td>$161,000</td>
<td>$64,200</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pledge Cards</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>28</td>
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A summary of giving in 2018 compared to 2017 is on the following page:

(Continued on page 11)
(Continued from page 10.)

Should you have questions about St. Mark’s finances, please do not hesitate to ask me at church or to email me at tmislansky@fuse.net or call me at 513-759-0581.

Thank you,

Tim Mislansky

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<tr>
<th>Monthly Summary of Giving / Receipts</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2017</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>$25,287</td>
<td>$28,905**</td>
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<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>$21,691</td>
<td>$25,288</td>
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<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>$25,717</td>
<td>$20,840</td>
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<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>$27,313**</td>
<td>$35,049**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>$18,736</td>
<td>$24,234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>$22,072</td>
<td>$24,405</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>$35,014**</td>
<td>$29,501**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>$22,898</td>
<td>$31,377</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>$23,552**</td>
<td>$21,588</td>
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<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>$26,595</td>
<td>$32,507**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td></td>
<td>$25,490</td>
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<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td></td>
<td>$38,540**</td>
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** = a 5 Sunday month

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<tr>
<th>Weekly Average</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2017</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$5,788</td>
<td>$6,220</td>
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St. Mark’s United Methodist Church
4601 Fairfield Avenue
Fairfield, OH  45014

St. Mark’s Staff
Pastor, Rev. Joseph M. Payne -
   Joe’s cell #614-531-2373
Pastor Emeritus, Bob Klingel
Admin. Assistant, Brenda Smoot
Director of Music, Chris Beiser
Organist, Sue Combs
Director of Children & Family Ministries, Peggy Smith
Nursery Director, Lauren Dichtl

Church Office Hours:
Monday — Thursday
9:00 - Noon, 1:00 - 3:00 pm
Friday - Office Closed

(513) 844-1818
Fax: (513) 844-2828
fairfieldstmarks.com

Worship Service:
Sundays 9:30 am