

SPIRIT OF ST. MARK'S

January / February 2020

The Mission of St. Mark's United Methodist Church is to make Disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

FOR THE WHOLE ST. MARK'S CHURCH FAMILY....







A Note from Pastor Joe

Dear St. Mark's Church Family,

Welcome to this first 2020 edition of the *Spirit of St. Mark's*! This newsletter is packed full of reports of ministries we accomplished in 2019, and plans in the works for this year. I'm excited and pleased to be a part of this wonderful church. There is no doubt we are making a difference in this community. Praise God!

Before you read the rest of this letter, please read Tim's Financial Update on the next page. I will wait.....

Have you finished reading Tim's Update? Good. Welcome back. I like Tim's updates. He's not negative, but he doesn't try to sugarcoat our financial picture either. And, what he says is true. We received 21 fewer pledges for 2020 than we received for the year 2019, and our ministries are being under-funded. Ouch.

Concerning the fewer pledges, I think I have an explanation. November 24 was Consecration Sunday, the day we received Estimates of Giving for 2020. On November 25 I had a stroke. In case you are wondering, the fewer pledges did not cause my stroke. Ha! On the other hand, I do believe my illness may have been at least partially the cause for the small number of pledge cards received.

You see, we never have perfect attendance, including on Consecration Sunday. And last year, those who were not present were contacted and invited to submit pledges. This follow-up meant that many of you turned in your pledge cards after Consecration Sunday. This year, my illness and recovery time meant some things just did not get done, including the all-important follow-up. We received one or two additional cards after November 24, but not nearly as many as we received last year.

So, to keep this long story from getting any longer, I will stop and simply say that I would like to extend our 2020 pledge season through February 14. If you have not completed an Estimate of Giving Card for 2020 (or if you completed one, but have decided to increase the size of your pledge for 2020), simply cut or tear out the pledge card below. Complete the card and place it in the offering plate on Sunday. Or, you may mail it to St. Mark's, attn. Ruth Ritenbaugh.

Your estimate of giving allows St. Mark's to budget wisely for the year. Plus, submitting a pledge involves a matter of commitment and is a sign that you are growing as a mature disciple of Jesus Christ. These pledges are not legally binding. They are a faith promise, but may be adjusted up or down as circumstances change. All you have to do is contact Ruth Ritenbaugh, our volunteer financial secretary.

Thank you! I can't tell you enough how pleased and thankful I am to be

Your pastor and friend,

My Estimate of Giving Card

	· ·	S	
As a part of t	this congregation named St. Mark's UN	MC, I (we) choose to faithfully participate in its ministries	in 2020 by giving
\$	weekly / monthly / other:	other:(circle one or fill in the blank) to St. Mark's General Fund.	
Persons / Fa	milies who wish to designate a portion	of their giving to a specific St. Mark's ministry will fill in	the lines below:
\$	weekly / monthly /other:	(circle or fill in the blank) to	Ministry.
Name		Date	
Address		Phone	
Please contac	ct me about electronic giving.	This commitment may be revised or cancelled at a	any time at my request.

St. Mark's Financial Update

Tim Mislansky, Finance Committee Chairperson



Happy New Year St. Mark's Family,

I hope you all had a Wonder-Full holiday season. As we close out 2019 and start 2020, here are some of the financial headlines for our church.

Total giving and receipts were \$322,000 for the year. This is up \$18,000 from the prior year or about 6%. Total expenses remained nearly constant as we spent \$316,000 to run the operations of the church and another \$15,000 on building repairs/improvements (mostly to the parsonage). When you add it all up, we spent about \$10,000 more than we brought in.

The chart below provides some detail and compares 2019 to 2018.

	2019	2018	Change
Giving and Receipts	\$322,348	\$304,184	\$18,163
Church Expenses	\$316,886	\$316,511	\$375
Capital Items	\$15,130	\$17,237	(\$2,107)
Net	(\$9,668)	(\$29,564)	\$19,895

We paid all of our apportionments in 2019. This mean we sent \$7,025 to the district and \$37,817 to the conference. We also reduced our debt by nearly \$12,000 and now owe approximately \$68,000 to the bank. And we've raised almost \$16,000 towards the parking lot repair.

We are working to finalize our budget for 2020. An important part of this is the annual pledge campaign.

	2020	2019	Change
Pledge Cards Received	59	80	<21>
Pledged Dollars	\$208,154	\$267,709	<\$59,555>

(See Pastor Joe's note)

As you can see, the number and dollar of pledges is down dramatically. We are estimating that the expenses for 2020 will be similar. This makes it difficult to budget for the year. If you have not turned in a pledge card, we encourage you to take the time to do so. You can get a card in the Narthex and drop it in the offering plate.

Should you have questions about opportunities to increase giving or about anything related to 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.

Sincerely, Tim Mislansky

St. Mark's Opportunities (Fellowship, Participation, Study, Serve)



If you like to have a good time, meet people <u>and</u> eat - the Lunch Bunch would like to invite you to join them for lunch and socializing once a month at various restaurants around the area (we are always open to suggestions of places to eat too!).

The Lunch Bunch is a group made up of 55 and older adults. We will be meeting at LaRosas, 5130 Camelot Dr. in Fairfield on **February 19th at noon.**

Please see Bob or Carol Pittman or call 829-4548 for reservations by noon, Monday, February .



The February get together of the Ruth Circle is **Friday**, **February 21st.** in Fellowship Hall.

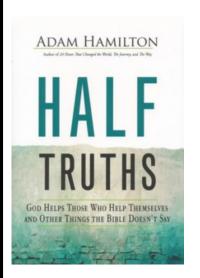
There will be a short program and refreshments.

All women are invited.

Please see or call Pam Guynes (779-9192) or Charlene Miller (844-6793) if you have questions.

MONDAY NIGHT BIBLE STUDY

The Monday night bible study group will continue to meet on **Mondays from 7:00-8:30**, **starting back up on January 20**th. Look for the sign-up sheet at the Welcome Center or see Julie Mislansky, knauffj@fuse.net, 505-4061 with any questions. Anyone is welcome to join us! You do not have to be a current part of the group. You can come in and out as your schedule allows! The next study will last until right before Lent begins.



Our next study will be Adam Hamilton's, <u>Half Truths: God Helps Those</u> Who Help Themselves and Other Things the Bible Doesn't Say.

Join Adam Hamilton in exploring popular sayings that miss the point. They are simple phrases: "God helps those who help themselves," "Love the sinner, hate the sin," and others. They sound Christian - like something you might find in the Bible. We've all heard these words. Maybe we've said them. They capture some element of truth, yet they miss the point in important ways. Discover the whole truth by comparing common Christian clichés with the wisdom found in Scripture.



2019 Celebration of Giving

Regular Giving

Broken Bus Ministry	\$1,245.00
Fairfield Food Pantry	\$1,955.00
ILAM	\$150.00
CRU	\$475.00
Salvation Army	\$700.00
Matthew 25 Ministries	\$775.00
Brian & Drian Vinson	\$725.00
Jubilee Project	\$525.00
Serve City	\$765.00
Living Water Ministries	\$823.82
Caring Closet	\$675.00
Subtotal of Regular Giving	\$8,813.82

United Methodist Church Giving

UMCOR Sunday	\$770.00
UMCOR	\$50.00
Subtotal of Methodist G	iving \$820.00

Miscellaneous Giving

Heifer International	\$3,865.00
Shared Harvest	\$15.00
Big Brothers / Big Sister	s \$682.00
Dougie & Ray's	\$800.00
Subtotal of Misc. Giving	\$5,362.00

Community Outreach (Came from St. Mark's Cares Operating Budget)

Good Neighbor Sunday	\$368.38
Fall Festival	\$89.21
Subtotal of Community G	iving \$457.59

GRAND TOTAL \$14,995.82

2019 Celebration of Serving

What an amazing year of giving love and care to others!

Our congregation was offered <u>33 opportunities</u> to serve and <u>over 130 people</u> became the hands of feet of Jesus!

Here is a summary....
4 Shared Harvest Volunteer Times
6 rides and serves on The Broken Bus
5 meals and fellowship with those at Serve City
3 times volunteering at Matthew 25

We needed help with 10 meals and over 50 people stepped up to help We had a team of 14 walkers at the Fairfield Food Pantry 5K 14 loving people offered a VBS to the kids at Living Waters 42 precious souls gave kids a great time at St. Marks VBS Almost 100 people participated in Good Neighbor Sunday

Our annual Fall Festival had 70 volunteers

We collected 6 boxes of shoes for Soles 4 Souls

Too many to count backpacks, shoes, clothing, food and toiletries for The Broken Bus Over \$600 worth of toys and games for Big Brothers Big Sisters 3 large bins full of school supplies for Dougie and Ray's

81 coats for those without in our community

A Christmas toy, a coat, and a pair of shoes for 51 children through the Salvation Almost \$4000 worth of animals purchased for The Heifer Project
Over \$800 sent to UMCOR for disaster relief

25 Thanksgiving meals provided to Fairfield families through The Fairfield Food Pantry





in Greater Cincinnati.

GET ON THE BUS - THE BROKEN BUS!

St. Mark's is scheduled for two bus rides serving those who are homeless in downtown Cincinnati.

We need riders and meal help on February 8th and February 15th. Watch the St. Mark's Cares bulletin board for sign-ups soon. We thank you for your loyal support of The Broken Bus Ministry for over three years!

FAIRFIELD FOOD PANTRY - URGENT TIME OF YEAR

We are entering the time of the year when food pantries receive the least donations. After the holiday rush of giving, donations drop drastically in January and February. As a reminder, we collect donations for the Fairfield Food Pantry year-round. There is a collection bin in the Narthex to the left as you enter from the side door. You can learn more at www.fairfieldfoodpantry.org. Here is a list of their current needs:

Peanut Butter
Canned Fruit/Vegetables
Macaroni & Cheese
Cereal
Snacks
Spaghetti & Sauce
Canned Meats (Tuna, Chicken, etc..)
Dried Pasta & Rice

Bars of Soap Toothpaste Shampoo Toilet Paper Laundry Detergent Dish Soap Sanitizing Wipes Baby Wipes Diapers



Serving Our Community Since 1997.



NEW YEAR - NEW OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE!!!

St. Mark's Cares is excited to announce that we have added four new ministries to our list of those we support with our time, money, talents, prayers, and witness! They are The Fringe Coffee House, Wesley Foundation at the University of Cincinnati, Dougie and Ray's and the YWCA Dove Shelter House. We will be highlighting these four missions over the next few months.

This month we introduce The Fringe Coffeehouse!

Patrick and Sarah Davis, of Hamilton, have been involved with prison ministry for over 15 years. Their eight-week prison music therapy program aims to get to the root causes of incarceration and destructive behavior, mentoring and building relationships with inmates and supporting them in re-entry into society. They pastor at The Fringe Church in Hamilton that "exists to live out the way of Jesus. To love, empower and build kinship with those on the fringe of our society wherever we find them, announcing the arrival of his kingdom and working for measurable change among the oppressed."

They are working towards opening The Fringe Coffeehouse, in historic Hamilton, where they will provide employment for ex-felons, a nine month job training program that will include a custom holistic support plan, music and art therapy, GED classes, parenting classes and other social services and opportunities. All for the end goal of helping those in the program regain a sense of dignity, learn healthy life skills and successfully reenter society.

Patrick and Sarah will be joining us in our worship service on January 26 th. We will hear more about their story, their ministry and their vision of helping those who live on the fringes of society. We will also find out how St. Marks can get involved. I urge you to check out their website at www.thefringecoffeehouse.com or their church's website at www.thefringehamilton.com.



Administrative Council Highlights January 14, 2020

In attendance; Julie Dichtl, Admin Board chair; Sue Luken, lay leader /delegate; Joe Payne, Pastor; PamGuynes, Nuture and Care chair; Charlotte Tierney, member at-large; Kim Nguyen, SPRC chair; Steve Nguyen, member-at-large; Peggy Smith, Children's Ministry; Erin Theodor, Youth Ministries; Tim Mislansky, Finance Chair; Pat Fassnacht, member-at-large; Jennie Marshall, Family Ministry chair.

Pastor Joe opened the meeting with prayer and devotion, focused on doing His work in the course of the meeting. Welcome to new member, Pat Fassnacht!

Committee Reports

Youth

Erin Theodor feels positive about 2020 youth ministry. She shared that she has started to have 1-on-1 youth meetings to set expectations for the coming year. This also includes a Behavior Contract that each youth will sign. Youth Group meetings are suspended until all 1-on-1's occur. Erin shared that the youth are excited about updating the youth room and that they are considering a change of time (for future youth group meetings). Additional items noted include, formation of a Youth Ministry Team. December Parent's night out was not a huge turnout, and an additional event is scheduled for Friday, February 14, 2020.

Family Ministry

Jennie Marshall spoke of kicking off 2020 with a Family Movie night, scheduled for 2/7/2020 at 7pm in Fellowship Hall. We will be showing A Wrinkle in Time, released in 2018. The Family Ministry (with Children and Youth Ministry) will be meeting Tuesday 2/20/2020, and continue planning for 2020.

St. Mark's Cares / Missions

Tim Mislansky presented Julie's report. (see pages 5-7)

SPRC

Kim Nguyen: Wrapped up 2019 getting Pastor Joe healthy. Kim took a moment to thank an anonymous donor for the Thanksgiving meal for Joe, Linda and Linda's sister that week. SPRC will be meeting at the end of January to kick off 2020.

Nurture and Care

Pam Guynes. Fifth Sunday meals for 2020 are scheduled for 3/29, 5/31, 8/30, 11/29 (may revisit with holidays). They have been busy with funerals, with 7-8 in the last 90 days. Joe noted that another member, Lew Hollinger passed away that morning. While Pam and Cindy Booker have the funeral meals down to a science, they are a lot of work. Pam noted the day before Cindy does the shopping, and makes a casserole, and the day of they are at the church most of the day with preparation, serving and clean up. There are others on the committee of 7 who will help serve, but most aren't able to stay all day. Pam did share a concern that on days of funeral meals there have been incidences of no toilet paper or no paper towels. Joe will speak with the trustees and cleaning service, to insure we can keep those stocked. Lastly for 2020, Pam advised that there are 8 people on the Nurture and Care Committee.

Children's Ministru

Peggy Smith shared with Julie an overview (handout) and noted that there was a cute kids program at Christmas to celebrate Advent (Chris Beiser had found) and that Sue Luken, Penny Dole and Jenni Hensler had helped teach the children the music. Children's ministry also supported the Youth Parent's night out. Children's Ministry has adopted the branding /name of **GLOW - Growing, Loving, Outreach, Worship**. Peggy also noted the introduction of a Pre-School Sunday School on Sunday mornings beginning 1/12/2020 in Room 102. Charlotte Tierney is leading the group and they had a good first session. For January 2020 Sunday school is focused on Baptism of Jesus and John the Baptist. February will be Discipleship. The next Children (Youth and Family combined) meeting is

2/21/2020. Peggy noted that Vacation Bible School is scheduled for June 14-18, 2020. She is attending a curriculum training in Kentucky 2/6/2020. She also noted a Lenten Dinner will be held 3/1/2020.

Lay Leader

Sue Luken shared the Ohio River Valley Leadership Training Day 1/25/2020 at Armstrong Chapel (handout). There are a lot of workshops offered and the cost is \$15 which covers the meal. Looking at the workshops, the team who is going (Sue, Kim, Peggy and Julie M) are trying to cover as many workshops as they can. The workshops are open to anyone. Sue encouraged the group to explore the Ohio River Valley workshops, and their Tuesday series that is no cost and offered in the morning and evening. Joe noted that these workshops can be shared with anyone in SPRC or other committees.

Finance

Tim Mislansky noted he previously sent out the 2019 Income and Balance Sheet. In summary, giving is up, church expenses are flat, but our net spending is still greater than revenue coming in; cash is tight as we've spent the small surplus that we had. Loan balances have been reduced during 2019 and apportionments were paid 100%. Electronic giving has slowly increased to 15 families which represents \$5,000 a month (about 20-25% of giving). A couple of

individuals have noted feeling awkward when the giving plate comes around on Sundays because they give online. Tim's son Joe has a friend who is a graphic artist who worked on a prototype for a card that we could have printed and laminated. An electronic giver could take the card on Sunday to put in the offering plate to lessen the awkward feeling. Need to work on the logistics, but the group was receptive to having this card for electronic givers. Tim noted that pledge cards are still be accepted. In 2019 we had 80 families turn in pledge cards; year to date we have pledge cards from 55 families. Finance and Joe will follow up, and with statements needing to be mailed by the end of next week will include pledge cards in that mailing. Tim indicated that Finance is holding off on finalizing the budget as they work through. Additionally they are working through the trustees' list to understand what can/should be done. Tim also covered the current check request form, noting that when individuals spend out of pocket for the church, they should use this form if they wish to be reimbursed. The back of the card has a place for signature by an approver; requestor cannot be approver (audit item). He also wanted to insure the group understood the Memorial fund policy. When there are donations greater than \$500 in someone's name, we ask the family how they want to have it spent. Currently have 6 memorial funds at the over \$500, and we typically give the

family about a year to decide how to spend the money (and Brenda insures we share with the family when spent).

Trustees

Pastor Joe presented on behalf of Bob Hamp. Joe noted that Bob was mistakenly left off the mailing list and agenda as well as had a family emergency and could not attend. Joe shared that there is a project list from the Parsonage (and church) that includes plumbing, bathrooms and sewer lines. The Parsonage's iron pipes (under the house) are clean for now, after a sewer back up around the holidays. We have bids (including from Roto Rooter) to re-line the iron pipes under the house. The trustees' list also includes the church bathrooms which are not handicap accessible and are dated.

Music

Julie Dichtl shared an email update from Chris Beiser. The Christmas Cantata was a success. The Choir ended the year with an evening of caroling to 10 shut ins and time for fellowship together afterwards. He and Joe will look at music for Lent and the Easter Cantata. He also shared that a group including Andy Shellman is meeting to plan a craft show/concert/dinner idea for the purpose of raising funds for the parking lot project.

Exploration of Consent Agenda

Julie D. introduced the concept of using a Consent Agenda going forward, noting that we had spent more than an hour on our committee updates, leaving limited time for new ideas and bigger vision items. The process would be that Julie sends out a meeting reminder a week prior to the next meeting. The council members will respond with their group's minutes or a brief report which Julie will then share with all council members. When we meet we would entertain a motion to accept the committee updates

(consent agenda items) as distributed. Tim Mislansky made the motion to accept, Erin seconded, Sue 3rd to adopt the consent agenda. Motion carried. Julie noted that she will send reminder for future meetings and for February she will not be at the meeting.

Next Meeting is Tuesday February 11, 2020 and going forward the 2nd Tuesday of the month. We will consider alternate dates/schedule for the summer.

Pastor's Report

Pastor Joe shared that he had 4 big goals in 2019 in his head (organizing into shepherding groups, Healthy Congregations training for leaders, a capital campaign (for parsonage and church) and assisting the congregation through the likely changes coming following General Conference. The body suggested that the Healthy Congregations training may be our top priority for the year and assist us moving forward. It was suggested we start with 2 of the 4 goals for 2020, and the council was supportive of pursuing Healthy Congregations training and a Capital Campaign. Pastor Joe passed out (handout) the Protocol of Reconciliation and Grace Through Separation. He noted that a diverse group of 16 leaders came together and unanimously agreed to this separation

document. He emphasized that this is a proposal coming before General Conference. Joe walked council members through the document and highlighted several sections including the timeline, process and financial terms. This document is available for anyone to view and review. Joe shared his hope that we as a whole church remain part of the United Methodist Church with the harmful language removed and that while not everyone is aligned, would stay for the love of the church. He noted his view has changed over the years and that we are all on a continuous journey of understanding and continuing this important discussion.

Jennie made the motion to adjourn the meeting. Joe closed us in prayer.

Respectfully submitted, Jennie Marshall

YOUTH GROUP NEWS

2019 ended with our Christmas Party, and I thank we would all agree that the saran-wrap game is one we'll be bringing back again soon.

As we begin a new year, One-on-One sessions are currently being scheduled. This is an opportunity for Erin to meet with each youth separately to set goals and expectations for the coming year. Once these sessions have all been completed weekly Youth Group meetings will begin again! If you are in grades 6th-12th and haven't yet scheduled a time to meet with Erin, please reach out to her at (513) 748-1085.

A trip is being planned to go see "Dead Serious...About Life" in Mason on Sunday, March 1st for all those youth (and others!) who are interested. Look for more information on this in the coming weeks!

Last but not least, this is the year we plan to make major headway in our revamp of the Youth room upstairs. The first manner of business will be filling in holes and painting, so if you would like to help with this, please let me know!

Erin L. Theodor Youth Director

Need a Parent's Night Out?

Drop your kids off at the church and we'll take care of the rest - dinner, crafts, games, and a movie. Don't have kids? Sign-up to help!

Donations Will benefit St. Mark's Student Ministries

Friday, February 14th
5pm - 9pm
St. Mark's United Methodist Church
4601 Fairfield Avenue
Fairfield, Ohio 45014

Contact Erin for more details: (513) 748-1085

February Birthdays and Anniversaries

If your birthday or anniversary is not listed or is incorrect, please contact the church office (513-844-1818).

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

- 3 Wade Lewis
- 3 Elle Nguyen
- 3 George Peters
- 4 Susan Bunte
- 7 Arvilla Brinkmeyer
- 8 Lauren Leyrer 8 yrs.
- 9 Shirley Cowden
- 11 Julie Dichtl
- 11 Doug Ewald
- 11 Laura Spahn
- 11 Jean Stivers
- 15 Erin Theodor
- 18 Lily Edmundson
- 20 Cindy Booker
- 22 Shane Becker
- 22 Alice Becker 3 yrs.
- 25 Shirley Grant
- 26 Theodore Wessels 1 yr.
- 28 Belinda Peters
- 28 Robert Rinker, Jr.

FEBRUARY ANNIVERSARIES

- 1 John & Linda Prohaska
- 11 Dick & Darlene Kuertz
- 12 Donal & Sue McDaniel
- 14 Ardean & Pat Pitman
- 20 Don & Cheryl Kemen
- 28 Jeff & Carol Gering
- 28 Steve & Diana Griffith

A Thank You from Pastor Joe and Linda

Dear St. Mark's Church Family,

To say the year 2019 was difficult for us is an understatement. You know that. But, you may not know how grateful we are to be here at St. Mark's. We cannot imagine any other church doing more to help get us through this past year. You have been with us and stayed with us through the challenges and heartache. You have been such a huge blessing to us.

You bless us in so many ways, including and especially through your generous Christmas Love Offering. We thank you so much for this gift. It means a lot to know that you care for your pastor and his wife.

In Christ,

Toe and Linda

St. Mark's Family,

I wish to thank the congregation for their many get well wishes and prayers the past several months as John's health declined.

My family and I are also most grateful for the support and caring of our St. Mark's family following John's passing. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

Sincerely,

Ann McWilliam

St. Mark's,

A special thanks to the St. Mark's carolers who came to my home a week before Christmas.

They gave me a wonderful gift of their voice in songs, especially on such a cold night. I so enjoyed it.

Blessings to each of you,

Virginia Shaw



St. Mark's,

Thank you to St. Mark's for all you did during Max's illness and passing. From the night it all began through his time at Tri County, people were praying, visiting and sending cards and cookies. He appreciated it all, especially the caroling of St. Mark's choir. Max loved St. Mark's and I'm sure he loved the funeral he planned the night of his surgery. Thank you to Pastor Joe, Chris and Sue for making it as he wanted!

Betty, Michelle, Mark



St. Mark's United Methodist Church

4601 Fairfield Avenue Fairfield, OH 45014

513-844-1818

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Looking Ahead - Mark Your Calendars

Ash Wednesday February 26, 7:00 p.m. Service of Imposition of Ashes and Holy Communion

Lenten Dinner Sunday Evening, March 1

Fifth Sunday Meal following Worship, March 29

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
Youth Director, Erin Theodor
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