



SPIRIT OF ST. MARK'S

MAY 2020

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



Dear St. Mark's Family,

God is working miracles through St. Mark's United Methodist Church! It is clear to me that as we go through this pandemic together, God remains with us, God is leading us, and God is working miracles through us.

Consider:

With no experience in live streaming worship, our worship team has been doing exactly that. While it would be much better to be together, live streaming worship has definitely filled a spiritual need. Plus, others are joining us. We are welcoming folks we haven't heard from in a while. And, others we have never met (yet) are worshipping with us. Good news!

Likewise, we had never had meetings "online" before. And yet, we are doing it! Ad Council's first Zoom Meeting was admittedly a learning experience. It was fun and frustrating at the same time. However, by the next meeting we were all pros. We learned a new thing!

Members of our congregation have stepped up in big and small ways, offering to assist others in need, from finances to toilet paper! Folks have been contacting me, offering to assist those who have been laid off or financially hurting. And, people in the community have appreciated our "Get By" Bags. They've even left us notes:

"Got mine today. Thank you so much!"

"Hey thank you soooooo much!....Starting new job after 3 months out of work."

Turn the pages of this Newsletter to discover further proof of the amazing miracles happening through the people of St. Mark's. Inside, you will find notes and reports from our Lay Leader and chairs of Trustees, St. Mark's Cares, and Finance. They help to tell this amazing story more fully.

Reading further, you will find our May birthdays and anniversaries. Finally, on the last pages are "Pick Me Up" Moments from Carol Pittman and an inspirational piece by Sue McDaniel.

The end of this crisis is not yet past us, and we may never go back to "where things used to be." Even so, I have every confidence that God will continue to work in and through this congregation

You have proven that even though our country is in lock-down, St. Mark's continues to be an alive and vibrant church! What a blessing to be a part of this congregation. I am most grateful to be

Your pastor and friend,

PS. Administrative Council will be meeting by Zoom on Tuesday, May 5 to discuss guidelines received from the Conference on ways we can begin public gatherings at St. Mark's. Stay tuned for more details.



From Our Lay Leader Sue Luken

Hello Faith Family

I surely do miss you all! Who would have thought at the beginning of 2020 that this is we would be, separated from each other by space, but certainly not in spirit and heart! It has been a difficult and trying time in many ways, yet I believe that many have experienced some beautiful moments in the midst of it all. I hope that when we come back together that we will be able to share some of these moments with each other. I'd like to share these words from

Beth Moore with you.

"God's light will always lead us right back to the path. No matter how long the detour has been. Return is only a shortcut away."

Hear these words; Lord, Your servant Job felt he was in the land of deepest night, of deep shadow and disorder, where even the light is like darkness. (Job10:22) You restored someone who knew a much bleaker darkness than mine. You will restore me too, if I let you.

You are my lamp, O Lord; You the Lord, turn my darkness into light. (2 Sam.22:29).

Friends, I believe that we are finally beginning to see the "light at the end of the tunnel" so to speak! We have been challenged during these days, but through God's love and grace, the leadership of our Pastor and worship team of leaders, as well as encouragement from one another; WE WILL PREVAIL even stronger than before! While we still have some hurdles to overcome, I know that if we as the Body of Believers in Christ work together, that we can and will indeed overcome. I cannot wait for us all to Be together in worship and fellowship as one body very soon!

Until then, be safe, stay well, and know that you are loved!

Your Lay Leader,

Sue Luken

Editor's Note: Special congratulations to Sue's husband, Mark, on his retirement from GE. Mark's first day of retirement was May 1.

Receiving Holy Communion on Maundy Thursday





St. Mark's Cares Update

Julie Mislansky

Hello friends!

I miss your faces!! I miss serving together!

I am thankful to report that even though we can't be together, and we are limited on how much we can "physically" help our neighbors, our church continues to support and love our neighbors. Because of your generous designated giving to St. Marks Cares, we were able to distribute close to \$2000 this month to our eleven ministries we support! I'd like to highlight two of them.

You may remember that we recently decided to support the Wesley House at the University of Cincinnati. Rev. Benji Sayre, the director of this ministry, visited and spoke to our congregation in March. Because of the Covid-19 crisis and the closing of UC, they had to ask the students who rented rooms in their two houses to vacate. Losing this income has put a tremendous strain on their finances. We were blessed to be able to send them a check for \$400.

Secondly, we were blessed, because of your generous giving, to significantly help another one of our ministries, Hamilton Living Waters. Just a few weeks ago, their outdoor security camera was stolen. This is essential to them, allowing them to safely let the children in and out of their building. You may know that our beloved John McWilliam was a huge supporter of HLW and served on their board of directors. Ann had recently given the memorial money given in John's name to St. Marks Cares, to spend as we saw fit. When the camera was stolen, we immediately knew that we had to give the \$440 of memorial money to HLW towards a new camera.

Another way we continue to serve our neighbors has been to start a St. Marks team to "walk/run/move in any form" in the Big Brothers Big Sisters Virtual 5K. They were to have an actual 5K on April 26th, but, of course, had to make this a "do it on your own time and in your own way" 5K. We set a goal to raise \$1000. At this writing, we have a team of 8 and have already raised \$759! This fundraiser goes until May 16th. Again, this was possible because of your support- those who have joined the team and many others who have donated to our team. Thank you!!! See our other missions page to see how you can join or donate.

Finally, we had an impromptu food drive during the Maundy Thursday drive-through communion. Even with the short notice, we collected 6 boxes of food. We plan to have another food drive in May and more information we will be coming about that. Watch your email and our Facebook page!

Thank you so much for your generous giving during these uncertain times. Our St. Marks family always comes through to help and love our neighbors!!





From Our Chair of Trustees Bob Hamp

Many housekeeping, maintenance, and repair items completed, or taking place, during the time the facility has been closed. These include:

- Strip, wax and buff floors in the kitchen, Room #101 and #102. Paint kitchen walls, pressure washed floor mats.
- Kitchen walls, cabinets, preparation tables, stove and oven cleaned.
- Painted Sunday school classroom #103.
- De-clutter the basement area, the second-floor utility room, and fellowship hall closet.
- De-clutter music room.
- Re-home an electronic piano stored in the choir/meeting room to a Ross high school music student.
- The drum set sold; funds returned to St. Mark's general budget.
- Eliminate a leak in the drain under the double stainless-steel sink in the kitchen.
- De-clutter and re-organize the former janitor's closet/storeroom.
- Round-up surplus folding chairs, now stored in the storeroom
- Begin cleaning windows, doors.
- Correct roof leaks over a choir room entry and a nursery entrances: (Graf Enterprises)
- Dishwasher drain connection problem corrected. (Ken Rader & Son)
- Cleaned fellowship hall tables and chairs.
- Completed cleaning pews, Sanctuary floor
- Removed hymnals, Bibles, registration pads from pews.

Pending: Call Bob at 513-668-3337 to reserve your spot to help in these or any other numerous projects. Signing up insures that you are able to work safely away from others. When you help, you are partnering with your church family to have a fine house a worship for you and for our guests.

- Sweep carpets throughout
- Empty trash cans, waste baskets
- Upgrade computers in the Finance office from Windows 7 (No longer supported by Microsoft) to Windows 10. (Zach Collins)
- Install doors in choir/meeting room storage areas.
- Paint storage area walls.
- Replace damaged ceiling tiles
- Replace (1) gutter downspout
- Move floor buffer machines to basement storage
- Declutter chancel storage area behind piano and organ
- Replace defective light fixtures
- Declutter "kitchen annex" storage area
- Install doors in Room 1076 (choir/meeting) room storage areas
- Obtain quote for upgrading building alarm system

Volunteers who have assisted include:

Chris Beiser
Pat Belarski
Cindy Booker
Lee Brinkmeyer
Gil Dole
Penny Dole
Beth Ewald

Doug Ewald
Holly Fassnacht
Pat Fassnacht
Pam Guynes
Chrissy Lampi
Julie Mislansky
Mary Mislansky

Dick Roemer
Lynn Schumacher
Ray Smith
Don Stewart
Marilyn Stewart
Danny Thomas
Rich Turner



St. Mark's Financial Update

Tim Mislansky, Finance Committee Chairperson

Dear St. Mark's family,

When the Administrative Council held its first meeting after the governor's stay at home order, one of the things we discussed at length was our financial situation. We were concerned that because we were not in church together that we would see a drop in our giving. We started making contingency plans on what to do if giving fell off, but we also put our trust in you and our trust in God.

I'm thrilled to report that since our worship services have moved online, we have had over \$48,000 generously given to the church. **That's tremendous!** And that doesn't include last week's checks which have not been counted yet.

Year to date, we have received over \$115,000 in contributions which is up over \$6,000 from the prior year. What an amazing display of faithfulness.

With the strong giving, we are currently at a point where we have essentially stopped borrowing from our designated funds.

We've paid all our bills on time, made our loan payments each month and paid our full share of apportionments for March and April. We've also had funds available to remove trees from the parsonage lot and re-waxed several floors in the church building.

And we've even seen an increase in designated giving so that St. Mark's Cares was able to send close to \$2,000 last week to the 11 ministries we support.

So thank you St. Mark's family. Thank you for your faithfulness. Thank you for your generosity. Thank you for your love of God and of St. Mark's.

Stay healthy, stay hopeful and stay at home as much as you can, and I hope to see you soon.

Tim

When Ohio reaches phase 3, gatherings with unlimited numbers of persons may be initiated. Until that time, we will not be worshipping physically in our sanctuary.

For your convenience, **we have enclosed two more addressed and stamped offering envelopes** with this newsletter. You may use them, or you may sign up for electronic giving by going to our website and following the directions under the "give" tab. If you have any questions or need any assistance in setting up your e-giving account, Tim will be glad to assist you. You may call Tim at (937) 657-4827

Daily Pick Me Up Moments

compiled by Carol Pittman

*As we go through this difficult season,
these encouraging sayings, quotations, and scripture verses are given
to help "pick you up."*

- Sunday, May 3: With God behind you and His arms beneath you, you can face whatever is before you.
- Monday, May 4: Remember that feelings are natural and normal, and that happy times and sad times are part of everyone's life. Mr. Rogers
- Tuesday, May 5: Lord, help me to do all the good I can, in all the places I can, to all the people I can, for as long as I can.
- Wednesday, May 6: Today will never come again. Be a blessing. Be a friend. encourage someone. Take time to care. Let your words heal, not wound.
- Thursday, May 7: The times when our hearts are weary and our strength fades, God carries us through. Isaiah 46:4
- Friday, May 8: Having hope will give you courage. Job 18:11
- Saturday, May 9: For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven. Ecclesiastes 3:1
- Sunday, May 10: The loveliest masterpiece of the heart of God is the heart of a mother. St. Therese of Lisieux
- Monday, May 11: God wants full custody, not just weekends.
- Tuesday, May 12: It's usually when it's harder than you thought, and taking longer than you thought, that it turns out to be better than you thought.
- Wednesday, May 13: When I'm alone God is my comforter. When I am nothing, God is my everything. When I am sad and lonely, God is my song and my joy. When I am weak and helpless, God is my strength.
- Thursday, May 14: Let your hope make you glad. Be patient in time of trouble and never stop praying. Romans 12:12
- Friday, May 15: I find joy in every day, not because life is always good, but because God is.
- Saturday, May 16: Put your heart and soul into every activity you do as though you are doing it for the Lord Himself.
- Sunday, May 17: My prayer today is that we feel the loving arms of God wrapped around us, and will know in our hearts that He will never forsake us as we trust in Him.
- Monday, May 18: Let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them. Ephesians 4:29
- Tuesday, May 19: If Jesus is your foundation, you'll be able to withstand the storm.
- Wednesday, May 20: The greatest privilege God gives to us is the freedom to approach Him at any time.
- Thursday, May 21: As you start and end your day, be thankful for every little thing in your life. You will come to realize how blessed you truly are.
- Friday, May 22: It is not how much we give but how much love we put into giving. Mother Teresa
- Saturday, May 23: Our job is to love others, without stopping to inquire whether or not they are worthy. John 15:12
- Sunday, May 24: May you find strength to face tomorrow in the love that surrounds you today.
- Monday, May 25: We are not called to walk in our strength; we are called to walk in His.
- Tuesday, May 26: God does not give what we can handle; God helps us handle what we are given.
- Wednesday, May 27: There will never be one moment of my life that God is not thinking about me or loving me

Thursday, May 28: The power of prayer cannot be explained but the power of prayer can be experienced.
Friday, May 29: Have patience. God is not finished yet. Philippians 1:6
Saturday, May 30: When your faith is tested, you learn to be patient. James 1:3
Sunday, May 31: Trust in the Lord forever, for the Lord Jehovah is an everlasting rock. Isaiah 26:4

Our "To Be" List

by Sue McDaniel

As many of you know, I love the Today Show. Last summer I went to New York City to be on the show on my birthday. Dylan Dreyer is my new best friend!!!

Maria Shriver is a contributor and I like her a lot too. Last week she talked about the Pandemic and suggested that we have a "To Be" list instead of a "To Do" list.

So, put your "To Do" list on the back burner (mine has been there quite a while) and start a "To Be" list. Here are a few ideas to get you going.

1. To be kinder.

"As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience." Colossians 3:12

2. To be more patient.

"I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love." Ephesians 4:1-2

3. To be more giving.

"Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God." Hebrews 13:16

4. To be happier. What we are experiencing can be a real bummer if we let it. So, let's look on the sunny side.

"Happy are the people to whom such blessings fall; happy are the people whose God is the Lord." Psalm 144:15

5. To be more thoughtful. A short phone call can brighten someone's day.

"Do to others as you would have them do to you." Luke 6:31

Our current group of "friends and family" is rather limited. Let's all make a "To Be" list that will help us get through this crazy time.

April Birthdays and Anniversaries

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

MAY BIRTHDAYS

- 1 - Sandy Ronningen
- 3 - Kathy Bradley
- 3 - Marla George
- 6 - Beth Ewald
- 7 - Malakie Edmundson (17 yrs.)
- 9 - Mary Mislansky (17 yrs.)
- 11 - Tomie O'Sullivan
- 13 - Barb White
- 14 - Cathy Seeger
- 15 - Theresa Griffin
- 17 - Roger Roark
- 18 - Julie Mislansky
- 22 - Jeff Guynes
- 22 - Don Jackson
- 22 - Gretchen Menke
- 23 - Marta Hollinger
- 23 - Steve Woods
- 24 - Zedith Pottenger
- 25 - Gary Miller
- 25 - Sue Webster
- 26 - Shirley Aydlett
- 26 - Lauren Dichtl
- 28 - Diana Danford (4 yrs.)
- 28 - Rich Zugelter
- 30 - Betty Winkler



MAY ANNIVERSARIES

- 1 - Ray & Karen Smith
- 6 - Don & Susan Moser
- 9 - Bill & Julie Dichtl
- 17 - Hugh & Pam Guynes
- 25 - Lee & Arvilla Brinkmeyer
- 28 - Charlie & Debbie Bryant
- 28 - Jerry & Gail Hartwig
- 30 - Bill & Lynne Schumacker

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

Worship Service:
Sundays 9:30 am
Live Streamed

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Butler County Virtual 5K Run/Walk

St. Mark's Cares is excited to share that we have started a St. Mark's Team to participate in the BBBS virtual 5K walk/run!.

Any movement counts - walk, run, ride a bike, take a scenic drive in your convertible, walk your dog, walk laps around your house! Any distance counts - 1 mile, 5K, marathon, one time around the block! Any amount of time you commit counts - one day, every day, once a week! Anything you do between now and May 16th counts to quality as your "race".

To register: <https://amplify.netdonor.net/.../st.-marks-united-methodist-c...>

Registration is \$25.

