



SPIRIT OF ST. MARK'S

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 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,

In early June the church garden plot was tilled. Pumpkin plants and seeds were set into the ground. My own garden next to it was planted in tomatoes, peppers, beans and other vegetables. Along the left hand side of the garden I planted little sunflower seeds. The package said these were mammoth sunflowers. Within the next couple months I learned that the "mammoth" name was not an exaggeration. Today, those sunflowers tower over me, some of them over ten feet tall!

The garden is coming to the end of its growing season. The mammoth sunflowers overlook a flourishing garden, including and especially our amazing pumpkin patch. The blooming sunflower heads are maturing, and will soon provide a feast of seeds for the neighboring birds. The tomatoes and peppers are slowing their ripening. The pumpkin vines are dying back, revealing 100 - 150 or more pumpkins of various sizes ready for the coming fall. It's been a good year for the garden, and my thanks goes to all who helped to make it happen.

For me, the garden symbolizes who we are as a community of faith. To be sure, my thoughts are not original. Jesus used many gardening references when describing the Kingdom of God (Kingdom of Heaven in Matthew). One of my favorites is how he compares the Kingdom to a mustard seed:

"He said, 'How will we liken the Kingdom of God? Or with what parable will we illustrate it? It's like a grain of mustard seed, which, when it is sown in the earth, though it is less than all the seeds that are on the earth, yet when it is sown, grows up, and becomes greater than all the herbs, and puts out great branches, so that the birds of the sky can lodge under its shadow.'" —
Mark 4:30-32, World English Bible

My friends, even in the midst of this pandemic, you have continued to do your part in growing the Kingdom. To be sure, we have our differences; on some things, we are certainly not of one mind. However, at the end of the day, you show what can happen when people unite in their love of Christ and others, and desire to grow in His likeness. Yes, even in the midst of this pandemic, you have responded to appeals from our St. Mark's Cares Committee. You have given of your own time. You have given of your finances. You are showing the world that even though we are not worshiping in person at our church, We Are Very Much The Church, more vital and alive than ever before. I thank God for you.

I pray that you are holding together during this Coronavirus pandemic, certainly a unique time in our nation and world. Individually and collectively, you have been on my mind and heart. I continue to pray for your physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health during this time and always. I pray for our kids and all school leaders as they begin a new school year. I pray for the day when we will be together again.

Most of all, I give thanks for you, for your enduring witness and faith. You are making a difference.
YOU ARE THE CHURCH.

Blessings in Christ, our Master Gardener,

PS. I am beginning our new member classes once again. We will meet virtually and in person. Anyone wishing to become a member of St. Mark's are welcome to call the church office to sign up. Details will be given when you call.

St. Mark's Administrative Council

In our ongoing journey to be a welcoming community of faith, the Administrative Council has approved this welcoming statement for publication in our print and electronic media.

"We are an all-inclusive faith community, where everyone is welcome at God's table. Truly, all people - all genders, races, ages, abilities, cultures, ethnic backgrounds, sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions , economic circumstances, family configurations, or difference of faith perspectives - are invited to fully participate in the life of our faith community. "

The above Statement is meaningless without the "meat" that backs it up. Therefore, we shall continually strive to back these words with our actions and to call out, resist, and fight against injustice and oppression wherever we see it in our community, our nation, and our world.

To that end, we will offer the following opportunities for education and enlightenment at St. Mark's UMC in the coming months. Watch your bulletin, newsletter, and our St. Mark's Facebook page for more information about these and other learning options.

Race Issues - Just Mercy by Bryan Stevenson book study and discussion.

Bryan Stevenson was a young lawyer when he founded the Equal Justice Initiative, a legal practice dedicated to defending those most desperate and in need: the poor, the wrongly condemned, and women and children trapped in the farthest reaches of our criminal justice system. One of his first cases was that of Walter McMillian, a young man who was sentenced to die for a notorious murder he insisted he didn't commit. The case drew Bryan into a tangle of conspiracy, political machination, and legal brinksmanship—and transformed his understanding of mercy and justice forever.

LGBTQ Issues – “Faithful & Inclusive, the Bible, Sexuality and the United Methodist Church” 6-week DVD series

Faithful and Inclusive allows you to gain an understanding of how United Methodists can be both obedient to God's Word and fully welcoming to LGBTQ persons in the church.

This six-session resource for Sunday schools and small groups has been designed for participants to develop their own perspectives on the Bible's passages related to homosexuality.

Rev. Rob Fuquay, pastor of one of the largest United Methodist congregations in the country, creates a safe space to navigate through this thorny issue, relying on the biblical-interpretation approach of Methodism's founder, John Wesley. Each video session also features the faith journeys of members of the LGBTQ community and their families.

Ethnicity/Socio-economic disparities - "Feast over Fences" hosted by the Fridge Coffee House. We will host this meal sometime in the future (as Covid allows), but in the meantime, we will make a donation to help fund these meals.

"Feast Over Fences" is a community meal that has been started by the Fringe Coffee House/Ministry. These meals are designed to bring people together and begin breaking down the racial and socio-economic segregation in our city. We believe our city and the world is a better place when we break bread with and get to know people who are different from us. In our divided nation and culture, the need for more meals and meaningful conversation has never been greater. There's a reason Jesus placed such a high value on meals. We believe healing can happen around the table... there will be great food, loud music and conversations long overdue.

St. Mark's Financial Update

Tim Mislansky, Finance Committee Chairperson



Greetings to my St. Mark's friends,

Finances Are In Good Order

Our financial results continue to be positive even in light of not gathering in person. We had over \$30,000 in giving during July and expenses of only \$27,000. Whenever, we bring in a little more than we spend, the better for our long term Financial health.

Year-to-date, total giving is \$205,000 which is up about 7% from last year – an incredible result considering the pandemic and economic uncertainty. Thank you again for your faithfulness to St. Mark's.

All in all our finances are in good order!

Parking Lot Campaign Final Stretch

We do have one area that we are in need. In 2018, we started an initiative to raise between \$35,000 and \$40,000 to fund repairs to the parking lot and install new lighting in the parking lot. We had some early success in fundraising, generating \$8,000 in 2018, \$9,000 in 2019 and less than \$2,000 this year. We've also set aside some extra funds from small, undesignated memorials towards the parking lot and now have \$18,000. The parking lot issue hasn't gone away and perhaps has even gotten a bit worse.

So recently the Administrative Board authorized a short term fund raising campaign. Today, we have about \$18,000 so we need to raise an additional \$17,000 to \$20,000 to complete the project. Time is of the essence because it needs to be done before winter.

While no one is probably going to get excited about spending the money just to repair the parking lot, I hope you would see value in improving the outdoor lighting in the parking lot. During our winter months when it's gets dark around 5 or 6 pm, we have a significant safety issue for those that come to the church for meetings, choir or other activities (and yes, we will eventually get past COVID-19 and get back to face-to-face).

We are working out the details of the fundraising, but we would ask that you prayerfully consider a contribution (or a second contribution) to the parking lot. Doing this would make St. Mark's a safer place for those who use the building. We do plan on fixing the lot and using our line of credit to borrow any potential shortage. And be on the lookout for announcements regarding this project. More info will follow.

Tim

St. Mark's Cares Update

Julie Mislansky

JULY AND AUGUST UPDATES



Our school supply drive was such a huge success and will help to fill many backpacks! Ted McDaniel, of Dougie and Ray's, and his four boys stopped by church to load up all of our donations. The students of Fairfield schools will be so blessed by your generosity. Thank you!

Total collections:
79 packs of crayons
48 packs of colored pencils
52 notebooks
210 bottles of glue
25 packs of dry erase markers
432 pens
56 packs of pencils
32 composition notebooks
162 glue sticks
52 packs of Index cards
32 packs of loose-leaf paper



During this Covid-19 time, we have continued to provide meals for the folks at Serve City. Thanks to the leadership of Charlotte Tierney, a full meal from Jocko's was delivered to Serve City residents in April, June, and August. The mission is now allowing volunteers and home-cooked food, so we will once again be asking for donations of food and money, if you prefer. Our next scheduled meal is November 18th and we plan on making it a full and generous Thanksgiving meal! Keep an eye out in early November for sign-ups!



UMCOR SUNDAY COLLECTION TOTAL

\$1855

**God bless you for your generosity!
Our biggest UMCOR offering ever!!**

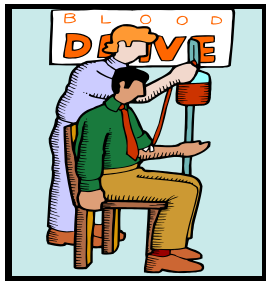


GOOD NEIGHBOR WEEK

St. Mark's UMC

Sept. 13-20, 2020

We are going all out this year and planning a whole week of "Loving Our Neighbors!" Your St. Mark's Cares committee has several activities planned and different ways for you and your family to be involved. With the uncertainty and disappointments of the past six months, we want to make this year's "Good Neighbor Week" extra-special and provide many ways to bless our congregation and our community! Here's what's in store for that week:



BLOOD DRIVE, hosted by the Community Blood Center
Wednesday, Sept 16th 3:00 - 7:00 Choir Room

For the first time since 2008, St. Mark's will host a blood drive! There are enough slots for 40 donors. Let's fill those slots!! All donors must have an appointment. Unfortunately, they are not accepting walk-ins at this time.

Here is the link to get registered to donate and select your time.
The information is also on our St. Mark's Facebook page.

Please share with your friends and family - anyone is welcome!
If you prefer, you can contact Julie Mislansky at 505-4061, and she will sign you up.
Let's love our community members and fill the much-needed donated blood supply!!

https://www.donortime.com/donor/schedules/drive_schedule/68443

St. Mark's Cares

CARE FOR OUR CONGREGATION **Monday, Sept. 14 – Saturday, Sept. 20**

Because of the pandemic, we know some of our congregation has not been able to get out and do all the things that are important and helpful to you! We want to help! We will be providing the physical help and the smiling faces! If you are homebound, because of Covid or otherwise, if you live alone or don't have family close by to help, if you have health issues, or if you just want or need a visit, we are here for you! Our calling team will be calling everyone on their list to inquire about any needs. They will also be asking for help from individuals or households who would be willing to assist with chores and visits. Please consider offering your help if you can! ALL WORK AND VISITS will be done OUTSIDE, masked and socially distant. But not spiritually distant!! Examples might be raking leaves, trimming bushes or planting fall flowers.

If you need help or want to provide the help or visit, and you have not spoken to your calling team leader about this, please call, text, or email either Sue or Charlotte. Please have this info to them by the end of August so we can plan accordingly.

Sue Luken 257-8862 suzluken@hotmail.com
Charlotte Tierney 795-3010 catterney13@yahoo.com

DONATION DRIVE FOR GIFT BASKETS FOR OUR LOCAL SCHOOLS STAFF

Tuesday, Sept. 8 1 - 3 pm
Wednesday, Sept. 9 9 - 11 am
Thursday, Sept. 10 5 - 7 pm

St. Mark's Cares team members will be in the back, by the kitchen door,
to accept your donations!!

We would like to show our appreciation and support to our area schools and all their staff for the extra hard work, care, and concern we know they will putting in for this school year due to the unusual circumstances. Whether schools are meeting in person or online, there is more planning and preparation to be done this year. We are grateful to all the schools for their dedication and love for our kids. We will be putting together gift baskets to be delivered to area schools as a way of "loving our neighbors" at our community schools. All donations must be store-bought and individually packaged, following the school's safety and Covid guidelines. Here is what we are asking for:

Bags of individually wrapped candy, candy bars, chocolate, lifesavers, etc.
Boxes of individually wrapped "treats"- Little Debbie snacks, granola bars,
nuts or almonds, dried fruit, etc.

Individual small bags of cookies, chips, cheezits, etc.

PPE (personal protection equipment)----

Multi-surface spray cleaner or wipes

Disposable plastic gloves

Any size bottles of hand sanitizer

2-layer face masks, disposable or handmade

St. Mark's Cares

CARE FOR THOSE WHO ARE ISOLATED

We have several members and friends of St. Mark's who are living in a nursing facility, assisted care facility, or live at home alone that would love to know how much we love them! If you would like to write a note or card for these friends, we will deliver them when we make our visits. You can drop these cards off during the donation drive the week before Good Neighbor Week.

FLOOD FACEBOOK WITH POSITIVE MESSAGES #NotAllHerosWearCapes

We would like to "love our neighbor" by recognizing and honoring our essential workers who've been there for all of us during this time of Covid. How we've depended on our Clicklist groceries, our Amazon packages, our neighbor who ran an errand for us, our online teachers and speakers, our pastors, our medical professionals, all those who clean and care for our community!?? We are asking you to show your appreciation by honoring them on your Facebook page; whether it be someone you know personally or just a sincere "thank you" to all. Each day of Good Neighbor Week we will honor a particular category of people. Post every day that week, thanking someone, and share a personal story or photo if you are recognizing a loved one. Feel free, if you wish, to add the hashtag #NotAllHerosWearCapes to your post, so we can all find and see each other's posts.

Monday, Sept. 14 - all medical professionals, EMS, nursing care facility staff

Tuesday, Sept. 15 - all school staff; administrators, teachers, aides, custodians, cafeteria workers, school nurses, bus drivers, school resource officers, etc.

Wednesday, Sept. 16 - all police officers and fire fighters

Thursday, Sept. 17 - all delivery and essential goods and services workers; grocery store staff, truck drivers, delivery and postal workers/drivers (Amazon, DoorDash, UPS, etc.), sanitation workers, etc.

Friday, Sept. 18 - all those in the military

Saturday, Sept. 19 - special family, friends, and neighbors who have supported us

Sunday, Sept. 20 - our faith leaders

I warned you it was going to be a jam-packed week of spreading love!!! We will have a kick-off to Good Neighbor Week on Sunday, Sept. 13th during worship and will celebrate and share the events of the week at worship on Sunday, Sept. 20th. Watch the bulletin and our Facebook page for reminders and updates or contact anyone on the St. Mark's Care's committee with questions or offers to help!! As a quick summary, here is short list of all the ways YOU and your family can get involved.....

- write a note or card for our homebound friends
- donate treats or PPE for local schools
- do chores and/or visits for our church family
- give blood
- write Facebook posts to honor our essential workers

YOUTH GROUP NEWS

It has been a fun month of getting to know our youth and families better as we figure out together how to make Youth group work during a pandemic!

I am excited to announce that Zach Dichtl, a long-time member and active participant in the life of St. Mark's, will be my partner in leading the youth! Zach's smile, positive outlook on life, and love for God will be a tremendous asset to me and the group.....not to mention, his youth and energy.

All the youth and families have been contacted by phone or a personal visit and most of them were given a personal back-to-school blessing by myself, Pastor Joe and Peggy, director of Children's Ministries. If you have a child of youth group age, grades 7-12, and you have not heard from me, please let me know! I don't want to miss anyone!

Julie Mislansky 5055-4061 knauffj@fuse.net

We will begin having "Zoom" gatherings in Sept. Youth, watch your email or texts for info about that.

The end of August has been super busy renovating the youth room! New paint, a new design, and new furniture are all happening. Several of the youth have been by to help paint. Thank you! And thank you to everyone in our church family who has come by to share their skills!

Natasha, Terry and Sully Saylor
Zach Dichtl
Layton & Olivia Edmundson

Jeannie, Rick & Gunnar Marshall
Tim, Julie & Mary Mislansky
Don Stewart

Lee Brinkmeyer
Gay & Marty Kubik



CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES



G . L . O . W .



GROWING IN FAITH - LOVING GOD AND ONE ANOTHER - OUTREACHING -WORSHIPPING TOGETHER)

Much like your academic world, Sunday School is taking on a whole new look for fall!
Coming in September virtual G.L.O.W.
More information will be coming soon.



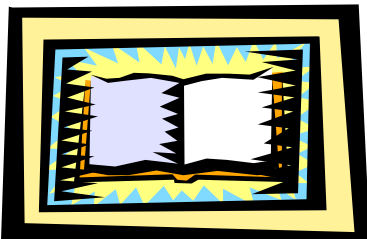
Pumpkins Galore!

St. Mark's Family Ministry is so excited about our pumpkin patch! We will be gifting any family with a pumpkin from our patch beginning in mid-September.

Reaching out and connecting with our community is more important than ever, and we want to celebrate fall and all that comes with the season.

In the next week, we will advertise days and times when families can visit and pick a pumpkin. (one family unit at a time)

THIRD GRADE BIBLE SUNDAY - October 18th



Celebrating this important milestone is something we don't want to delay or pass by.

If you have a third grade student, please contact Peggy Smith at p.smith@fairfieldstmarks.com

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



RUTH CIRCLE

Due to continuing Covid, it does not look like we will be able to have the September Ruth Circle meeting.

We certainly miss everyone and would love to see you, but think that it is in best interest of our group to cancel all Ruth Circle meetings until further notice.

If you have any questions/comments, please contact Pam Guynes at 513-779-9162 or Charlene Miller at 513-844-6793.



Altar Flowers may still be ordered for our online services.

Please call the church office if you would like to have flowers some Sunday on the Altar. Orders must be received by Wednesday.

You can come to the church after the service, Monday morning, or call the office to arrange a time to get your flowers.

ST. MARK'S SHUT-INS

Phyllis Tunning	Sandy Ronningen
Virginia Shaw	Betsy Jones
Nancy & Bob Miracle	Eleanor McCollum
Dale Shreve	Sue Webster
Paul Schutte	

HELLO TO ALL OUR ST. MARK'S SHUT-INS

- those in nursing homes and those in their own homes. I know I can speak for the Visitors of the Nurture and Care Committee.

We have missed seeing you, bringing you communion, etc. Although we can't visit you "in person" please know that we love and pray for you.

We keep you close to our hearts and wait for the day when we may, once again, come to see you and spend time with you. We have missed that so much.

Until we meet again, take care and stay safe.

Yours in Christ,
Lois



The West Ohio Annual Conference will be virtual this year on Saturday, September 12th. The theme is "Be Not Afraid - God is with us"

Participating from St. Mark's will be Pastor Joe, Sue Luken, Julie Mislansky and Brenda Smoot.



SEPTEMBER PICK ME UP MOMENTS

Thanks to Carol Pittman

- Sept 1: I will refresh tired bodies; I will restore tired souls Jeremiah 31:25
- Sept 2: Joy is a prayer. Joy is strength. Joy is love—Joy is a net of love by which you can catch souls. Mother Teresa
- Sept 3: Helping one person may not change the whole world, but it could change the world for one person. Anon.
- Sept 4: We all have different gifts, so we all have different ways of saying to the world who we are. Fred Rogers
- Sept 5: When my day starts with prayer and ends with prayer, everything in between seems to always work out! Anon
- Sept 6: May your day be filled with good thoughts, kind people, and happy moments. Anon
- Sept 7: Joy runs deeper than despair. Corrie ten Boom
- Sept 8: We cannot force someone to hear a message they are not ready to receive, but we must never underestimate the power of planting a seed.
- Sept 9: Sometimes you will be the angel of the Lord sends to bear others up. Henry B. Eyring
- Sept 10: God is not calling us to church; He is calling us to be the church, the hope of the world. Craig Groeschel
- Sept 11: The greatest lesson I have learned in life is that I still have a lot to learn. Anon
- Sept 12: Religion doesn't save anybody-----Jesus does! Anon
- Sept 13: One little prayer can change one huge situation. Anon
- Sept 14: You are my place of quiet rest. I wait for Your word to renew me. Psalm 119:114
- Sept 15: Miracles happen when the children of God work together guided by the Spirit to reach others in need. Reyna J. Aburto
- Sept 16: Faith is like Wi-Fi, it's invisible, but has the power to connect you to what you need. Anon
- Sept 17: For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus. Ephesians 2:10
- Sept 18: God is your personal GPS. He will lead you in the right direction. Anon
- Sept 19: The Bible is one that you can never finish with. It is like a bottomless well; you can always find fresh truth from its pages. Charles H. Spurgeon
- Sept 20: Kindness is a gift everyone can afford to give. Anon
- Sept 21: Be Joyful for the joy of the Lord is your strength. Nehemiah 8:106
- Sept 22: It's the friends we meet along the way that helps us appreciate the journey. Anon
- Sept 23: Peace on the outside comes from knowing God on the inside. Anon
- Sept 24: God, please teach me to speak right words at the right time with the right tone, so I can live in peace and happiness. Anurag Prakash Ray
- Sept 25: The most wasted of all days is one without laughter. ee cummings
- Sept 26:be strong and courageous, don't be afraid or discouraged for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go. Joshua 1:9
- Sept 27: Kind words do not cost much yet they accomplish much. Blaise Pascal
- Sept 28: Every day, set your mind in the right direction. Find something to be grateful for. Joel Osteen
- Sept 29: In school we are given the lesson, then the test. In life you're given the test, then the lesson. Tom Bodett
- Sept 30: God I ask you to "redirect" my thoughts, improve my vision/outlook on life and give me clarity on what I should be focused on. Anon

September Birthdays and Anniversaries

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

SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

2 - Jim Beckett
2 - Dee Dee Edmundson
2 - Missy LaMar
2 - Alethea LaMar
2 - Suzan Stracke
4 - Ruth Ritenbaugh
5 - Mike Booker
6 - Carol Ault
6 - Andy Shellman
7 - Chelsea Menke
8 - Pam Guynes
9 - Tari Randall
10 - Sam Moser
10 - Carol Pittman
12 - Patty Coyle
12 - Edith Davis
13 - Mary Kay Bowling
13 - Casey Theodor (9 yrs.)
14 - Mindy Kuertz
15 - Linda Fenzel
15 - Jennie Marshall
19 - James Robinson (3 yrs.)
20 - Ruth Stanifer
21 - Maryada Millspaugh
24 - Nancy Hole
24 - Peggy Woods
26 - Sherman Griffin
26 - Sue Luken
27 - Hannah Hensler
28 - Dale Addis
28 - Shirlene Norris
29 - Ray Smith

SEPTEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

1 - Alan & Wilma Batt
1 - Mark & Jenni Hensler
3 - Dave & Cindy Booker
4 - Steve & Kym Nguyen
6 - Justin & Erin Theodor
9 - Sherman & Teresa Griffin
10 - Ben & Heather Chambers
11 - Larry & Cheryl Creach
14 - Don & Carol Ault
16 - Kraig & Vicki Cavender
16 - Denny & Sue Mullen
20 - Roy & Helen Brown
20 - Mark & Sue Luken
29 - Ron & Becky Hamblin



St. Mark's,

Thank you for the planter we received in memory of Chet. It is very pretty and your thoughtfulness is greatly appreciated.

The Hard Family

St. Mark's Community,

Thank you so much for the flowers and generosity!

Love,
Carr and Ramsey family

To St. Mark's Congregation,

Thank you so much for all the love and support you have given my parents. They loved their church and members in it.

So in memory of Mom and Dad, please accept this check for \$5,000. This was their gift to the church.

Thanks again for all your blessings. Willa Ramsey

St. Mark's Family,

I want to thank all of you who made my 90th birthday a true day of joy. The cards filled my heart with the beautiful messages. I am so blessed. I even rode on my grandson-in-laws motorcycle with him. Of course, they had to help me on and off. Never say never. Love, Iris

St. Mark's UMC
4601 Fairfield Ave.
(513) 844-1818
Fax: (513) 844-2828
fairfieldstmarks.com

Worship Service:
Sundays 9:30 am
Live Streamed