



SPIRIT OF ST. MARK'S

May 2021

*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,

As most of you know, 2 ½ years ago Brenda Smoot came out of retirement to once again serve as our administrative assistant, a position she had held for over twenty years here at St. Mark's. We all knew this arrangement would be temporary. But, we all loved having her in this position, and she was enjoying herself as well (at least that's what she told me!).

Now, Brenda is ill. She has blood clots, plus an infection of the lining of the heart. Preliminary tests also detect cancer. Doctors say it is lymphoma, although at this writing, Brenda has not received any more details, including her treatment plans.

It should come as no surprise that Brenda is retiring once again. She didn't want to retire this way, but it is what it is. So, the SPRC and I are spreading the word about this new opening (see back cover).

Brenda can never truly be replaced, this much we know. But, I also know that Brenda need not worry about St. Mark's. We will survive. So, Brenda, I'm speaking to you now: Concentrate on you getting well. With these few words I want you to know how much all of us have appreciated you as a faithful member of our staff, and still love you as a dear sister in Christ. So, get well soon!

I am sure you will join with me in wishing the best for Brenda. I know we all look forward to her return to full health and wholeness.

Blessings,

Well wishes may be sent to Brenda at 5557 Olde Winton Ct., Fairfield, OH 45014.

Looking Ahead....

May 9—"No Greater Love" John 15:9-17 Happy Mother's Day

May 16—"We Are Yours" John 17:6-19

May 23—Graduation Sunday Pentecost Sunday. **Wear Red!** "Spirit Poured Out" Acts 2:1-21

May 30—Trinity Sunday. New Member Reception "Born of the Spirit" John 3:1-17

June 6—"Being Renewed" Mark 3:20-35

June 13—"Growing in the New Creation" Mark 4:26-34

June 20—"Enduring the Storms" Mark 4:35-41 Happy Father's Day

June 27—"Giving What You Have" 2 Corinthians 8:7-15



ST. MARK'S CARES MISSIONS and OUTREACH



Thank you, St. Mark's church family! We collected 28 hygiene kits and a large box full of miscellaneous hygiene items for the students at the Butler County Juvenile Justice Center! Due to Covid, the students' parents are not able to mail packages to them, so your donations are greatly needed and appreciated!



Dinner time! We're having breakfast! A feast of breakfast items will be served to the residents at Serve City on May 8th. Thank you to all who donated!

Our next food drive for Fairfield Food Pantry will be held the last week in May. We will accept drive-thru donations on Wednesday, May 26, from 5:00 - 7:00 and on Thursday, May 27, from 10:00 to noon. There will also be bins in the Fellowship Hall and the narthex where you can place your donations any time before then at your convenience.

As always, any donations of non-perishable food items are needed and appreciated, but our focus this drive will be on "diapers, dishes, and detergent."

That would include:

Baby diapers and wipes

Dishwashing soap

Laundry detergent, fabric sheets, stain spray



A Note from Your Pastor regarding our cancelled blood drive.

If you were registered for the June blood drive you may wonder why you received a cancellation notice from the Community Blood Center. I made the difficult decision to cancel this blood drive because of our shared belief that any events held at our church should be open and inclusive of all people.

I became aware of at least two instances where persons were turned away because of the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) current policy against allowing certain gay men from donating blood. In one instance the screener's comments were especially rude.

I believe blood drives are important, and I believe in the need to assure a safe blood supply. But, I believe the current policy is discriminatory. This is my opinion, but it is shared by other organizations such as the American Red Cross, which has publicly opposed this policy:

<https://www.redcross.org/about-us/news-and-events/press-release/2020/statement-on-updated-fda-donor-eligibility-criteria.html>

Continued at bottom of next page

St. Mark's Children's Ministry
G.L.O.W.

Growing in faith - Loving God and one another - Outward reaching - Worshiping together

**NURSERY AND *G.L.O.W. RESTARTING MAY 16
(*GROWING, LOVING, OUTREACH, WORSHIP)**

Is God calling You to children's ministry?

We are happy to announce that we have a restart date for both the Nursery and G.L.O.W. on Sunday mornings for our children. Our launch date is May 16th. However, we **NEED** you! Anyone interested in stepping up as a Servant Leader should contact Peggy Smith at p.smith@fairfieldstmarks.com. Maybe you can give one Sunday per month, a whole month, or possibly even an entire quarter to help us fill these positions? We will be offering some training with two different sessions; April 28th @ 7pm, and May 2nd immediately following worship. We cannot be faithful to serving our children without your help! Hope to hear from some of you soon.

Live and in person!



**Join the VBS fun August 1-5
6:15 until 8:30**

Blood Drive, continued from previous page.

I am encouraged to learn that the FDA is funding a new study looking at vetting donors based on individual risk, rather than on a blanket prohibition.

<https://www.nbcnews.com/feature/nbc-out/fda-considers-lifting-restrictions-blood-donations-gay-bi-men-n1252424>

I am hoping this study will lead to a positive change in the FDA's policy.

I believe in blood donation. I have given blood for over 40 years, and will continue to do so. At the same time, I would not want any of our church family to be discriminated against at any event held in our church facility. We can give blood while being in opposition to this policy.

As soon as the FDA's policy is changed to reflect more inclusivity - and I believe change is coming - I will heartily recommend that St. Mark's host blood drives once again. — Your pastor, Joe Payne.

MUSIC MINISTRY

Chris Beiser - Director of Music



Hello everyone!

So other than a few really cold days, an unexpected snow, and some sleet mixed with rain filled evenings I think spring might finally be here! Be reminded we do live in Ohio so take each day as it comes.

I am very grateful to all of you for being wonderful participants in the Top Ten Hymn Countdown for the church. I received over 50 nomination cards, calls, and texts for 250 votes. There were actually 72 different hymns nominated, Wow! One thing I have to say St. Mark's congregation members love their hymns. A review of your top ten...

- 10, Victory in Jesus
- 9, Great is Thy Faithfulness
- 8, Because He Lives
- 7, Blessed Assurance
- 6, The Old Rugged across
- 5, How Great Thou Art
- 4, Here I Am Lord
- 3, Amazing Grace
- 2, It Is Well With My Soul
- 1, In The Garden



Thank you to Mark, Jennie, and Rick for all they did in keeping the service technically shipshape. Also to Dick Roemer, Charlene Miller, The Hand bell Choir, Mark Hensler, Linda Payne, Sue Combs, and the congregation for singing and playing the top ten hymns. What an abundance of talent our church has!

I spoke with Rev. McIntyre and he said he had a blessed time with all of you and to tell you that he and Vera Bell would love to come back and visit again, thank you for all your kindness.

I'm planning on, weather permitting, starting up Wednesday night yard singing again May 12, @ 6:30. Anyone is welcome to join, we take hymnals and sing 3-4 hymns and then journey to our next home. Looking forward to starting up this fun ministry again.

Thank you to Sue Combs for leading the bell choir these last couple months. It took a bit to get everyone back together, but it has been a great joy to have their beautiful music as a part of our Sunday morning services.

I need to fill up the summer with special music selections so please let me know if you have something you'd like to sing or play. We can plan a time to record the song for church, you can present it live, or send in a video recording of the selection yourself. Thank you!

Ask the Lord for rain in the springtime; it is the Lord who sends the thunderstorms. He gives showers of rain to all people, and plants of the field to everyone.

Zechariah 10:1

Chris Beiser

New Team Being Formed :

Room at the Table

Hello friends!

We are excited to share with you that the Administrative Council voted unanimously at their April meeting to officially recognize a new core team at St. Mark's, called Room at the Table. The purpose of Room at the Table is to explore with the congregation the possibility of becoming a Reconciling Church. A Reconciling Church is a United Methodist Church that affiliates with the Reconciling Ministries Network (www.rmnetwork.org), and makes this public commitment:

"We celebrate God's gift of diversity and value the wholeness made possible in community equally shared and shepherded by all. We welcome and affirm people of every gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation, who are also of every age, race, ethnicity, physical and mental ability, level of education, and family structure, and of every economic, immigration, marital, and social status, and so much more. We acknowledge that we live in a world of profound social, economic, and political inequities. As followers of Jesus, we commit ourselves to the pursuit of justice and pledge to stand in solidarity with all who are marginalized and oppressed."

Room at the Table began as a group of concerned persons passionate about expanding the inclusivity of St. Mark's to all people, including members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex and asexual (LGBTQIA+) community. They began meeting informally in 2019 to discuss this concept. Recognition of this team in no way obligates St. Mark's to becoming a Reconciling Church. Instead, it allows the group to be fully transparent as we explore this concept together.

Members of Room at the Table believe the time is right for this discussion, considering the upcoming vote and probable split of the United Methodist Church in 2022. As a congregation, we will need to decide our position on LGBTQ+ inclusivity. Room at the Table feels strongly we should be proactive rather than reactive regarding this decision.

We also understand the importance of giving people the time and space to reach this decision. This includes engaging in honest, graceful conversations with each other. The Room at the Table team intends to offer education in the form of bible study, book studies, documentary watch parties, LGBTQ+ panel speakers, etc. But, most importantly, *graceful conversations*. We need to give everyone the opportunity to tell their story, where they are in this journey, and to decide together St. Mark's future pathway.

There is no formal timeline, but it is generally believed that this discernment could at minimum be a twelve-month process. As a side note, there are four Reconciling Churches in southwest Ohio, although the closest ones are in Clifton, Hyde Park, and Dayton. We could fill a huge gap in this area if we decide to become Reconciling.

To learn more about becoming a Reconciling Church you can watch a video on Reconciling Ministries: <https://youtu.be/YmYE1kmJJoI>. You may also contact one of the following team members with questions. There are others on the team, and we are open to having even more join us! Please let us know if you feel likewise and would like to be a part of the team.

We hope that you are as excited as we are about the potential this brings to St. Mark's to openly welcome, affirm, and celebrate all to our church family.

In His Service,
Tim and Julie Mislansky, John and Peggy Smith,
Tom and Charlotte Tierney, Sue Luken,
Jennie Marshall, Pastor Joe, Julie Dichtl





YOUTH GROUP happenings

Julie Mislansky, Youth Director

We have been super busy this past month- planning and leading a worship service, flocking yards with flamingos, and working on beautifying the courtyard area!



I was super proud of our youth for their amazing job leading the service on April 18. Most every part of the service was led by a youth, including the message, which was written by one of our own. The bulletin cover was drawn by one of our own as well. They even chose the service theme, “not judging others, celebrating difference.” These young adults have much wisdom and talent to share with us.

Our first fundraiser together has been a huge success! We are on target to flock 40 yards! It has been a fun time and many youth families have been involved. **A huge thanks to Sue Rumley** for helping us out as well!! Between flockings and those who bought insurance, **we have raised \$460!** We plan to use part of the funds to help with the courtyard.





Speaking of... the youth have taken on this project as a way of giving back to our church family. We are painting the metal courtyard furniture and we are working on plans to add some color and beauty, beyond the gorgeous flowers, shrubs, and trees. Trustee Jeff Gering has been working tirelessly to help and guide us. Thank you, Jeff! Give us a few weeks, and then make sure you check out the courtyard re-do!



Finally, we are planning a **Summer Mission Week, tentatively June 14-18**. Each day we will serve a different local ministry. We would like one of those days to be a work day at St. Mark's! We would love to open this up to the entire congregation, so watch for more details about this in the bulletin and on Facebook. Each day will be something different, so you do not have to be involved each day. Come and go as your schedule allows! **Please let Julie know if you are interested in being a part of this week.** We will definitely need some adult chaperones/helpers on some days. Thank you!

PRAYER PARTNERS!

Family Ministries is excited to announce we are bringing back Prayer Partners!

We know that if you are praying for someone, you start caring for that someone, and relationships begin to grow.

We believe intergenerational prayer partners not only benefit the pair, but also helps families feel more connected to the church, and leads to growth in prayer life for all involved. We are a church FAMILY, and we want our kids to know that from a very early age!

To be a prayer partner, all that is asked of you is to pray regularly for your partner! You may want to encourage him/her with notes, cards, emails, remembrances on his/her birthday, and seeking them out at church for a chat. Anything beyond that will be up to the pair and his/her families. We will be encouraging our children and youth to make this a mutual relationship so that they are also praying and remembering their adult partner.

The only information that will be shared between partners will be name, address, and birthdate. Any info beyond that can be decided between the child's family and their prayer partner. We will plan a date sometime in the coming months, when we are back to full in-person worship, for our prayer partners to "meet."

Our goal is to have everyone in the church be a part of this ministry! Children, youth, and young adults are being contacted by Peggy and Julie about their participation.

If you are an adult, and want to be a prayer partner, please contact Peggy Smith, at p.smith@fairfieldstmarks.com or Julie Mislansky, at knauffjj@icloud.com and let us know.

We will also post about this on our Facebook page and you can respond there as well.



MAY, 2021 PICK ME UP MOMENTS

compiled by Carol Pittman

- May 01, 2021 God, let your voice become the loudest one I hear and the one I'm most sensitive to.
~Brittney Chan
- May 02, 2021 When God sees you doing your part, developing what He has given you, then He will do His part and open doors that no one can shut. ~Anon
- May 03, 2021 People will let you down, God never does. ~Anon
- May 04, 2021 God can restore what is broken and change it into something amazing. All you need is faith.
~Joel 2:25
- May 05, 2021 The fact that our heart yearns for something Earth can't supply is proof that Heaven must be our home. ~C.S. Lewis
- May 06, 2021 Being happy never goes out of style. ~Lilly Pulitzer
- May 07, 2021 A peaceful heart leads to a healthy body. ~Proverbs 14:30
- May 08, 2021 Life is full of give and take. Give thanks and take nothing for granted. ~Anon
- May 09, 2021 If you desire to make a difference in the world, you must be different from the world.
~Elaine S. Dalton
- May 10, 2021 My soul finds rest in God alone. ~Psalm 62:1
- May 11, 2021 Everyone is beautiful in their own way because God makes no mistakes. ~Vishal Badole
- May 12, 2021 Being ourselves means sometimes having to find the courage to stand alone. ~Brene Brown
- May 13, 2021 When the time is right, I, the Lord, will make it happen. ~Isaiah 60:22
- May 14, 2021 The more you trust God, the more He amazes you. ~Anon
- May 15, 2021 We embody Christ not only in what we say and do, but in who we are. ~Robert D. Hales
- May 16, 2021 To pray is to let go and let God take over. ~Philippians 4: 6-7
- May 17, 2021 My dumb mistakes are sometimes the best memories of how the Lord rescued me. ~Anon
- May 18, 2021 May your day be filled with many smiling moments. ~Anon
- May 19, 2021 I am so thankful for all the special people that God chose to put in my life. ~Anon
- May 20, 2021 Our prayers work when they are short, when they are weak, and when they are poorly worded.
~Anon
- May 21, 2021 Show me the way I should go. ~Psalm 143: 8
- May 22, 2021 Don't let a spirit of doubt drain the gifts God has placed in you. ~Anon
- May 23, 2021 Remember to take care of yourself. Sometimes you forget because you are too busy taking care of other people. Remember you are important too. ~Anon
- May 24, 2021 Take time to be quiet. ~Zig Ziglar
- May 25, 2021 Sometimes we become so focused on the finish line, that we fail to find the joy of the journey.
~Dieter F. Uchdorf
- May 26, 2021 Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. ~Romans 12:12
- May 27, 2021 No matter what anyone thinks of me, God knows my heart and that's ALL that really matters.
~Anon
- May 28, 2021 Often the most powerful statement is your dignified silence. ~Anon
- May 29, 2021 Above all, be careful what you think because your thoughts control your life. ~Proverbs 4:23
- May 30, 2021 A spark of kindness radiates like the sun. ~Anon
- May 31, 2021 We repent enough to be forgiven, but do we surrender enough to be changed? ~Anon

ST. MARK'S TRUSTEES

Our Trustees are busy! Many projects for the church and parsonage have been completed or are about to begin:

- * Thanks to Jeff Gering, Gil Dole, Don Stewart, Bob Mendenhall, Pastor Joe, and the scouts for mulching the church and parsonage.
- * Thanks to Jeff Gering for taking the lead in beautifying our courtyard. Jeff moved some shrubbery and replanted them in the courtyard. With the help of Gil Dole, the courtyard was mulched. Marty and Gay Kubik planted some daisies to add color. Jeff then power washed the flagstones and filled in between the stones with fresh gravel. He completed the job by sealing the stones. Our youth are painting the metal furniture. The courtyard is beautiful!
- * Have you noticed how dark it is in sections of our hallways? It's all because some of our fluorescent lights have old non-working ballasts. So, those old fixtures will soon be replaced with more energy efficient LEDs.
- * An electrician has been secured to replace outdated and faulty wiring in the youth room, install a ground-fault outlet in the upstairs restroom, and another outlet in the Youth Director office.
- * A bid has been received to add additional lighting for our parking lot. Monies received from our recent capital campaign will cover this project.
- * The plumber has replaced the parsonage hot water heater pressure relief valve.
- * A leak in the parsonage roof will be repaired by Ray St.Clair roofing. .
- * Measurements are being made of the parsonage kitchen door for a storm door replacement.
- * Two ceiling fans will be installed in the parsonage: one in a bedroom and another in the main dining area.

The courtyard flagstones before



....and after. Beautiful!



All-Church Work Day

Come join in the fun! Outside and inside work,
Weeding, trimming, washing....
Something for everyone!

Saturday, June 5, 9:00—Noon



St. Mark's Financial Update

Tim Mislansky, Treasurer

Hello St. Mark's Family,

We're 1/3 of the way through the year so far and our financial results are solid. We have received over \$106,800 in total giving. This is within \$1,000 of our budget, but is about \$11,000 behind this point last year. Some of this is attributed to a \$3,500 COVID grant we received from the conference and increased giving related to the pandemic.

Our expenses to "run the church" through the first four months are about \$100,000 which is \$3,000 less than the same time period last year. And we have spent about \$6,000 less than budgeted. There were no major unplanned expenses for the year. We have paid our apportionments each month. We also paid off the line of credit loan – freeing up \$500 per month that was formerly used for the loan payment.

Our money in the bank is at \$70,000. We have \$27,500 in the parking lot fund to do the lights and the trustees are currently obtaining quotes. Our total cash nearly equals our total of bills outstanding and designated funds. As long as the number is positive or not negative, we feel good about our financial position.

In summary, your continued generosity allows St. Mark's to be in a decent financial position. Thank you! If you have questions about anything related to St. Mark's finances, please do not hesitate to ask either me or Gale.

Sincerely,
Tim Mislansky, Treasurer and Gale Goodman, Finance Chair

May 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 Edmondson (18 yrs)
- 8 Elliot Luken (2 yrs)
- 9 Mary Mislansky (18 yrs)
- 10 Riley Luken (5 yrs)
- 11 Tomie O'Sullivan
- 13 Barbara White
- 13 Ted McDaniel

- 17 Roger Roark
- 18 Julie Mislansky
- 20 Sam Saylor (2 yrs)
- 22 Jeff Guynes
- 22 Gretchen Menke
- 23 Steve Woods
- 23 Marta Hollinger
- 24 Zedith Pottenger
- 25 Sue Webster
- 25 Gary Miller
- 26 Lauren Dichtl
- 26 Shirley Aydlett
- 28 Rich Zugelter
- 30 Betty Winkler

MAY ANNIVERSARIES

- 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

St. Mark's United Methodist Church
4601 Fairfield Ave.
Fairfield, OH 45014

Position Opening

POSITION OPENING: OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR

Pastor Joe and the SPRC regretfully accepts Brenda Smoot's decision to retire once again as St. Mark's administrative assistant. Brenda selflessly came out of retirement two years ago when we had a need for someone to help us in our transition upon Pastor Joe's appointment. We cannot thank her enough and wish her well on her retirement.

SPRC hopes to find a person to fulfill Brenda's duties, as well as to assist our treasurer in performing some basic bookkeeping tasks. We expect this to be a 20-hour per week position. A job description is available on request. Please contact Jennifer Rinker (jrinker1@aol.com) for more information.

PASTOR JOE'S SCHEDULE HAS CHANGED ONCE AGAIN

While we seek to fill this new position, Pastor Joe has temporarily changed his days off.

Instead of Mondays, Pastor Joe's full day off will be every Friday, He will also have Sunday afternoon and evening off.