

Spirit of St. Mark's

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



FEBRUARY 2024

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FEBRUARY 2, FRIDAY at 7-9PM

LADIES FELLOWSHIP GAME NIGHT
Contact Sue Luken (Fellowship Hall; page 5)

FEBRUARY 3, SATURDAY 9-11AM

MATTHEW 25 MINISTRIES VOLUNTEERS
(See more details on page 4)

FEBRUARY 11, SUNDAY

SOUPER-BOWL FOOD DRIVE
(See more details on page 4)

FEBRUARY 13, TUESDAY, 5:00-6:30PM

SHROVE TUESDAY PANCAKE DINNER
(See more details on page 5)

FEBRUARY 18, SUNDAY, 6PM

FIRST ANNUAL CHILI COOK OFF
Contact Lyn Bucalo (Fellowship Hall; page 11)

FEBRUARY 23, FRIDAY 10AM-5PM

LASAGNA LOVE
Contact Cindy Miller; (See more details on page 4)

FEBRUARY 27, TUESDAY 12PM

MONTHLY LUNCH BUNCH
Contact Brenda Smoot; (See more details on page 5)

MESSAGE FROM PASTOR MARK

“A Serious Moment...”

As we move into February we enter the season of Lent. A time set aside to prepare for the celebration of one of the most important moments in history and the Christian year, Easter. Lent is a time we identify and share in Jesus’ walk to the Cross. It is a time of reflection, of self denial, and repentance. Lent is a serious season, and a time to ask tough questions of ourselves as we walk with Jesus to the Cross.



One of the things we think about is confession. We tend to think of confession in very strict and narrow terms, however confession is much larger than that. It is taking what is hidden and sharing it. We tend to think of confession with sin, and clearly it has a place. However, it has broad implications beyond that. We confess our faith, we confess our love, we confess many things. Our Lenten series will be on the difficult subject of confession.

Join us as we “fess up” and learn the power of confession in our lives.



**Save the Date: February 14
Ash Wednesday Service at 7PM**



Diana and I would like to thank the congregation for their generous gifts to us during the Christmas season. We are blessed by your generous spirit and we are thankful to be a part of the St. Mark’s community and look forward to the new year among you.

As your pastor, I would also like to thank and affirm your faith giving to St Mark’s. Because of your gifts we were able to meet all obligations, pay our apportionments in full, and begin the new year on good footing. On behalf of the leadership of St Mark’s I want to thank each one of you that made that happen. Because of your faithful giving we are able to focus on the ministry and outreach of St. Mark’s with joy and thanksgiving. Thank you again for your faithfulness. God Bless!

“December 24-Celebrating a Pastoral Trio”



**Pastor Mark,
Pastor Jim,
and Pastor Bob**

MESSAGES FROM NEW COVENANT CHURCH

NEW COVENANT UMC IN PICTURES...

Induction Service for New Covenant Leaders for 2024 Calendar Year



From the right to the left we have Dr. Anthony Tsetse taking the position of Men Fellowship President. Mrs. Edith Gyan—Women Fellowship President. Mrs. Christina Appeadu—SPPRC Chairperson, Miss Carrie Kessley—Childrens Ministry Director, Brother Isaack Wilson—Church Secretary and Bro Justice Owusu-Ansah—Music Director. Conducting the charge, Rev. Ologo cautioned them that their first loyalty is to Jesus Christ; the founder and owner of the church. The second responsibility is to the United Methodist Church, the Bishop and the District Superintendent. Their third loyalty is to the Pastor and members of New Covenant UMC and their last responsibility is to themselves and families. They must take good care of themselves in order to care for God's church.

"Embracing Leadership Responsibilities in Faith"

Our shared journey of faith calls us to reflect on the responsibilities of church leadership. Guided by our spiritual compass, we find a delicate balance between devotion to God, our church family, and personal lives. Leading with integrity and compassion, our leaders play a crucial role in guiding our community. Through their actions, they exemplify the leadership we value:

1. Loyalty to Jesus Christ (First Responsibility):

At the core of our commitment is an unwavering loyalty to Jesus Christ. It is through His teachings and love that we find purpose and direction.

2. Loyalty to the United Methodist Church, Bishop, and District Superintendent (Second Responsibility):

Recognizing the importance of unity, we pledge our allegiance to the United Methodist Church. We respect and follow the guidance of our Bishop and District Superintendent, ensuring a unified and harmonious experience for all.

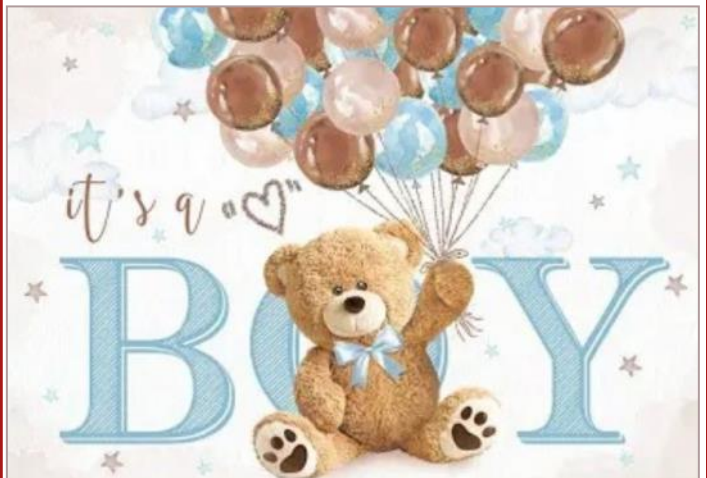
3. Loyalty to the Pastor and Members of New Covenant UMC (Third Responsibility): Collaboration and support define our relationship with the Pastor and each member of New Covenant UMC. Together, we work towards fulfilling our shared mission and vision.

4. Responsibility to Themselves and Families (Last Responsibility): Acknowledging the need for balance, our leaders prioritize self-care and the well-being of

their families. A healthy foundation at home allows for a more robust commitment to serving God's church. Let us remember that these responsibilities are not isolated; they form a seamless tapestry of faith, woven with love, commitment, and shared purpose. May our collective efforts continue to strengthen the bonds that make New Covenant UMC a beacon of hope and love.



Our sister, Elvira, originally from Ivory Coast, has relocated to Colorado Springs to join her husband. In the above picture, you'll find her husband, their mother, and her two sons. Please join me in sending Elvira your heartfelt farewell wishes. May the Lord be with them wherever they are.



Isaiah 40:31, "they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength..."

Brethren, let's congratulate our sister Dina Ampofo for giving us a handsome Baby Boy. The best news in 2024! This is our newest and cutest member, Darius Osei Poku. The Lord has added a new baby boy to the church through our sister Dina Ampofo.

MISSIONS AND OUTREACH

SHARED HARVEST VOLUNTEERS

On January 16, we had made a positive impact by packing 500 blessing boxes for the homeless at Shared Harvest. The rewarding experience awaited those who joined, and we never knew what we would get into which is part of the fun. Signing up was as easy as checking the Narthex bulletin board. More dates for contributing and making a difference at Shared Harvest will become available throughout 2024. See you at the next event.



MATTHEW 25 MINISTRIES: FEB 3, 9-11AM

Join us at Matthew 25 Ministries to bring hope to the less fortunate. St. Mark's has an upcoming volunteer opportunity at the Blue Ash facility. Donations of time, talent, or finances are equally crucial and make a significant difference in the lives of the poorest and disaster victims. Be part of the change; your involvement helps to support this amazing ministry.



HELP FEED FAMILIES IN NEED WITH LASAGNA LOVE, FEBRUARY 23 10AM-5PM

(ST. MARK'S KITCHEN)

Sign-ups are in the Narthex for donations of lasagna ingredients. Ingredients can be dropped off in the church kitchen. Also, there are sign-up sheets for volunteers to help make the lasagnas – and people to deliver the lasagnas!

Lasagna cooks can work anytime during the day – whatever fits their schedule!

Delivery teams should pick up the lasagnas at 4:45 pm. The delivery teams should include how far they are willing to drive and how many lasagnas they can deliver on the sign-up sheet.

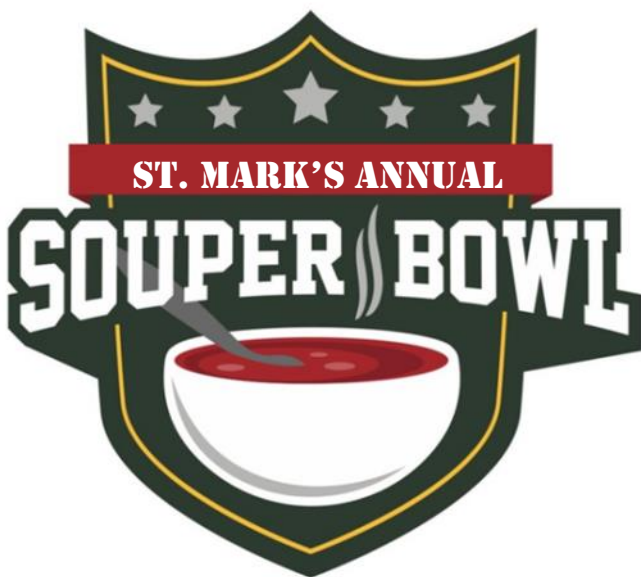
Thank you from Cindy Miller, St Marks Cares, Lasagna Love, and the families we feed!

For questions, contact Cindy Miller at (513) 604-0173 Cmiller4151955@gmail.com

To learn more about the group, request a lasagna, or volunteer to: www.lasagnalove.org.

SOUPER BOWL FOOD DRIVE

Join us in the "Souper—Bowl" Food Drive for St. Mark's little food pantry. This year, we are tackling hunger together and scoring big for our community pantry. Help us make a difference by donating non-perishable soups, canned and boxed foods, and other essential items. Every item counts! Let's come together and make this "Souper—Bowl" a win for those in need. Together, we can make a meaningful impact! Drop off your donations in the bins located in the Narthex by Feb. 11. We are in need of these items: Canned meats, Mac-n-cheese, boxed potatoes, veggies of any kind, fruit cups, applesauce, boxed milk, cereals, toilet paper, soap, shampoo, toothpaste plus whatever else you can think of. Please, NO peanut butter is needed. #SouperBowl #CommunityCaring #EndHunger #GiveBack



FELLOWSHIP and GATHERINGS

LADIES FELLOWSHIP GAME NIGHT **FEBRUARY 2, FRIDAY, 7-9PM** (FELLOWSHIP HALL)

All women are welcome to join us for a night of fun and fellowship. We will provide a variety of games, but feel free to bring your favorite with you! Bring a snack to share, drinks are provided. Sign up at the Welcome Center and please let us know if you like a ride to and from so we can arrange that. Note that we will enter from the back kitchen door and into Fellowship Hall so that we do not disturb New Covenant Prayer sessions in the sanctuary.



MONTHLY LUNCH BUNCH **(THE OLD SPAGHETTI FACTORY)** **FEBRUARY 27, TUESDAY, 12PM**

Get ready for an unforgettable Lunch Bunch experience at The Old Spaghetti Factory, nestled at 6320 South Gilmore Road in Fairfield, (Old Forest Fair Mall area). Embark on a flavorful adventure with an enticing Italian menu featuring mouthwatering lasagna, taste tempting ravioli, and an irresistibly tantalizing array of spaghetti delights. Don't miss out to lock in your spot by securing reservations before the deadline on Sunday, February 25 with Brenda Smoot. Anticipation is building, and we can't wait to share the joy of a "Delizioso," meal together! Join us for an afternoon filled with great company and even greater flavors!

Contact Brenda Smoot at (513) 316-1807 for details and placing reservations.



RUTH CIRCLE **FEBRUARY 16, FRIDAY, 1-2PM** (FELLOWSHIP HALL)

Ruth Circle welcomes all women to join its diverse community. Meetings feature camaraderie, snacks, and devotions, fostering sisterhood and support. It's more than a gathering; it's where friendships flourish, faith deepens, and women thrive.



SHROVE TUESDAY PANCAKE DINNER **FEBRUARY 13, 5:00-6:30PM** (FELLOWSHIP HALL)

Celebrate the spirit of St. Mark's community and embark on a delicious journey at our Shrove Tuesday Pancake dinner! Join us of fellowship as we kick off the Lenten season with a feast of fabulous pancakes. Customize your culinary adventure with our delightful toppings bar, savory sausages, and enjoy a warm cup of coffee or refreshing juice. Pre-order takeout options are available for those on the go, and gluten-free pancake alternatives ensure everyone can partake in the festivities. Your generosity makes a difference, as all donations from this event contribute to our 2024 VBS, fostering a sense of unity and support within our church community. Come one, come all, and let's make this Shrove Tuesday a memorable start to our Lenten journey together! Contact, Peggy Smith.



MUSIC MINISTRY

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC

CHRIS BEISER

God is so Good, He's so good to me...

I am excited to share that 2 years after my heart stint operation, the doctor has said that I'm doing great, in fact, the two arteries that were still giving him concern are clear to very little blockage. I'm able to be taken off two medicines, and I don't need to see him again for 6 months.



**Yes, God is so good, he's so good to me!
He cares for me, He's so good to me.**

I am grateful for the blessings that God has given me and has surrounded me with incredibly kind individuals that care for me as if I were one of their own. In various aspects of my life, I have felt God's guidance and care through all of you. Loneliness and confusion are unfamiliar to me, and my moments of celebration and joy are incomplete without my St. Mark's family by my side to share in those times.



**Yes, God cares for me, He's so good to me!
He answers prayers, he's so good to me.**



I've witnessed this again and again within our church family. Answered prayer also extends into the many requests that are received each week, and not to mention all the unspoken ones. There is an amazing power in prayer when believers join their hearts and voices together. I have been on the receiving end of this awesome power, and know you all have too! God is listening to our every prayer and in all of our life's highs and lows, He carries us with Him.

**Yes, God answers prayers, He's so good to me!
I praise His name, He's so good to me.**

The gift of choir, piano, organ, vocal soloists, instrumental soloists, handbells, children, and you singing hymns is praise to His name! For all He has done for each us and will continue to do is reason to praise His name! To be able to join together to become stronger disciples of His word in our lives and in the world around us is reason to praise His name!



Yes, I'll praise God's name, He's so good to me!

God is so good, He cares for all of us, He answers our prayers, so we will praise His name! I look forward to experiencing this with all of you through 2024 and beyond.

GOD is SO GOOD!

FINANCIAL UPDATE

GALE GOODMAN, FINANCE COMMITTEE CHAIR

BILL SCHUMACKER, TREASURER

Dear St Mark's Family,



Well February is here. That can only mean that Pitchers and Catchers will be reporting to Spring Training. For me, that signals Spring is not far away.

First and foremost, we want to update the Congregation that due to your generous efforts during November and December, we were able to pay our apportionments in full by the end of December. So once again, St. Mark's continues its consistent ability to pay the apportionments. We have started to nip away at this year's apportionments. Which unfortunately for us, did increase a bit. The percentages that the apportionments were based on did not change from 2023, however, due to our operating expenses increasing, etc. our basis for determining the apportionments increased.

In 2023, we paid \$34,154 for apportionments; in 2024 we will be paying \$35,354. That represents an increase of \$1200. For the present, we want to thank you for your support in rising to help us take care of the apportionments.

We are all due a pat on the back for that!



In December, we ended the year with \$105,473 in the bank accounts for St Mark's. There is \$41,029 in the checking for paying the expenses of the Church; while \$64,444 is in the savings account. As I always point out, only \$25,024 can be used for general expenses of the Church – with \$39,420 only being used for improvements to the buildings and

properties of St. Mark's. Our loan at Park National Bank stands at \$29,459. All payments have been made on time and are current.

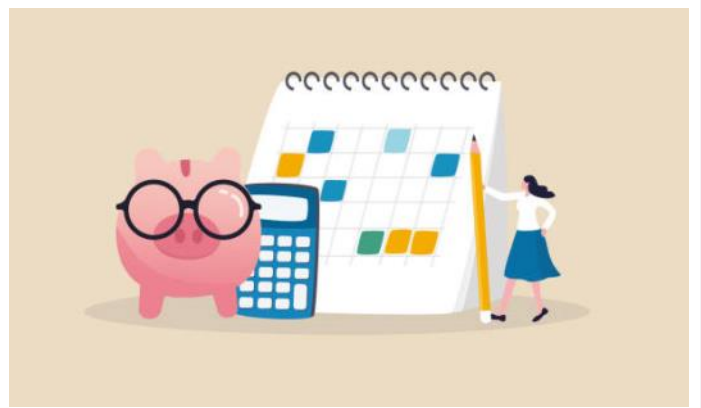


By now, you should have received your Annual Giving Statements. Please make sure you take a few minutes and review it when you receive it. Ruth and Cheryl will need to know as soon as possible if there are any issues that you might find with your statement. The sooner that those issues are discovered, the sooner they can be resolved. Also remember, they are the only ones who have access to your giving accounts.

Please contact them directly or leave a message at the Church for them to contact you.



The Finance Committee is now working on the budget for 2024. We hope to have the budget to the Admin Board at that next meeting. As always, if you have questions regarding the financial status of St Mark's, feel free to contact Bill or myself. We will be happy to address any of your concerns.



WEEKLY STUDY GROUP AND REHEARSALS

LADIES MONDAY NIGHT GROUP STUDY FEBRUARY 5, 6:45PM

(MEET IN PERSON THIS DAY IN FELLOWSHIP HALL)

Embark on a journey through the books of Deuteronomy and Joshua with us this February! Our gatherings take place every first Monday of the month in person in Fellowship Hall, while the remaining sessions are held via Zoom throughout the month. Don't stress about keeping up every week – this is an ongoing Bible study, and you're invited to join at any point. No requirements or obligations; participate whenever it suits you. Kym provides weekly Bible study questions, fostering discussion and shared learning. Contact: Kym Nguyen.



WEDNESDAY GROUP BIBLE STUDY WEDNESDAYS 2-3PM

Exciting News from The Wednesday Group Bible Study! We're thrilled to announce that our Bible study is expanding, and we want YOU to be a part of it! Join us from 2-3PM in Fellowship Hall for an enriching journey through the Bible. Contact Sue McDaniel for details.

What to Expect: *Engaging Group Discussions
*Fascinating Historical Insights
*Deep Exploration of Scriptures.

Current Focus: The Book of Acts



Who Should Join? *Those seeking fellowship
*Anyone eager to learn something new
*Individuals with valuable knowledge to share

All Are Welcome!

Whether you're a seasoned Bible scholar or just starting your exploration, everyone is invited to participate in our meaningful discussions. Come join us.



MEN'S PRAYER GROUP WEDNESDAYS AT 7:30AM (PRAYER ROOM)

Join the men in the prayer room/zoom each Wednesday at 7:30am. Followed by Breakfast. For more details, contact Jeff Gering.



HANDBELL CHOIR—WEDNESDAY, 6:30PM



Join the Handbell Choir every Wednesday at 6:30pm for a delightful musical experience – no prior experience or sheet music reading skills required! Reach out to Sue Combs for more details.

CHANCEL CHOIR—WEDNESDAY, 7:30PM

After the Handbell rehearsal, the Chancel Choir gathers every Wednesday at 7:30 pm. We warmly welcome new members anytime – it's never too late! Joining the choir is a joyful experience; no prior experience or sheet music reading skills are necessary. Just come prepared to make a joyful noise! Contact Chris Beiser for more information.



CHILDREN and FAMILY MINISTRY

JANUARY 28 & FEBRUARY 14

Glow at Night Events *Illuminate Learning and Fun*

Get ready for two exciting Glow at Night events hosted by our Children's Youth and Family Ministry! On January 28, from 6:00 PM to 7:30 PM, we'll dive into the exploration of Holy Communion. This dynamic session guarantees not only educational insights on Holy Communion but also a fun and interactive experience for our young participants.

But that's not all – mark your calendars for February 14, from 6:00 PM to 7:00 PM, when our Glow at Night event takes a meaningful turn towards Lent. We'll conclude the evening early at 7:00 PM to actively participate in the Ash Wednesday service, creating a seamless transition from learning to a spiritual experience.

These Glow at Night gatherings are designed to blend education and enjoyment, providing a unique space for our children to grow in their faith while having a glowing good time. Join us as we illuminate the path of knowledge and devotion for our young members.

For more information or inquiries, feel free to contact our Children's Youth and Family Ministry Director Peggy Smith. Let the glow of learning and faith shine bright in the hearts of our children!



(Cool kids wearing the "Love Glasses" at Sunday worship)



Exciting Adventures Ahead in Children, Youth and Family Events!

Get ready for an egg-citing time and an adventure-filled week as we announce two upcoming events in our Children, Youth and Family Ministry. Mark your calendars, because you won't want to miss these!

1. Easter Egg Hunt - March 23, 2024:

Hop into the Easter spirit with our annual Easter Egg Hunt on Saturday, March 23 at 2:00PM! It's a day filled with joy, laughter, and the thrill of searching for colorful eggs hidden throughout our grounds. Kids of all ages are invited to join in the fun, so bring your baskets and get ready for an egg-stravaganza!



2. Vacation Bible School (VBS) - June 23-27:

Save the dates for an unforgettable week of learning, laughter, and spiritual exploration. Our Vacation Bible School is set to take place from June 23 to 27. Dive into a world of exciting stories, engaging activities, and meaningful lessons that will create lasting memories and strengthen faith bonds.

These events are not just gatherings; they are opportunities for our children and youth to connect, grow, and experience the joy of community. Stay tuned for more details as we prepare for these incredible adventures!

For any inquiries or to get involved in making these events even more special, please reach out to our Children's and Youth Ministry team. Let's make these moments unforgettable for our young members! Save the Dates and Stay Tuned for More Excitement!

BIRTHDAYS and ANNIVERSARIES and THANK YOU'S

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

February

BIRTHDAYS

02/03	Wade Lewis	
02/04	Susan Bunte	
02/04	Alex Robinson	
02/07	Arvilla Brinkmeyer	
02/08	Lauren Leyrer	
02/11	Ann Brabbs	
02/11	Julie Dichtl	
02/11	Doug Ewald	94
02/11	Jean Stivers	
02/17	Rick Marshall	
02/20	Cindy Booker	
02/21	Kyle Robinson	
02/22	Shane Becker	
02/22	Alice Becker	7*
02/25	Shirley Grant	
02/28	Belinda Peters	
02/28	Bobby Rinker, Jr.	



"Thank you so much for the many kind words of encouragement, the thoughtful cards, visits, special prayers, and delightful goodies. Your support means the world to me! I am making progress each day and taking steps toward walking again, one day at a time."
Love in Christ,
Terrill Broshear

"Thank you so much for your prayers, cards, calls and visits. I am so thankful to have wonderful friends in my life.
Love to All!
Mary Lou Knau

"Thank you to our faithful volunteers from St. Marks for packing 500 bags in our Hunger Awareness Center."



ANNIVERSARIES

02/01	John & Linda Prohaska	49
02/11	Dick & Darlene Kuertz	63
02/12	Donal & Sue McDaniel	52
02/20	Don & Cheryl Kemen	42
02/28	Jeff & Carol Gering	37

A BIG thank you to everyone who contributed warm coats for those in need. Our initial focus will be on providing for Fairfield kids and families, and the remaining coats will be dedicated to keeping the homeless of Cincinnati warm this winter. Your generosity is truly appreciated! Together, we're creating a warmer and more compassionate community.



Share Your Success Stories!
"As we reflect on the journey of this year, we are excited to celebrate the achievements within our community. Whether you've reached a personal milestone, accomplished a goal, or received special recognition, we eagerly await hearing about your successes. Please send your stories to Lyn Bucalo by the monthly deadline noted on the back of bulletins. Feel free to include photos or any additional details that make your story uniquely yours. Let's come together and celebrate the remarkable achievements within our community. Your stories inspire us, and we can't wait to share in the joy of your successes!"

ST. MARK'S CHURCH EVENT :

FIRST ANNUAL CHILI COOK-OFF

FIRST ANNUAL CHILI COOK OFF SHOWDOWN:

"Savor the Flavor of the St. Mark's First Annual Chili Cook-off Extravaganza!"



Get ready for a flavorful kickoff as St. Mark's proudly presents its **First Annual Chili Cook-off on Sunday, February 18 in Fellowship Hall at 6pm!** This exciting event is not just any cook-off; it's a lively contest with awards that promises to add an extra layer of fun to the festivities.



The Ultimate Chili Cook-Off: Prepare for a chili extravaganza our St. Mark's Chefs and chili enthusiasts battle it out for the sought after title of the best chili in church! From classic beefy blends to innovative vegetarian options, ranging from mild to scorching hot, the competition at St. Mark's heats up with a variety of chili flavors to tantalize every palate.

Community and Camaraderie:

St. Mark's Chili Cook-off is more than just a culinary competition; it's a gathering of friends, families, and foodies, echoing the communal spirit of celebratory festivities. Join in the friendly competition, share your love for chili, and connect with fellow enthusiasts as you prepare for the big day.



Judging, Prizes, and Festive Vibes:

Participants can engage in the excitement by placing tickets for their favorite chili; First, second, and third categories will determine the winners, with the chili receiving the highest number of tickets in each category claiming the coveted prizes. The stakes are high, with exciting awards awaiting the winners. The occasion embodies an energetic blend of competition and celebration, making it a must attend event for those eager to get into the chili make'n-n-taste'n spirit.



How to Join the Chili Extravaganza: Whether you're a seasoned chili connoisseur ready to showcase your culinary prowess or a spectator looking for a flavorful experience, St. Mark's Chili Cook-off invites you to be a part of the excitement.

To participate, kindly register on the sign-up sheet located at the Welcome center in the Narthex.

Prepare your chili—ideally 4-6 quarts (in a large crockpot). If you have special toppings, kindly include them. Whether you contribute chili or not, everyone is invited to savor a bowl of chili and enjoy fellowship.

For attendees relishing the chili, there's an admission fee of \$5 per person or \$10 for a family.

ALL proceeds will directly support St. Mark's Mission and Outreach projects. We eagerly anticipate your presence!

Conclusion:

St. Mark's Chili Cook-off on February 18 is an ideal way to embrace the winter season—a chili cook-off that brings people together, adds warmth to the day, and sets the stage for a festive celebration. Engage in the enjoyment, relish delectable chili, and let the warm atmosphere of St. Mark's Chili Cook-off ignite your celebrations with culinary creativity and chili charm!





4601 Fairfield Avenue
Fairfield, OH 45014

PRST MKTG
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FAIRFIELD, OH
PERMIT NO. 62

SPIRIT OF ST. MARK'S JANUARY 2024



CREATE IN ME A PURE HEART, O GOD, AND RENEW A STEADFAST SPIRIT WITHIN ME.
— PSALM 51:10

St. Mark's Staff :

Pastor Mark Gregory
Admin. Assistant, Lyn Bucalo
Director of Music, Chris Beiser
Pianist & Bells, Sue Combs
Director of Children & Family Ministries, Peggy Smith
Pastor Emeritus, Bob Klingel

Church Office Hours :

9:30am– 3:00pm on Tuesday,
Wednesday, Thursday and Friday
Monday - (Office Closed)
Phone (513) 844-1818
www.fairfieldstmarks.com

Worship Service:

Sundays 9:30 am