

# 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.



## MARCH 2024

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### **MARCH 2, SATURDAY 9AM**

HELPING HANDS—ALL CHURCH WORK DAY  
CONTACT BILL DICHTL

### **MARCH 10, UMCOR SUNDAY SPECIAL COLLECTION**

AND DAYLIGHT SAVINGS (SPRING FORWARD)  
(During Sunday Worship)

### **MARCH 15, FRIDAY**

RUTH CIRCLE, 1:00-2:30PM, CONTACT PAM GUYNES (Page 5)  
AND BROKEN BUS MEALS, CONTACT TARI RANDALL (Page 10)

### **MARCH 23, SUNDAY, 2PM**

EASTER EGG HUNT  
(Rain date is March 30 at 2pm) (See more details on page 9)

### **MARCH 24, PALM SUNDAY**

PALM SUNDAY PROCESSION  
AND EASTER CANTATA "THE RISEN CHRIST" (During Sunday Worship Service)

### **MARCH 26, TUESDAY 12PM**

MONTHLY LUNCH BUNCH  
CONTACT BRENDA SMOOT (See more details on page 5)

### **MARCH 28, THURSDAY 7PM**

MAUNDY THURSDAY SERVICE  
(SMUMC Sanctuary)

### **MARCH 31, SUNDAY**

EASTER SUNDAY SERVICE  
(See more details on page 4)



## MESSAGE FROM PASTOR MARK

### “The Most Important Day...”

There are a lot of important days in life. When I have a wedding, I always remind the wedding couple that there are three days you are the complete center of attention. The day you are born, the day you die and the day you get married, and you are only going to remember one of them.

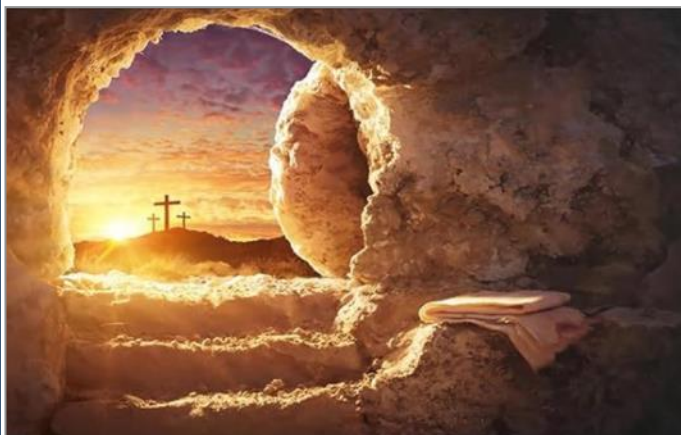


If you reflect on your life, you will see a series of special days. Beginnings and endings. Fresh starts and new opportunities. However, in all this, it is a difficult task to pick the most important day of all.

Such is the same in the life of the Church. We have special days in the life of a congregation, and as Christians in general. However, unlike our personal lives, it is easy to pick the most important day of all...

### Easter.

There are many important days and moments in the life of Christ we celebrate but I think we can all agree that the most important moment is one we celebrate on Easter. It is the fulfillment of the Word of God; it is the end of the curse of sin and death. It is a striking moment that changed history and all eternity. It is the most important day not just in the Christian year, it is the most important day in history and our lives as believers.

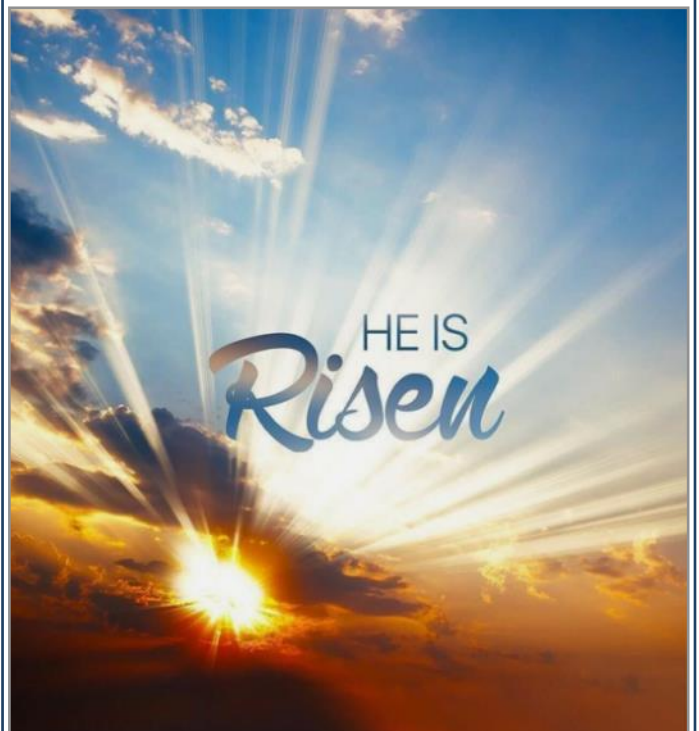


In a world so broken and divided, filled with wars, greedy, misinformation and hate... Easter is a moment to pause and understand that God in

Christ has won the victory over the sin that surrounds us. It is a day to celebrate victory, not defeat and to remember again the power message of the empty tomb and the Risen Savior.



Join us this Easter Sunday as we celebrate the greatest day ever, revisit the empty tomb and be surprised by a plot twist few saw coming. It is a blessed day, join us on Sunday morning March 31 at 9:30 AM as we relive this amazing moment, the best.



# MESSAGES FROM NEW COVENANT CHURCH

## NEW COVENTANT UMC IN PICTURES...

### Joint Mass Musical Celebration Between TWO United Methodist Choirs



The New Covenant Choir and the Ebenezer Ghana United Methodist Choir joined voices in a harmonious celebration on January 28, 2024. The event was a great success, showcasing the talent and dedication of both choirs.

Ebenezer Choir's visit was a source of encouragement for New Covenant Choir, with their performance demonstrating musical excellence and offering heartfelt support. The choirs' voices blended beautifully, creating an uplifting and unforgettable experience.

The celebration highlighted the power of music to unite and inspire, bringing two church communities together in fellowship and praise. It was a joyous occasion that resonated with hope, love, and faith. The Joint Mass Choir Musical Celebration was a true testament to the beauty of music and unity. Thank you for the visit Ebenezer Choir, to encourage New Covenant Choir!



### *"Couples and Singles Valentine Dinner" With Queens and Princesses!*

A special dinner that celebrated love in all its forms; couples and singles alike enjoyed a delightful evening filled with good food, music, and fellowship for a "Couples and Singles Valentine Dinner" with Queens and Princesses!

One of the highlights of the evening was a heartfelt thank you to the volunteer babysitters who generously offered their time and care so that parents could enjoy the evening worry-free. These dedicated volunteers ensured that the children had a fun and safe time, allowing the parents to relax and connect with others.

The Valentine's Day dinner was not just a celebration of romantic love but also a reminder of the importance of community and support. It was a beautiful example of how coming together, whether as couples or singles, can create meaningful connections and lasting memories.



# MISSIONS AND OUTREACH

## MATTHEW 25 MINISTRIES

On February 3, ten dedicated volunteers from SMUMC joined hands at Matthew 25 Ministries, working for those in need. Their commitment and compassion shone brightly as they gave their time and effort, embodying the spirit of service and generosity that defines Matthew 25 Ministries' mission. Additionally, the ministry is collecting clean, empty prescription bottles in the Narthex, furthering their mission to help those in need.



## LASAGNA LOVE RESULTS

On February 23, we had 10 area families that were given lasagnas made in St Mark's UMC kitchen. A total of 43 people were fed with these lasagnas (24 adults and 19 children). These families had submitted requests for a lasagna to Lasagna Love. Lasagna Love is a nonprofit that uses local volunteer chefs to make and deliver lasagnas to families in need.



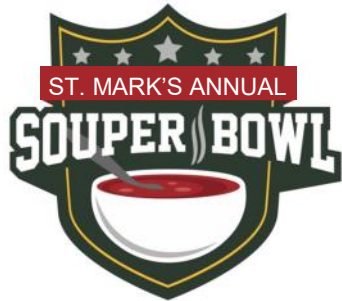
Many thanks to all that donated ingredients, casserole carriers, and their time! Our mission was a success, and everyone enjoyed spending time together as we made the lasagnas! To sign up as a volunteer or make a lasagna request – go to [www.lasagnalove.org](http://www.lasagnalove.org).



## SOUPER BOWL FOOD DRIVE RESULTS

February 11, St. Mark's Church hosted a Souper Bowl Food Drive to support its Little Pantry initiative, a community outreach program aimed at providing food and essential items to those in need within our neighborhood. The food drive encouraged our congregation to donate non-perishable food items and other essentials. **We collected 349 items for our pantry.**

The success of the Souper Bowl food drive is a testament to the generosity and compassion of the St. Mark's community. The donations collected will help to ensure that the Little Pantry is well stocked and able to meet the needs of those who rely on it over several weeks.



We would like to thank everyone who participated in the Souper Bowl food drive. Your generosity made a real difference in the lives of those less fortunate in our community.



# FELLOWSHIP and GATHERINGS

## LADIES FELLOWSHIP GAME NIGHT



February 2, the women of St. Mark's Church gathered for a delightful evening of fun and fellowship at the Ladies Game Night.

Laughter filled the air as they enjoyed a variety of games, from classic board games to a friendly competition of a lively blind fold & oven mitt marshmallow game. It was an enjoyable evening that brought fun and camaraderie to all who attended, making cherished memories.



## A FLIPPING FUN SHROVE TUESDAY PANCAKE DINNER

On February 13, St. Mark's was buzzing with excitement as the community gathered for a delicious Shrove Tuesday Pancake Dinner. The event, which marked the beginning of the Lenten season, was a success. The attendees enjoyed a dinner featuring a toppings bar with an array of choices, from classic maple syrup to fresh fruits and whipped cream. Sausages, coffee, and juice were also served, ensuring that everyone left satisfied.

*The best part of the evening?* All donations from the event benefit 2024 VBS, making the celebration even more meaningful. Overall, the Shrove Tuesday Pancake Dinner was a wonderful opportunity for the community to come together, enjoy delicious food, and support a great cause. Thank you to all volunteers and attendees.



## MONTHLY LUNCH BUNCH (THE TWIN DRAGON CHINESE BUFFET) MARCH 26, TUESDAY, 12PM

This is your opportunity to try something new, in a buffet, around 200 items. Buffet is \$11.99. For those that do not like Chinese food, there is a big selection of American foods. Reservations need to be made by Sunday March 24. Contact Brenda Smoot 513-316-1807. Twin Dragon Chinese Buffet address is 7763 Tylersville Road, West Chester. Images from the Lunch Bunch at Shooters Sports Grill (January).



## RUTH CIRCLE MARCH 15, 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.

# MUSIC MINISTRY

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC

CHRIS BEISER

## EASTER CANTATA



**On Sunday March 24 the Chancel Choir will present the Easter Cantata "The Risen Christ."**

This moving Cantata contains 9 songs and narration that moves the listener to reflect on the meaning of the cross and to know the risen Savior in a vibrant and life-changing way. Performed with live orchestra, choir, and narration, this will be an excellent way to get yourself prepared for Holy Week.

*So why present a Cantata every Easter and Christmas you might ask?*

Well, here are some reasons that I have researched...

\* Cantatas are an event for the church. They bring in people that may not come to a regular worship service and they build excitement and a positive feeling into the service.

\* Cantatas offer a different way to tell a biblical story that can leave a real impact on the listener.



\* Cantatas gives the choir time to present a message of strong context in a worship service. It allows the choir to weave together music and narrative, so that the impact of the presentation is increased.

\* A Cantata is an event that can get people to attend our church that often don't come. Many times, someone comes to see a friend or family member. It allows time for churchgoers to invite other people to attend the program.

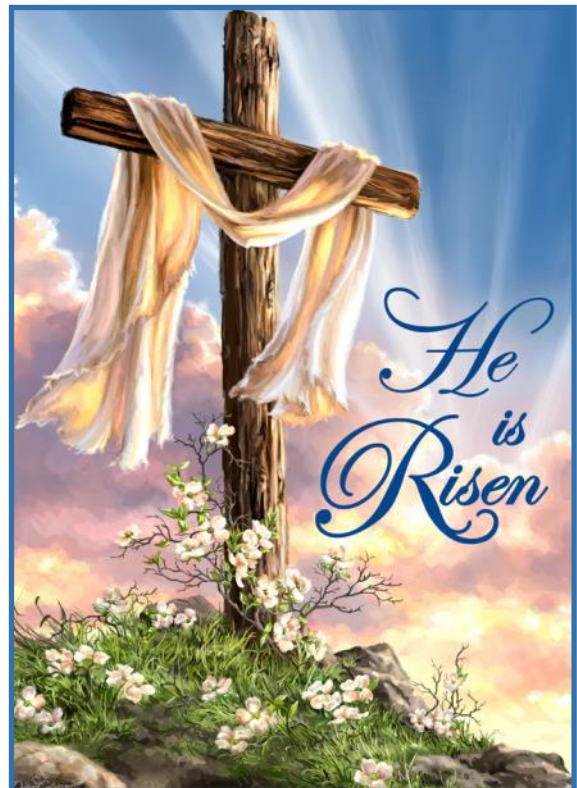
\* A Cantata allows for wider group involvement, so you not only have the choir, but you have instrumentalists and narrators, sometimes a set and costumes. Cantatas get many ages involved.



\* Cantatas provide memories. If you ask a church member what anthem was sung last Sunday, they probably don't remember but ask them what Cantata was sung a year ago or even several years and they'll be able to tell you about it immediately.

So bottom line, a Cantata, prepared and carefully performed, can create a lasting, and sometimes life-changing impact on those who experience them.

**So, mark your calendar now for Sunday, March 24 at 9:30am presenting "The Risen Christ"**



# FINANCIAL AND TRUSTEES UPDATES

## FINANCIAL UPDATE

Dear St Mark's Family,

It is hard to believe that the Season of Lent is upon us. We hope that this season will give you an opportunity to pause and reflect on the last year since Easter, 2023.

We finished January with \$40,958 in the checking account. We have \$64,453 in the savings account. With \$39,420 being held for property improvements here at St Mark's, we have \$25,033 remaining that can be transferred into the checking account for general expenses if needed. Our loan at Park National Bank stands at \$28,732. All payments have been made on time and are current.



We have started making monthly payments towards our apportionments for 2024. Our apportionments increased this year by \$1200. The total balance due is \$35,357. Our plan is to make payments every month in the amount of \$2,946.42.

With the assistance of the various Committees and Ministries here at St. Mark's, we have been able to set a budget for the new year. With your continued support through your gifts and prayers, we hope to stay on track and finish the year strong.

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.

God Bless,  
Gale Goodman, Finance Committee Chair  
Bill Schumacker, Treasurer

## TRUSTEES UPDATE



**SPRING FORWARD**  
Change your clocks

Happy March!

2024 is marching along at quite a fast pace. It is hard to believe we will be springing our clock forward already, on Sunday, March 10! Your Trustees are also springing into action with items that

need to be done in and around the church, and parsonage. The Helping Hands – All Church Workdays are in full swing again starting Saturday, March 2, at 9:00 AM. Bill Dichtl will be the contact Trustee on this one. Come and help us keep our church clean and welcoming. We will be holding workdays this year every other month, on the first Saturday of that month. So, if you cannot make it this month, you will have another opportunity to help in May, July, September, and/or November. We have a running list of projects to be completed. In addition, if you notice something that needs attention, please let a trustee know, and we will add it to the list. We greatly appreciate the folks that show up and help us on these days.



We would like to take this opportunity to give a big THANK YOU to our outgoing members and extend a big WELCOME to our new members. Thank you for your faithful service Marlis Hatton, Rich Turner, and our fearless Chair Jenni Marshall. We welcome new trustees: Kathy Fitzpatrick, Shane Becker, and Jim Howell and the new Chair team, Bill Dichtl and Tonya Leguina. If you have any questions or concerns, please reach out to either of us.  
His Servants,  
Bill Dichtl and Tonya Leguina

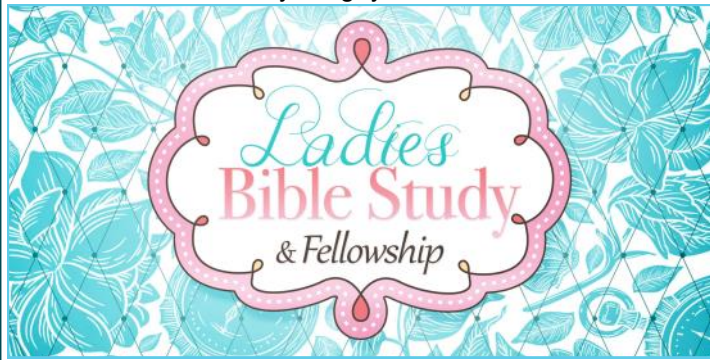


# WEEKLY STUDY GROUP AND REHEARSALS

## LADIES MONDAY NIGHT GROUP STUDY MARCH 4, 6:45PM

(MEET IN PERSON THIS DAY IN FELLOWSHIP HALL)

Join us for Women's Monday Night Bible Study as we investigate the depths of 1st and 2nd Samuel, now at an impressive 99 days of study! Our gatherings are a blend of in-person sessions on the first Monday of each month, with the rest of the weeks conducted over Zoom, ensuring accessibility for all. You're welcome to join us at any point in our journey through these rich books of the Bible. Weekly questions are provided to guide our reflections and discussions. Contact Kym Nguyen for details.



## 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.



## WEDNESDAY GROUP BIBLE STUDY 2-3PM

Join us for Wednesday Group Bible Study from 2-3 PM in Fellowship Hall for a rewarding journey through the Bible. Led by Sue McDaniel, this study offers engaging group discussions, fascinating historical insights, and deep exploration of scriptures. Currently, we are finishing up the book of Acts. This study is for anyone seeking fellowship, eager to learn something new, or individuals with valuable knowledge to share. All are welcome, whether you're a seasoned Bible scholar or just starting your exploration. Come join us for meaningful discussions!



## ROOM AT THE TABLE (RATT)

The mission of the Room At The Table committee is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world; a world of love, justice, and peace filled with people growing in the likeness of Jesus Christ.

Historically, the Christian Church as a whole has treated certain populations as if they are insignificant, pushing them to the margins of society and rendering them powerless. Today marginalized populations may include groups that are excluded due to race, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, physical ability, or language.

We know the congregation of St. Mark's doesn't want to be that type of church. The Room at the Table Committee seeks to share information with anyone who wishes to know more about the groups of people who have been marginalized and how they have been impacted by this treatment. The Committee is beginning efforts to reach out to marginalized people to ask how we can help them, to make them aware St. Mark's United Methodist Church is a welcoming congregation, and invite them to attend worship.



## MEN'S WEDNESDAY PRAYER GROUP MEET IN PRAYER ROOM AT 7:30AM



All men welcome. Go to the church Prayer room each week in person or phone in. Followed by Breakfast. Contact Jeff Gering for details.



# CHILDREN and FAMILY MINISTRY

## G.L.O.W. at Night Events

The Children's, Youth, and Family Ministry recently hosted two engaging G.L.O.W. at Night events focused on exploring the significance of Holy Communion and gaining insightful perspectives on Lent. These interactive experiences were tailored to our young participants, offering a blend of education and enjoyment. G.L.O.W. at Night provides a unique space for our children to deepen their faith in a fun and meaningful way.



We have an exciting adventure with God at this year's VBS, 'Camp Firelight', inspired by Psalm 56:3. Our VBS events are not just gatherings; they are opportunities for our children and youth to connect, grow, and experience the joy of community. Twinkle and flutter into a world of exciting stories, engaging activities, and meaningful lessons that will create lasting memories and strengthen faith bonds.

Stay tuned for more details as we prepare for these incredible adventures! For Inquiries, contact Peggy Smith for more information.



## Easter Egg Hunt—March 23 at 2PM!

Hop into the Easter spirit with our annual Easter Egg Hunt on Saturday, March 23 at 2:00PM! (*Rain-date is March 30, 2pm*) It's a day filled with joy, laughter, and the thrill of searching for colorful eggs hidden throughout our grounds. We will have our normal group rotations of crafts and hear the Easter Story before our Egg Hunt, which will then happen by age group. Kids of all ages are invited to join in the fun, so bring your baskets and get ready for an Egg-stravaganza!



Create memories with us this Easter Season and discover the true meaning of Easter!

CRAFTS &  
ACTIVITIES  
FOR ALL AGES

JOIN US FOR  
THE EASTER  
STORY

FREE EVENT  
ST. MARK'S UMC  
4601 FAIRFIELD AVE.  
FAIRFIELD, OH 45014

## HELP WITH FILLING EASTER EGGS:

We are once again asking for your help to fill our eggs with INDIVIDUALLY WRAPPED candy, stickers, tattoos, etc.! They are located at the Welcome Counter in the Narthex, available now. We will have the empty eggs bagged with 2 dozen each available for you to take home, **fill and then return them by March 17**. We could not offer this fun event without your support! We know you will "HOP" at the opportunity to serve our children, grandchildren, and the children in our local community!



# 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)



## **BIRTHDAYS**

<b>03/01</b>	<b>Steve Griffith</b>	
<b>03/01</b>	<b>Kristina Stanifer</b>	
<b>03/02</b>	<b>Mike Aiken</b>	
<b>03/04</b>	<b>Diana Gregory</b>	
<b>03/05</b>	<b>Lee Brinkmeyer</b>	
<b>03/07</b>	<b>Abby Randall</b>	<b>8*</b>
<b>03/10</b>	<b>Helen Bowman</b>	
<b>03/11</b>	<b>Denny Mullen</b>	
<b>03/14</b>	<b>Kathy Fitzpatrick</b>	
<b>03/16</b>	<b>Mark Luken</b>	
<b>03/16</b>	<b>Hayden Meyer</b>	<b>8*</b>
<b>03/19</b>	<b>Pastor Mark Gregory</b>	
<b>03/19</b>	<b>Paul Huelsman</b>	
<b>03/20</b>	<b>Chris Beiser</b>	
<b>03/21</b>	<b>Tyler George</b>	<b>17*</b>
<b>03/21</b>	<b>Colin George</b>	<b>17*</b>
<b>03/22</b>	<b>Pat Fassnacht</b>	
<b>03/22</b>	<b>Kaden Theiss</b>	<b>13*</b>
<b>03/23</b>	<b>Bill Dichtl</b>	
<b>03/23</b>	<b>Jim Jones</b>	
<b>03/24</b>	<b>Judy Scofield</b>	
<b>03/24</b>	<b>Cameron Smoot</b>	
<b>03/27</b>	<b>Dick Brewer</b>	<b>88</b>
<b>03/27</b>	<b>Doreen Robinson</b>	

## **ANNIVERSARIES**

<b>03/06</b>	<b>Don &amp; Marilyn Stewart</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>03/07</b>	<b>Wayne &amp; Tari Randall</b>	<b>37</b>

**UMCOR SUNDAY  
MARCH 10**



## **MEALS FOR BROKEN BUS- MARCH 16**



Serving those in need in  
greater Cincinnati

Calling all St. Mark's cooks! We will be providing a hot meal for those in the Cincinnati area experiencing homelessness. The meal will be taken downtown by the Broken Bus.

I would like to thank all of you for your phone calls, the beautiful cards, and your prayers during my illness. Thanks to Pastor Mark for his visit and phone calls. Blessings to all,  
Mike Fitzpatrick

Webster's Dictionary has no words to describe St. Mark's Congregation when people are down and out! My goodness, I was overwhelmed with everyone who reached out to me in many ways to make me feel loved while in rehab for an injured knee! Thanks so much to Pastor Mark and all my friends.  
With Love,  
Lois (Clumsy!) Hill

Thank you so very much for your recent donation to the Wesley Foundation! We are so grateful for your partnership and investment in our ministry. Your contribution enables us to connect with, build relationships and disciple college student at University of Cincinnati and Miami University.  
With much gratitude,  
Pastor Becky-Exec. Director

## **Other UPCOMING Events to Note for APRIL:**

April 9—Shared Harvest  
April 12—Serve City, we will need meals



# ST. MARK'S CHURCH EVENT: FIRST ANNUAL CHILI COOK-OFF RESULTS

## "SPICY SUCCESS: CHILI COOK-OFF RESULTS"

### St. Mark's First Annual Chili Cook-Off Declares Jennie Hensler Chili Chef Champion!

In a face-off that left taste buds tingling and stomachs satisfied, St. Mark's First Annual Chili Cook-Off on February 18 was a notably fun and flavorful affair.

Twelve crockpots of chili, each simmering with its own unique blend of spices and flavors, competed for the title of the best chili in church.



Alongside the chili, attendees enjoyed a variety of yummy sides and toppings galore, adding to the festive atmosphere. Organizers are even considering incorporating the best side dish and dessert categories for the next Chili Cook-Off, promising an even more delicious competition.



After sampling each participant Chili sensation, the coveted first place Chili Trophy was awarded to Jennie Hensler for her outstanding chili creation.



Presented by Pastor Mark, the Chili Trophy symbolizes not only culinary excellence but also the spirit of community and camaraderie that defined the event.



From classic beef chili's to vegetarian delights, each entry brought something special to the table, showcasing the passion of the participants.



Beyond the competition, the Chili Cook-Off was a celebration of community, with families, friends, and chili enthusiasts coming together to enjoy good food and company. A charitable component was also present, with all of the proceeds going to St. Mark's Mission, highlighting the event's commitment to giving back.

As the aroma of chili filled the air and the excitement of the cook-off lingered, St. Mark's Chili Cook-Off proved to be a flavorful start to the year. Again, congratulations to Jennie Hensler and all the participants for making the event a spicy success!

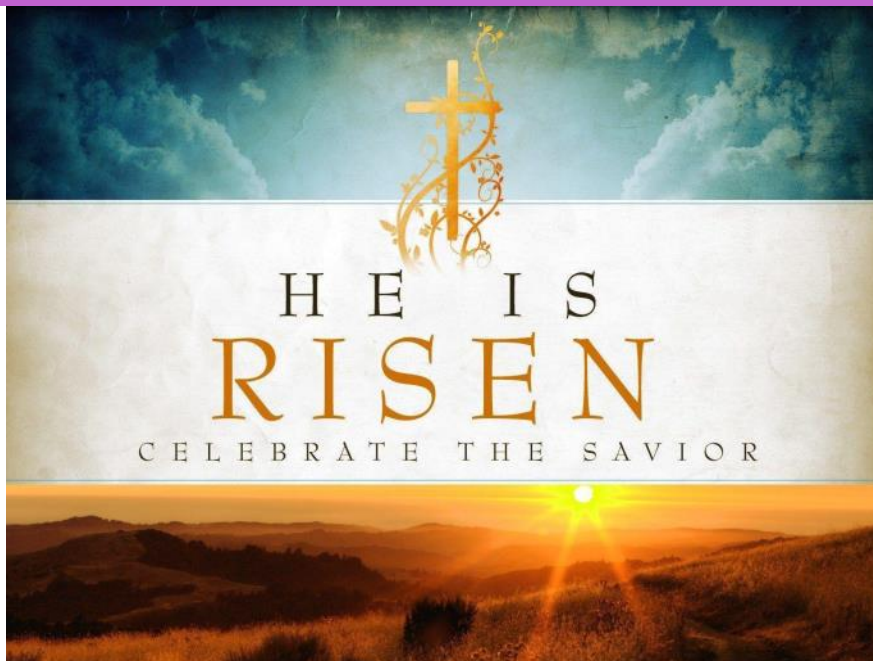




4601 Fairfield Avenue  
Fairfield, OH 45014

PRST MKTG  
POSTAGE AND  
FEES PAID  
ST MARK'S UMC  
FAIRFIELD, OH  
PERMIT NO. 62

## SPIRIT OF ST. MARK'S MARCH 2024



**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](http://www.fairfieldstmarks.com)

**Worship Service:**

Sundays 9:30 am