



# 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.

**APRIL 2024**

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### **APRIL 9, TUESDAY, 12:30-2:30PM**

SHARED HARVEST

CONTACT DEBBIE BRYANT (See more details on page 4)

### **APRIL 10, 17, and 24, WEDNESDAYS**

WALK/EXERCISE CLASS IN FELLOWSHIP HALL, 10-11AM

(FELLOWSHIP HALL, CONTACT RUTH RITENBAUGH for more details, on page 8)

### **APRIL 12, FRIDAY, BY 5PM**

SERVE CITY MEALS AND SERVE

CONTACT LYN BUCALO (See more details on page 4)

### **APRIL 19, FRIDAY 1-2:30PM**

RUTH CIRCLE

(FELLOWSHIP HALL, CONTACT PAM GUYNES for more details, page 5)

### **APRIL 23, TUESDAY 12PM**

MONTHLY LUNCH BUNCH at SNOWS LAKESIDE TAVERN

CONTACT BRENDA SMOOT (See more details on page 5)

### **APRIL 26, FRIDAY, 7-8:30PM**

LADIES NIGHT FELLOWSHIP presents ANNIE OAKLEY

(FELLOWSHIP HALL, CONTACT SUE LUKEN for more details, page 5)

### **MAY 4, SATURDAY 9AM**

HELPING HANDS—ALL CHURCH WORK DAY

CONTACT TONYA LEGUINA



## MESSAGE FROM PASTOR MARK

### **"God Has Blessed Us..."**

I would like to personally thank everyone for their kindness during the recent passing of my mother. Thank you for all of the cards and the kind words. Thanks to all of the folks who provided lunch after the service; it was appreciated by my family. St. Mark's is a very loving community, and we are happy to be a part of it. Again, on behalf of my family, I would like to thank you all.



In times like these, we are reminded of why a church family is important. In days when we are becoming increasingly secular and many people are disconnecting from the church, we are reminded of the vital role a faith community plays in our lives.

There are many reasons to be connected to a church: worship, service, mission, fellowship. However, from time to time, we are reminded of the ways the church ministers to us in times of need like no other community can. As members, we all play a role in that, and we maintain that connection in order to be able to reach out to others. When it is our turn, we can be the recipients of that love and care.

***WE ARE...***  
***God's people in this world!***

We are the church, God's people in this world. We are the agents of God's grace in a broken world. Celebrate that role and your part in it. God has blessed us in so many ways, and we can be a blessing to so many through the power of the Holy Spirit.



Many talk about what is wrong with the church and how we can do better. However, we also need to celebrate what we do right and how God has blessed us through this connection that we share as brothers and sisters in Christ.



Take a moment to celebrate the church, and in particular, St. Mark's today. Be thankful for the love and connection. The mission and service. It is easy to take that for granted, but so many live without it. God has blessed us. Let us be thankful.

God Bless,  
Pastor Mark



# MESSAGES FROM NEW COVENANT CHURCH

## **Please Welcome Pastor Alfred Arthur!**

Jenn Lucas, District Superintendent of the West Ohio Conference of the United Methodist Church, officially introduces Pastor Alfred Arthur to the congregation of New Covenant UMC.



New Covenant UMC is delighted to introduce Pastor Alfred Arthur as our new pastor. We are truly blessed to have him join our congregation.

As Pastor Alfred's deep commitment to serving the church and the community becomes an integral part of our church family, he will lead us in our spiritual journey. His passion for the ministry and his dedication to spreading the love of Jesus Christ makes him a wonderful addition to our church family. Let us extend a warm welcome and offer our support as he settles into his new role.



**Jenn Lucas**  
District Superintendent  
of West Ohio  
Conference of the  
United Methodist  
Church

## **(Pastor Alfred Arthur)**



Together, let us continue to grow in our faith, strengthen our bonds of fellowship, and to reach out with kindness and compassion to all.

Please join us in welcoming Pastor Alfred Arthur with open hearts and open arms. We are excited to embark on this new chapter together and look forward to the blessings and spiritual growth that lies ahead.

Blessings,  
Isaac Wilson  
Secretary, New Covenant UMC



# MISSIONS AND OUTREACH

## SHARED HARVEST VOLUNTEERS

Join us on April 9 from 12:30 to 2:30PM at Shared Harvest Foodbank to volunteer. We will be packing boxes for distribution to those in need within our community. This is a great opportunity to lend a helping hand and make a meaningful impact. A sign-up sheet is available on the Narthex bulletin board. For more information, please contact Debbie Bryant. We look forward to seeing you there!



## SERVE CITY, APRIL 12

Serve City is looking for volunteers to help with our upcoming event Friday, April 12. Our theme this month is "Breakfast for Dinner," where we will be serving 75 people in need. Volunteers are needed to prepare meals, bring casseroles, and help serve the meals. If you're interested in serving a warm meal and providing a welcoming atmosphere, we'd love to have you join us! Please bring your items to St. Mark's kitchen promptly by 5:00 pm so that there is enough time to pack the car, drive, and unpack at Serve City.

Please sign up to volunteer by April 10, and contact Lyn Bucalo for more information. Thank you for your support! Need some ideas on what to bring?

### Some examples:

Breakfast casseroles: Sausage, egg, hashbrown, etc.), Breakfast burritos, breakfast tacos, Quiches, frittatas, French toast, pancakes with assorted toppings, (fruits, whipped cream, and syrups), Breakfast sandwiches (Bacon, egg, and cheese or sausage and cheese on a biscuit or English muffin), Yogurt parfaits with granola and fresh berries, Breakfast muffins or scones, Breakfast potatoes, grits, fruit salads, allow imagination to create tasty meals. These items offer a variety of flavors and textures that will appeal to a wide range of tastes, making your "Breakfast for Dinner" event a delicious and enjoyable experience for everyone!



## EASTER EGG BASKETS TO FFFP

In the spirit of the Easter season, St. Mark's embarked on a heartwarming mission to bring joy to families and children in need. Through the donations of our congregation, we were able to fill and arrange 50 Easter baskets, each brimming with goodies and love. Special thanks to Debbie & Charlie Bryant for arranging and delivering these baskets to the Fairfield Food Pantry, a vital organization serving our community with compassion and care.



Upon receiving our donation, the Fairfield Food Pantry team expressed immense gratitude. However, the demand was so high that our baskets were quickly distributed, highlighting the ongoing need for support and solidarity within our community.

We are immensely proud of our congregation's generosity and kindness. Your contributions have brought smiles to many faces and warmth to many hearts. As we move past the Easter season, let us continue to reflect on its true meaning and spread love and hope to those around us.



Thank you to everyone who contributed to this meaningful cause. Your support is deeply appreciated and makes a real difference in the lives of those in need.



# FELLOWSHIP and GATHERINGS

## LADIES FELLOWSHIP NIGHT April 26, FRIDAY, 7:00PM

Ladies, we invite you to join us for a "First Person" presentation of Ohioan Annie Oakley by Joyce Browning from nearby Heritage Village. It's sure to be a great and informative time of fellowship together! Dessert will also be provided. There will be a nominal fee of \$5.00 per person in order to cover our presenter's fee. Feel free to invite your friends to join us. We would love to have a great turnout for our speaker's time and effort! Please see the sign-up sheet at the Welcome Center. (You can pay ahead or on the night of the event, but we would like to have an idea of how many to plan for.)



## RUTH CIRCLE APRIL 19, FRIDAY, 1-2:30PM (FELLOWSHIP HALL)

As April unfolds, the Ruth Circle Women's Fellowship blooms with the promise of new beginnings. We invite all women to join us as we celebrate the season's beauty and the flourishing sisterhood of Ruth Circle. Our April gathering will be a vibrant one, filled with spring-themed treats and shared devotions that nurture meaningful connections, beloved traditions, and spiritual growth.



## MONTHLY LUNCH BUNCH (SNOWS LAKESIDE TAVERN) APRIL 23, TUESDAY, 12PM

Join us for the April Lunch Bunch at Snows Lakeside Tavern! This month, the menu offerings include salads, sandwiches, fries, and appetizers. The Address is: 4344 Dry Ridge Road, Cincinnati, 45242 (Colerain). Contact Brenda Smoot at (513) 316-1807 to make your required reservations by Sunday, April 21. In Feb., we went to the Olive Garden and then in March, we were at Twin Dragon Buffet. Below, are the images.



In March, we celebrated St. Patrick's Day with a special treat—a dancing leprechaun! The leprechaun showcased delightful skills, adding a touch of joy and whimsy to our gathering. We were delighted to have Diana Gregory, a special guest speaker who shared her experiences as an airline flight attendant. Diana's stories of opening emergency exit doors, placing your oxygen mask on first before assisting others, and other stories were both enlightening and entertaining.

Join us as we continue to explore fresh perspectives and strengthen our bonds in faith. Whether you're a long-time

member or a first-time visitor, let's paint April with hues of renewal and connections that bloom.

# MUSIC MINISTRY NEWS



## “You Are The Music”

As another wonderful Easter season comes to a close, I want to make sure to once again send a huge thank-you to all the of the amazing people in the music ministry who made this time so special for everyone.

The choir, orchestra, narrators, and tech helpers involved with this year’s cantata, “The Risen Christ,” were tremendous! What a blessing that was to all who heard it.

Always, a thank-you to the many musicians and instrumentalists who presented specials throughout the Lent and Easter Sundays and extra services.

In the May newsletter, I’ll share my ideas for the spring. However, I will close this month with a beautiful poem about music and its connection to us and our Lord.

## **The poem is entitled “You Are The Music” by Marcia Newton**

You are the music. You are the song.  
You are the words of truth and love.  
You are the voice that speaks to our heart.  
You are the music, the song of our heart.

You are the music we love and adore.  
You are the song that we sing evermore.  
You are the voice that calls us to pray.  
You are the words of goodness and strength.

You are the music that brings us delight.  
You are the song that brings hope to our life.  
You are the voice that calls us to faith.  
You are the words of kindness and grace.

You are the music we sing joyfully.  
You are the song that brings light to our day.  
You are the voice that calls us to serve.  
You are the words of love we have heard.

You are the music that fills us with peace.  
You are the song that we sing and believe.  
You are the voice that calls us to grace.  
You are the words we pray every day.

You are the music that blesses our soul.  
You are the love song that makes our lives whole.  
You are the voice that called us to Him.  
You are the words of life without end.



# FINANCIAL AND TRUSTEES UPDATES

## FINANCIAL UPDATE

**Dear St Mark's Family,**

We trust that everyone had a wonderful Easter this year. Hard to believe that Easter is now behind us for another year. We finished February with \$33,500 in the checking account which is down \$7,458 from January. 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 \$28,003. All payments have been made on time and are current.

Currently, \$5,893 has been paid of the \$35,357 due for apportionments. We have been able to stay with our plan to pay \$2,946.42 towards that balance every month.



As noted above, our checking balance is down. After reviewing the "Budgeted numbers" to the "Actual numbers," we are spending less than what we anticipated. We appreciate all of the committees and ministries here at St. Mark's helping to keep our expenses inline. Where we are falling short is the amount that is being received through the giving of the congregation. We will go into more detail next month after we have had a full quarter-of -the- year to report on.

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

**HAPPY SPRING!**

Spring officially arrived on March 19. So, "Happy Spring!" Not to upstage March, but April has a pretty cool thing happening with the Great North American Solar Eclipse, on April 8, 2024. People from all over are flocking to locations nearby where the eclipse will be in totality. With all of these celestial and cosmic forces at play, we know one thing for certain...April showers bring May flowers, and where there are flowers, there are weeds, weeds, and more weeds!

Our upcoming Helping Hands - Spring Clean -Up Day, is scheduled for Saturday, May 4 at 9AM, (with a rainout date of May 11.) Tonya Leguina will be the contact Lead Trustee. We have a running list of projects that need to be completed inside and outside



of the church. This time of year, there are always a lot of external items to tend to, including trimming, raking, fertilizing, weed control, mulching, and flower planting.

As always, if you notice something that needs attention, let a Trustee know, and we will add it to the list. In addition, your Trustees are working on adding three more handicapped spots on the west side of the parking lot, closest to the building. We also want to upgrade our fire alarm system this year and to upgrade the sconce lighting at the front of the church, just to name a few items. We have more tasks on our list and will be working on them, as well.

Lastly, a BIG THANK YOU to all who support us in keeping St. Mark's beautiful!

His Servants,  
Bill Dichtl and Tonya Leguina

# WEEKLY GROUPS AND REHEARSALS

## LADIES MONDAY NIGHT BIBLE STUDY APRIL at 6:30PM

Join us for Women's Monday Night Bible Study as we investigate the book of 1 Chronicles. Our gatherings are a blend of in-person sessions on the first Monday of each month, with the remainder 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 thoughts and conversations. Reach out to Kym Nguyen for details.



## WEDNESDAY GROUP BIBLE STUDY 2-3PM

Join us for Wednesday Group Bible Study from 2-3 PM in the 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 who is seeking fellowship, who is eager to learn something new, or for 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!



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



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

## HANDBELL CHOIR—WEDNESDAY, 6:30PM



Join the Handbell Choir every Wednesday at 6:30pm for a delightful musical experience – no prior experience nor 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 nor sheet music reading skills are necessary. Just come prepared to make a joyful noise! Contact Chris Beiser for more information.



## WEDNESDAYS WALK/EXERCISE CLASS



Join us every week at 10 AM in the Fellowship Hall for our Walk/Exercise Class. This class is designed for all levels and includes beginners. You can even sit in a chair and work out, too! We walk, kick, and sidestep our way towards healthier lifestyles together. There's no judgment here; you can go at your own pace. Come and join us and take a step towards better health! For more information, contact Ruth Ritenbaugh.



## ROOM AT THE TABLE (RATT)

We welcome new members to join the committee, if you are interested in joining the Room at the Table to help make St. Mark's more accepting for all, please fill out the questionnaire by visiting this link: [tinyurl.com/rattform](http://tinyurl.com/rattform) The Committee has begun efforts to reach out to marginalized people to ask how we can help them and to bring awareness: St. Mark's UMC is a welcoming congregation and we invite everyone to attend worship.





# CHILDREN and FAMILY MINISTRY

## **A Joyous Easter Egg Hunt Celebration**

A Joyous Easter Egg Hunt Celebration at St. Mark's! On March 23, St. Mark's hosted a vibrant Easter Egg Hunt, bringing our community together for a day filled with laughter and joy. Even though we had partly sunny skies, the event was a resounding success.



The day began with crafts and snacks, setting the stage for a fun-filled gathering. A talented balloon twister entertained the crowd, adding an element of whimsy to the festivities. Families had the opportunity to capture special moments and memories with the Easter Bunny!



A highlight of the event was a special time in the sanctuary, where Peggy shared the very important Easter story. This meaningful moment provided a deeper understanding of the holiday's significance, enriching the overall experience for attendees.



Following the indoor activities, children eagerly headed outside to participate in the egg hunt. They had such excitement as they scoured the grounds, gathering nearly 1000 eggs in total. It was a heartwarming sight to see the

joy on their faces as they made new discoveries and shared in the thrill of the hunt.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to all who donated to make this day possible. Your generosity helped create a memorable and enjoyable event for our community. We look forward to more celebrations and gatherings in the future, strengthening the bonds that unite us as a community.



Thank you once again to everyone who participated, volunteered, and contributed to the success of our Easter Egg Hunt. Your support is truly appreciated, and we can't wait to see you at our next event!

## **Palm and Easter Cantata Sunday**

We want to extend our heartfelt thanks to each and every one of you who joined us for our Palm Sunday procession and Easter Cantata Service on March 24. It was a truly special day, filled with beautiful music, meaningful worship, and a sense of community that makes St. Mark's such a special place.



## **VBS-JUNE 9-13, 6:30-8:15PM, 'CAMP FIRELIGHT'**

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.

# 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>04/01</b>	<b>Bob Klingel</b>
<b>04/02</b>	<b>Dave Booker</b>
<b>04/03</b>	<b>Gay Kubik</b>
<b>04/06</b>	<b>Diana Griffith</b>
<b>04/11</b>	<b>Brandon Stanifer</b>
<b>04/13</b>	<b>Gil Dole</b>
<b>04/15</b>	<b>Cindy Miller</b>
<b>04/16</b>	<b>Katie Chambers</b>
<b>04/19</b>	<b>Randy Starkie</b>
<b>04/23</b>	<b>Bob Pittman</b>
<b>04/28</b>	<b>Sue Rumley</b>



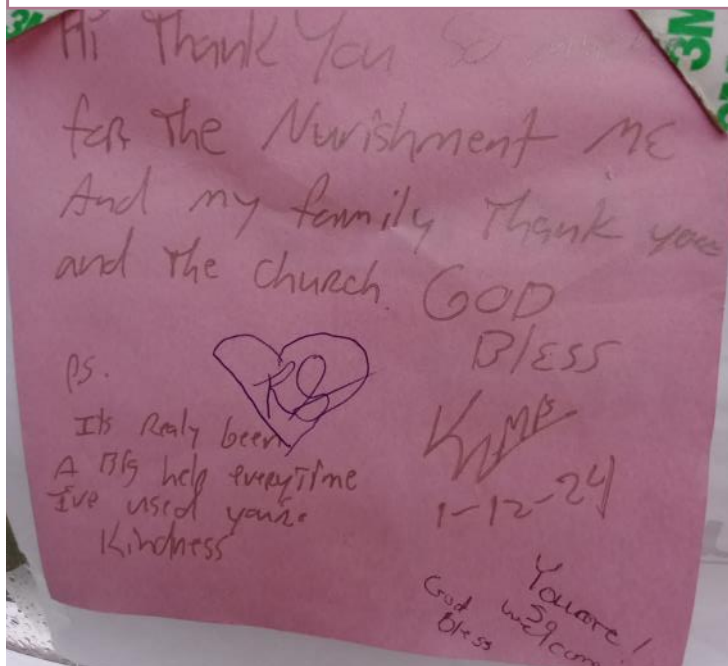
What a great church family and one who really cares for each other. I want to thank Pastor Mark and all who have prayed with me, shared cards, flowers, gifts, visits, and delicious foods. I have been so blessed!  
God Bless You All!  
Love,  
Iris Jones

HAPPY  50<sup>th</sup> WEDDING  
*anniversary*

## **ANNIVERSARIES**

<b>04/05</b>	<b>Jim &amp; Shirley Howell</b>	<b>50</b>
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The note below is a heartfelt thank you from a neighbor who utilized our Little Food Pantry. It serves as a reminder of the impact our church has on the local community.



## Annual Spring Salad Luncheon and Crafts

*Sponsored by the Monday Craft Ladies*

**May 2, 2024 (Thursday)  
11am—1:30pm**



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

## **EARTH DAY- APRIL 22**



# ST. MARK'S CHURCH EVENT: MOST IMPORTANT BIRTHDAY BATTLE RESULTS

## "Most Important Birthday Battle Results" St. Mark's Most Important Birthday Battle of March 2024, Declares Pastor Mark Gregory

In early March, the joyful sounds of a birthday battle cry echoed through the halls and in the sanctuary of St. Mark's Church. Pastor Mark boldly proclaimed that his birthday on March 19, reigned supreme as the most important in March.

Not to be outdone, Chris Beiser, our Music Director, fired back, asserting that his birthday on March 20, deserved top billing, reminding us all of the uplifting music he brings us each Sunday service.

The banter between Pastor Mark and Chris reached hilarious heights, with Pastor Mark even playfully noting that his birthday, being a mere day before Chris', naturally took precedence. But the celebrations didn't stop there—Diana Gregory, Pastor Mark's wife, also celebrated her birthday on March 4, adding to the festive celebrations.



To settle the score, a grand birthday battle finale was held in the Fellowship Hall—a birthday battle like no other. The two birthday champions faced off in a cake-eating competition; the least amount of cake left on their respective platters, each vying for the title! In a twist of fate, a tie ensued, leading to a thrilling "Rock, Paper, Scissors" showdown to determine the ultimate winner.



The St. Mark's community came together in full force to celebrate this joyous occasion, and we're already looking ahead to 2025, when both Pastor Mark and Chris Beiser will reach the milestone of turning 60 years old. Oh, what fun awaits us! Enjoy looking at all of the fun images from this event.





4601 Fairfield Avenue  
Fairfield, OH 45014

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ST MARK'S UMC  
FAIRFIELD, OH  
PERMIT NO. 62

## SPIRIT OF ST. MARK'S APRIL 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