



# 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.

**MAY 2024**

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### **MAY 2, THURSDAY, 11-1:30PM**

ANNUAL SALAD LUNCHEON & CRAFTS

CONTACT TOMIE O'SULLIVAN (See more details on page 11)

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

HELPING HANDS—ALL CHURCH WORK DAY and MULCH MADNESS

CONTACT TONYA LEGUINA (See more details on page 3)

### **MAY 10, FRIDAY 12-2:30PM**

RUTH CIRCLE LUNCHEON

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

### **MAY 12, SUNDAY**

MOTHER'S DAY—HAT DAY CELEBRATION

(For more details, page 3)

### **MAY 7 (TUESDAY) AND 19 (SUNDAY)**

VBS TRAINING DAYS

CONTACT PEGGY SMITH (See more details on page 10)

### **MAY 23, THURSDAY 6PM**

SUMMER BREAK FUN FEST

CONTACT PEGGY SMITH OR SUE LUKEN (See more details on page 9)

### **MAY 28, TUESDAY 12PM**

MONTHLY LUNCH BUNCH at SMOKEY BONES, WEST CHESTER)

CONTACT BRENDA SMOOT (See more details on page 5)

### **JUNE 1, TUESDAY 12PM**

MATTHEW 25 MINISTRY VOLUNTEER DAY

CONTACT LYNNE SCHUMACKER (See more details on page 4)

## MESSAGE FROM PASTOR MARK

### **"Confessions of a Weather Geek: Embracing the Stormy Side of Spring"**

Spring is upon us, and it is time when many of us think about baseball, flowers, birds, and warmth. Me? I think about something else. I will confess that I am a certified weather geek. I have 14 weather apps on my phone. I am also a certified storm spotter. I love weather, all types. So for me, as you think of flowers in the spring, I think of tornadoes.



I remember in the fall of 2013, I was up close and personal with a tornado (EF-2 for any fellow weather geeks). I was standing outside watching for a tornado that was coming our way. I should know better, but you know how that goes. I was maybe 150 yards from the tornado, and in that moment, I noticed a few things. Tornadoes up close don't look like tornadoes. It is a mass, a wall of swirling green. You are also struck by the power; it is massive and consuming, and something you are not prepared to experience. A tornado is the most violent storm that exists on earth, and witnessing its power personally leaves one with a profound sense of awe.



We stand in awe of God and God's power. Funny thing is, we tend to think of awe in easy terms. We are amazed, or we wonder. That is a part of "awe"; however, when you truly experience "awe," you are struck by elements of it that you did not understand. In the Old Testament, the Hebrew word for "awe" is most closely related to fear.

We have the Proverb, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (Proverbs 9:10). In a modern sense, we bristle at that Proverb. We love God and fear is not a part of that. And the Bible says "Perfect love casts out all fear..." (John 4:18) In our relationship with God, we no longer fear punishment for our sin, yes...However, when we stand before the power of God, there is still awe, and there is still fear. Not being afraid of God, but being overwhelmed by the power displayed in who God is.

**Frankly, seeing the power of God displayed should give us pause and should inspire some holy fear. That's a good thing.**



We often make God too small, too much like us. Take a step back and imagine and experience the power of God in creation and in your life. Let God be God. Yes, sometimes that is scary, but scary in a good and powerful way.

God Bless,  
Pastor Mark



# MAY MATTERS

## TRUSTEES UPDATE

### **Mulch Madness: May's Month of Garden Glory!**

May is the last full month of spring and the transition period to the warm, sunny days of summer. So, make this month a lively and bright period for outdoor activities under the sun's warmth!



One way to do that is to join us for our upcoming Helping Hands - Spring Clean-Up Day that is scheduled for May 4, (with a rainout date of May 11), at 9:00AM. Tonya Leguina will be the contact Trustee. We have a running list of projects that need to be completed inside and outside of the church.

May is the month we MULCH! "Mulching in May" has become an annual thing around St. Mark's. This year, we need to de-weed, and mulch the entry areas around the church and the parsonage. Even if you are not able to join us on the morning of May 4, please consider donating three (or more) bags of black mulch, and we will do the raking and spreading. Feel free to drop off the bags of mulch anytime between now and May 4. Just leave them on the pavement, to the left of the kitchen door entrance.

As always, if you notice something that needs attention, let us know, and we will add it to the list. As your Trustees, we appreciate all that you do in helping us keep St. Mark's beautiful!

His Servants,  
Bill Dichtl and Tonya Leguina



## MOTHER'S DAY, HAT DAY

### **Tip Your Hat to Moms!**

Join us for a special Hat Day during Sunday worship on May 12. Show off your favorite hat, whether it's elegant, fun, or simply unique, and let's make this Mother's Day truly memorable.



Let's honor all of the mothers, grandmothers, and motherly figures in our lives with this fun and fashionable tradition.

We look forward to seeing you and your fabulous hats on Mother's Day!

## VOLUNTEER MEDIA MINISTRY

### **Calling all Creatives: St. Mark's Needs Media Maverick/s!**

Are you tech-savvy, slightly technical, or just interested in learning the a little about media? St. Mark's is looking for a volunteer/s to assist with Sunday worship media! You can be a trail blazer in media or just have an interest in helping out.

**No prior experience is needed** – just a willingness to learn and a passion for supporting our church community. An alternative option could be for a couple of volunteers to alternate Sundays, making it a flexible and manageable commitment.

If you're interested in this exciting opportunity to contribute to our Sunday services, please contact Pastor Mark. Your involvement will help create a more engaging and impactful worship experience for everyone.





# MISSIONS AND OUTREACH

## **MATTHEW 25 MINISTRIES ON JUNE 1**

Matthew 25 Ministries is offering a volunteer opportunity on June 1, Saturday, from 9-11am. This is a wonderful chance to make a difference in our community by lending a helping hand to those in need.

Join us, as we come together to support this important cause. Your time and effort will directly impact the lives of those less fortunate and bring hope to those who need it most.

No special skills or experience are required – just a willingness to serve and a desire to make a positive impact. Mark your calendars for June 1 and join us in spreading compassion and kindness through volunteerism. Contact Lynne Schumacker for more information regarding this volunteer opportunity.



## **Shared Harvest Success: Volunteers Unite to Feed Young Minds!**

Shared Harvest had a successful event on April 9, where 11 dedicated volunteers came together to pack bags for school kids in need. These bags are meant to provide essential food items for the weekends, ensuring that these children have access to nutritious meals even when they're not at school.

By providing these weekend bags, Shared Harvest is helping to alleviate food insecurity and ensure that every child has the nourishment they need to thrive.

We are grateful for the generosity and compassion of our volunteers, whose efforts embody the spirit of community and caring. Thank you to everyone who participated in this event, and we look forward to continuing to make a positive impact together.



## **Serving Up Warmth & Gratitude: St. Mark's "Breakfast for Dinner" at Serve City**

On April 12, St. Mark's congregation came together to support Serve City, with 19 generous individuals donating food, including 6 dedicated volunteers serving a "Breakfast for Dinner" meal to those in need.

As we arrived, Serve City residents greeted us with hearts full of gratitude. The aroma of breakfast classics filled the air and created a cozy atmosphere that brought smiles to everyone's faces.

The highlight of the evening was the connections made with the residents. They expressed their sincere appreciation for the meals and the companionship, reminding us of the importance of community and compassion. We left with full hearts, grateful for the opportunity to serve and support Serve City. Thank you to everyone who made this event a success. Together, we can make a difference, one meal at a time.





## FELLOWSHIP and GATHERINGS

### **MONTHLY LUNCH BUNCH (SMOKEY BONES, WEST CHESTER) MAY 28, TUESDAY, 12PM**

The May Lunch Bunch is Tuesday, 12PM, May 28 at Smokey Bones. The Address is: 9484 Civic Centre Blvd, in West Chester. Besides BBQ Ribs and Chicken, there are many appetizers, sandwiches, and salads offered. Reservations need to be made by Sunday, May 26. Contact: Brenda Smooth (513) 316-1807.



The monthly Lunch Bunch excursion on April 23 to Snow's Lakeside Tavern was a delightful experience, with 30 attendees soaking in the ambiance and camaraderie. Conversations flowed as freely as the food, with everyone enjoying the picturesque scenery.



One quirky highlight was a makeshift swan on the lake, so lifelike that it left us pondering its authenticity, sparking laughter and adding to the day's charm. Check out the images below for a glimpse of our wonderful time at Snow's Lakeside Tavern.



### **RUTH CIRCLE MAY 10, FRIDAY, 12-2:30PM (FELLOWSHIP HALL)**

Join us for a special Ruth Circle Luncheon on Friday, May 10 (Please note: Date moved up a week)! This delightful gathering marks our last meeting before the summer break, making it the perfect time to come together before we pause for the summer months and resume in September.

Expect a feast of delicious entrees and beverages that will be provide. To make this luncheon even more special, we invite everyone to bring a covered dish to share. Our potluck style luncheons never fail to impress, showcasing the diverse culinary talents of our St. Mark's Ladies.



As we bid farewell to spring, we eagerly anticipate the fellowship and the friendship that define our Ruth Circle meetings. With a break over the summer, we'll return in September, revitalized and eager for another season of shared meals, engaging presenters, meaningful devotions, and heartfelt stories.

Don't miss out on this wonderful occasion! Mark your calendars for May 10 and join us as we celebrate the end of the winter/spring season at the Ruth Circle Luncheon. Let's close out another successful season with joy and togetherness!

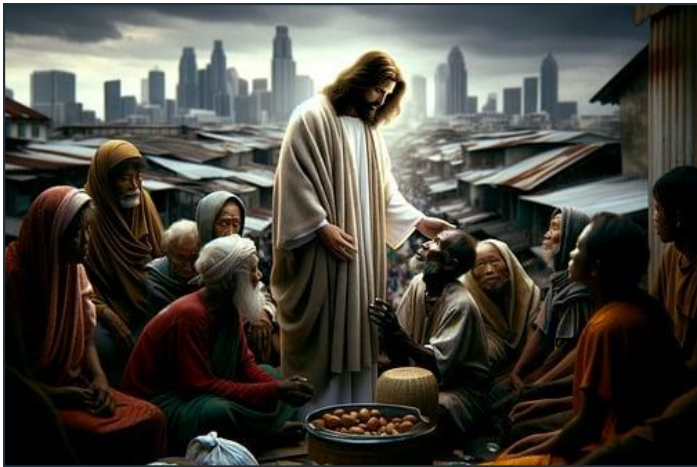




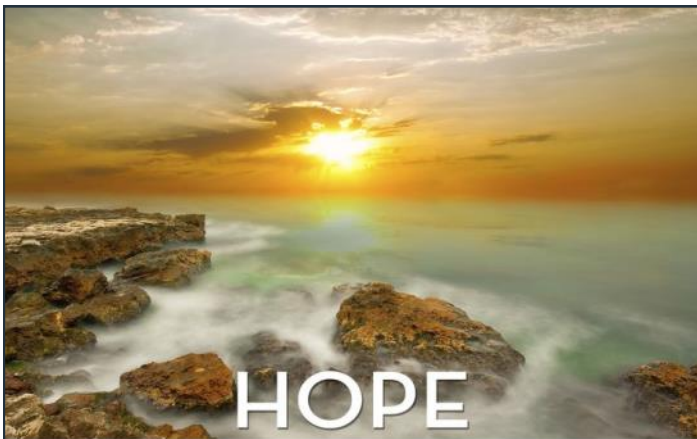
# MUSIC MINISTRY NEWS

## **Finding Shelter in God's Promises: A Cantata of Hope and Healing**

When faced with very real hurts, where can you go to find an answer? It's human to get caught up in our "messy stuff" whether we want to admit it or not, but no pep talk can outmatch God's promises. "The Shelter" presents a unique opportunity to fully embrace the broken and hurting within ourselves, our church and our community, and to not shy away from the feelings that people are experiencing. Feelings of loneliness, anxiety, restlessness, hopelessness and helplessness are all addressed in this moving Cantata. The lyrics are pulled directly from God's own words, His responses to those feelings, and no matter their course, God is with us in our storms.



The music arranged for the string quartet, piano, and percussion reinforces this very personal relationship we have with our Creator, the relationship that He truly desires to have with each and every one of us. As struggles of all different aspects continue to find their way into our lives, "The Shelter" offers a refreshingly, authentic worship experience that will open your hearts and minds, and embrace these feelings with His promise.



"The Shelter" will be presented at the 9:30am service on June 2. The taking of communion will be a part of the Cantata presentation that morning. In my 30 years at St. Mark's, I have conducted over 50 different cantatas and well over 1000 single anthems. Many of these songs we have repeated because the words have spoken to us in such a touching manner that the song just has to be done again. Never have I come across a work of music like "The Shelter". It touches my heart so deeply and brings a calming spirit to all who hear its beautiful songs.



I want to invite anyone, ANYONE, past choir member, someone who loves to sing, or even ask a friend to join in the singing of this amazing Cantata. We will rehearse at the beginning of choir practices on Wednesday evenings from 7:30pm to 8:15pm.

I look forward to bringing this wonderful message to the congregation of Saint Mark's.



# FINANCIAL UPDATE

## **Shining Through the Summer: Navigating Stewardship at St. Mark's**



Dear St Mark's Family,

I trust everyone survived the solar eclipse. It was quite an amazing wonder to witness. I hope everyone had an opportunity to witness it.

March ended with us having \$41,459 in the checking account while we have \$64,461 in the savings account. I will always point out that \$39,420 in the savings account can only be used for property improvements on the St Mark's campus with \$25,041 being available for general expenses, if needed. Currently, \$27,266 is the remaining balance to be paid on the Park National Loan.

As noted in last month's newsletter, I would like to update you on the financial status of St Mark's through the end of first quarter. For the first three months of 2024, we have received \$81,470 in gifts to the church, while we had budgeted \$94,288 for the same period. This budget number was based on what historically is given to the church during the same period in previous years. This represents a \$12,818 deficit from what we had budgeted.

We (the Finance Committee) had asked all of the committees and departments here at St. Mark's to be very conservative with their budget requests for 2024. We also requested that expenses be controlled as much as possible. Those requests were heard and have been acted upon. For the first quarter of 2024, we had budgeted \$85,401 in expenses to be paid. At this point, I am happy to report that the actual expenses for the first quarter of 2024 were kept to \$80,678. Therefore, we spent \$4,723 less than what we budgeted for.

You may ask, why is this important information? Well, coupled with the surplus from the end of 2023 and the controlled spending for the first quarter, we were able to weather the \$12,818 deficit in giving. With the actual giving in the first quarter of \$81,570 and the expenses paid of \$80,678, we spent less than what we received which is a good thing.

I do want to caution everyone with the first quarter results. The summer months are coming. The giving usually dips during that time with weekend get-aways and vacations. We need to remain vigilant in our giving and in our spending. The surplus from the end of 2023 will quickly be absorbed into 2024 spending; therefore, we will not have that to rely on going into the summer months. Note, all of our expenses, payroll obligations, apportionments, and the loan are being paid up- to-date and on time.



Your gifts to St Mark's as well as all the diligent work that is being done to benefit St Mark's financial position, is greatly appreciated by everyone. We ask for your continued support through your prayers and gifts. 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





# WEEKLY GROUPS AND REHEARSALS

## LADIES MONDAY NIGHT BIBLE STUDY MAY 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 each Wednesday for a deep dive into the book of Acts! St. Mark's UMC's Bible study group gathers weekly to read, learn, and discuss the teachings and stories found in this important book. Our last meeting before the summer break will be on May 22, so mark your calendars and join us as we continue our journey through Acts. Whether you've been with us from the beginning or are just joining in, there's always something new to discover and learn. We look forward to seeing you there as we grow in faith and understanding together through the study of God's word! 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

## SUMMER BREAK FUN FEST

Get ready for a Summer Break Fun Fest like no other at St. Mark's UMC! Join us on May 23, starting at 6pm, at the church shelter for an evening of family-friendly fun and community celebration. (Raindate May 30).



This event is open to everyone in the community, so bring your friends, neighbors, and loved ones for a night to remember. We'll have a delicious array of food to enjoy, exciting games for all ages, and fantastic prizes to win.

Kids (and kids at heart) can bounce around in the inflatable bounce house, while everyone can participate in our drawing for a summer fun basket filled with goodies to kickstart your summer adventures.



Mark your calendars and don't miss out on this fantastic event! Let's come together as a community to celebrate the start of summer with food, games, prizes, and plenty of fun for everyone. See you there! For more information, contact Peggy Smith and Sue Luken.



## VBS JUNE 9-13: CAMP FIRELIGHT

Join us for an exciting adventure with God at this year's Vacation Bible School, 'Camp Firelight', inspired by Psalm 56:3!

From June 9th to 13th, 6:30-8:15 PM, children and youth are invited to twinkle and flutter into a world of exciting stories, engaging activities, and meaningful lessons that will create lasting memories and strengthen faith bonds.



At 'Camp Firelight', VBS is more than just a gathering; it's an opportunity for our young ones to connect, grow, and experience the joy of community. Through fun-filled activities and engaging lessons, children will embark on a journey of faith and discovery. Use this link to sign up! <https://stmarksumc.mycokesburyvbs.com>



Don't miss out on this enriching experience! For inquiries and registration, please 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**

05/03	Kathy Bradley	
05/03	Marla George	
05/06	Beth Ewald	
05/11	Tomie O'Sullivan	90
05/17	Roger Roark	
05/18	John Meyer	
05/18	Julie Mislansky	
05/20	Samuel Saylor	
05/22	Gretchen Menke	
05/23	Marta Hollinger	
05/24	Zedith Pottenger	95
05/25	Gary Miller	
05/25	Sue Webster	
05/26	Shirley Aydlett	
05/26	Lauren Dichtl	
05/28	Rich Zugelster	
05/30	Betty Winkler	95



## **ANNIVERSARIES**

05/05	Pablo & Tonya Leguina	34
05/09	Bill & Julie Dichtl	37
05/17	Hugh & Pam Guynes	44
05/25	Lee & Arvilla Brinkmeyer	39
05/28	Charlie & Debbie Bryant	36
05/30	Bill & Lynne Schumacker	43

## **Light Up Your Calendar with Firefly Fun: Camp Firelight™ VBS Training Days Ahead!**

Join us for an exciting opportunity to prepare for Vacation Bible School (VBS) at St. Mark's UMC! Whether you're a seasoned VBS volunteer or looking to get involved for the first time, our training sessions are designed for everyone. There will be a safety background check for all volunteers.

### **Training Schedule:**

- **Tuesday, May 7th at 6:30 PM:** Kick-off training session
- **Sunday, May 19th after worship:** Follow-up session

### **What to Expect:**

- Learn about this year's VBS theme and curriculum
- Discover your role and how you can contribute
- Get tips and tricks for leading activities and engaging with children
- Meet other volunteers and build community.

**No Experience Necessary:** Never volunteered for VBS before? No problem! Our training is open to all, regardless of experience. Whether you're tech-savvy, slightly technical, or just interested in helping out, we welcome you to join our team!

**How to Get Involved:** Mark your calendar for these important dates and plan to attend. For more information or to sign up as a volunteer, please contact Peggy Smith or Sue Luken.

Let's make this year's VBS an unforgettable experience for our children and community! We look forward to seeing you there!





# ST. MARK'S CHURCH EVENT:

## ANNUAL SALAD LUNCHEON AND CRAFTS (and Used Book Sale)

Savor the Flavor Event:  
"Annual Spring Salad Luncheon and Crafts"



Annual Spring  
Salad Luncheon  
and Crafts

*Sponsored by the Monday Craft Ladies*

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



**\$10.00**  
per person

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

**Get ready to indulge...** in a delightful array of salads and hand-made crafts at the Annual Spring Salad Luncheon and Crafts event on Thursday, May 2, from 11am to 1:30pm. Hosted by the Monday Craft Ladies, this event promises a feast for your taste buds and a treat for your eyes. For just \$10 per person, you'll have access to more than 50 plus, unique salads to sample or fill up on.

From classic favorites like chicken or tuna salads as well as potato salad to unique creations like Jello salads and broccoli salad, there's something for everyone to enjoy.



In addition to the delicious salads, there will be hand-made crafts available for purchase. Explore the tables in the hallway and discover intricate and cute items that will make perfect gifts or additions to your home.



Now through May 1, we are collecting gently used books you may have to donate to the "Used Book Sale" during the event. For more information, contact Cindy Booker.



Join us for a day of good food, beautiful crafts, and community spirit at the Annual Spring Salad Luncheon and Crafts event.





4601 Fairfield Avenue  
Fairfield, OH 45014

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# SPIRIT OF ST. MARK'S MAY 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