

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.

JULY 2024

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Church Events: VBS-

JULY 4, THURSDAY, INDEPENDENCE DAY CHURCH OFFICES CLOSED

CONTACT PASTOR MARK (For Pastoral Care)

JULY 9, TUESDAY, 12:30-2:30PM

SHARED HARVEST VOLUNTEERS
CONTACT DEBBIE BRYANT (See more details on page 4)

JULY 13, SATURDAY, 9AM

HELPING HANDS—ALL CHURCH WORKDAY CONTACT MATT SNYDER (For more details, page 7

JULY 17 (IN- PERSON) & AUGUST 14 (ZOOM), 7:00PM

CHURCH MEETING & DISCUSSION
CONTACT PASTOR MARK (For more details, page 2)

JULY 19, FRIDAY, 1:00-5:00PM

LASAGNA LOVE
CONTACT CINDY MILLER (For more details, page 4)

AUGUST (TBD)

LADIES FELLOWSHIP SWAP EVENT
CONTACT SUE LUKEN (For more details, page 8 & Bulletins)

AUGUST 11, SUNDAY DURING WORSHIP

BACKPACK BLESSINGS
CONTACT PEGGY SMITH (See more details on page 9)











SUMMER NOTES FROM PASTOR MARK

Summer Seeds: Planting Faith and Leadership

Summer is a time to garden, to grow things that we can eat, or to grow plants that are beautiful.

In worship this summer, we are going to talk about a garden, the Garden of Eden. This sacred story offers profound insights into who we are and who God is.

In the Garden, We learn who God is...

In this story, we take a deep dive into temptation and explore its very DNA within our lives.

Temptation is a universal experience; sometimes it comes in small, seemingly insignificant forms, and other times, it presents itself as powerful forces that threaten to destroy our relationships with God, others, and even ourselves.

In the Garden, we learn who God is and gain insight into who we are and why we do what we do. Join us in worship as we walk through the majestic garden, face our temptations, and seek to understand their impact on our lives. Together, we will find clarity, strength, and the courage to overcome the temptations that challenge us daily.





This summer you also have the opportunity to join with me to discuss an issue we have been discussing among leadership this past year. There are two options for the organization of a UMC church. One is the traditional structure we currently have, and the other is a lead team in order to get your input, I have been asked to have a couple of opportunities to present information to the congregation regarding a 'Lead Team.' We will have two meetings during the summer for this to happen. One will be in person and one will be on Zoom.

July 17 at 7:00 PM (In Person) August 14 at 7:00 PM (Zoom)

If you would like to attend the Zoom meeting contact the office to let them know and you will be added to an email that will have the link for the meeting. God Bless!





NEW COVENANT NEWS FROM PASTOR ALFRED ARTHUR

Glowing Hearts: Nurturing Your Spiritual Spark in July

Salutation,

Again, the journey through the vibrant days of summer vacations, family gatherings, or simply the chance to enjoy the beauty of God's creation is here. At such time, I'm reminded of the words from Ecclesiastes 3:1, "to everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under heaven."



Each season in our lives offers unique opportunities for growth, reflection, and renewal. This season, with its long days and warm sunshine, I feel invited to embrace a spirit of rest and rejuvenation. The earth basks in the sunlight and the fields burst into bloom, and so do we. It is a call to find moments of rest in God's presence and to allow His light to nurture our spirits.



In these times, I encourage you to reflect on the blessings in your life and to reconnect with the ONE who provides them. As we continue to be a beacon of hope and love in our community, let us take time to pray, to meditate on scripture, and to seek God's guidance and peace in the stillness of our heart.

This season, we have many opportunities to serve and connect with one another, from our upcoming church picnic to outreach programs for those in need.



These events are not just activities but expressions of our faith in action, reflecting Christ's love to those around us. Let us also remember those who may not find summer to be a time of rest as they may be facing challenges, health issues, or hardships.

As a congregation, we are called to support and uplift each other. Reach out to those in our community who may need a word of encouragement, a helping hand, or a prayer. Together, we embody the love of Christ. I look forward to the wonderful experiences we will share in the coming weeks. May this season be filled with God's grace and may His light shine brightly in your hearts and homes.





MISSIONS AND OUTREACH

THANK YOU FOR VOLUNTEERING AT MATTHEW 25 MINISTRIES ON JUNE 1

St. Mark's volunteers made a difference in our community by lending a helping hand to those in need. Participants joined together to support this important cause, knowing their time and effort would directly impact the lives of those less fortunate and bring hope to those who needed it most.



No special skills or experience were required – just a willingness to serve and a desire to make a positive impact.

Contact Lynne Schumacker for more information regarding all volunteer opportunities. August will be the next opportunity to volunteer.



FEEDING HOPE AT FAIRFIELD FOOD PANTRY: A COMMUNITY'S GENEROUS SPIRIT

We are thrilled to share the success of our recent donation drive for the Fairfield Food Pantry!

Throughout May, our generous community collected a sizeable 174 pounds of food, delivered to the pantry on June 2. Your contributions have made a significant impact, and we are deeply grateful for your support. While we appreciate all food donations, the pantry has an ongoing need for specific items to help our neighbors, including pet food, hygiene products, and packaged food. Let's continue to show our compassion and support for those who rely on the Fairfield Food Pantry.

Thank you for your generosity and commitment to helping others!



SHARED HARVEST JULY 9, 12:30-2:30PM

Mark your calendars for a fun volunteer opportunity with Shared Harvest! Join us in making a tangible difference in our community by helping sort and pack boxes and assist with distribution. Your participation is invaluable in helping our community and to spread kindness—see you there!



HELP FEED FAMILIES IN NEED WITH LASAGNA LOVE ST. MARK'S KITCHEN, JULY 19, 1-5PM

Back by popular demand, we will have another lasagna making day in the LASAGNA church kitchen! This time we will make 15 lasagnas to help the Lasagna Love backlog in our area. You can sign up in the Narthex to donate lasagna ingredients or to volunteer to help make and/or deliver the lasagnas.

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Thank you in advance from St Marks Cares, Lasagna Love, and the families we feed! Call Cindy Miller at 513-604-0173 or Cmiller4151955@gmail.com



FELLOWSHIP and GATHERINGS

TIE, TEE, & HAT DAY: CELEBRATING FATHERS WITH STYLE!

On June 16, Sunday service was filled with joy and appreciation as we celebrated Father's Day with a special 'Tie, Tee, & Hat' day! To honor all the amazing dads, granddads, and father figures in our lives, everyone was invited to wear their favorite tie, T-shirt, and/or hat to the service.



It was a fun and meaningful way to show our appreciation and make the day extra memorable. We saw a few snazzy ties, comfy tees, and stylish, silly hats, each representing the unique personality and love of the men we celebrated.





We came together as a community, cherishing the men who have made a difference in our lives and expressing our gratitude for their love, guidance, and support. The vibrant and joyful atmosphere truly made this Father's Day one to remember.



RECAP OF RED'S GAME DAY EVENT: FUN, FELLOWSHIP, AND MEMORIES!

Our Red's Game Day was a hit! On a cloudy summer



afternoon, our church family gathered at the Ballpark Stadium to watch the Cincinnati Reds take on the Boston Red Sox. The atmosphere was electric, and the fellowship was even better!

The smell of popcorn and nachos filled the air as we took our seats. The kids and adults were all smiles, especially when they got their hands on the iconic ice cream served in a Red's hat—perfect for keeping cool and showing team spirit!





Our group's cheers could be heard across the stadium as we rooted for our beloved Reds. In between innings, there was plenty of time for fellowship. Conversations flowed as easily as a bottle of water, and bonds were strengthened with each high-five and shared snacks.

The game itself was a rollercoaster of emotions, filled with suspenseful moments and thrilling plays. While the Red's fought hard against the Red Sox, our church group cheered with unwavering enthusiasm, proving that our spirit is unshakeable, win or lose.

As the final inning came to a close, it was clear that Red's Game Day was more than just a baseball game. It was a celebration of our church community—of friendship, joy, and the simple pleasures of life. We left the stadium with hearts full of gratitude and excitement for the next event. Thank you to everyone who joined us and made the day special. We can't wait for the next group event.





MUSIC MINISTRY NEWS

Summer Serenades: <u>Music Ministry's Sparkling Spotlight</u>

I've been blessed with being a part of the St. Mark's family since I was a baby, but as the Director of Music for 30 years. Now in my estimation that's around or about 1,000 anthems and probably close to 100 cantatas. During Sunday morning services, thousands of hymns have been led and many solos sung. I wouldn't trade one bit of it for all the amazing years that we've shared music together week after week, season after season, year after year.



I will never forget the evening I received a phone call from Pastor Paul Eicher asking if I would be the Music Director until Christmas. I am so thrilled that I said yes. Now I knew this was going to be a challenge for me because I had never directed a choir before, but I sure did love St. Mark's and was happy to helpout. Around November, I was asked if I was interested in staying on and again, I am so thrilled that I said yes. I had attended St. Mark's since I was a

baby, then through childhood, as a teenager, and into young adulthood. I went away to college but would come back on Christmas Eve or for special services here and there. Now here was the opportunity to come back home and stay.

I have been honored to serve under amazing ministers throughout my time at the church. Pastor Paul Eicher, Pastor James Cattran, Pastor Robert Klingel, Pastor Dave Long, Pastor Gary Wheeler, Pastor Tammy Jo Reiser, Pastor Joe Payne, and now Pastor Mark Gregory. Each one has been extremely supportive of the Music



Ministry at St. Marks, and each one were so very supportive of the use of music to enhance a church service.





I can't begin to even start to put into words what the choir, bell choir, instrumentalists, soloists, all mean to me. There are choir members who have been singing long before I even started as the Music Director. You should all be recognized for having spent 30 years with me. The amount of time and dedication that each individual volunteers within the music ministry makes my heart so full. No matter if I've had a long week, rough day, don't feel well, music time comes on Wednesday nights, and all that goes away. Then it may come back again, but thankfully Sunday morning comes along and for a while it all goes away again. So instead of thanking me, I need to be the one thanking all of you...and I do thank you all so very, very much.



The congregation of St. Mark's is amazing. The generosity, support, participation, and prayers that has poured abundantly through the music ministry over the years is so God-honoring. Our church is made up of wonderful people, and those wonderful people love church music, so that makes me a very lucky guy, and what I do is all that much more gratifying.

I am nothing on a Wednesday night or a Sunday morning without Sue Combs. The remarkable, brilliant talent in those two hands when she plays the piano and the organ is astounding. Her loving heart, gentle spirit, and great knowledge of music and the Bible add an immense amount of energy and joy to everything the music ministry does. Sue is the best, and I think we make a great team if I do say so myself!



Thank you all so much for a wonderful celebration on June 2. Everything was perfect... the food, decorations, piano mood music, cards, gift cards, notes, letters, messages on the poster. Everything made me feel very loved and appreciated. I look forward to what lies ahead as we continue our journey as a family of God at St. Mark's United Methodist Church.



FINANCIAL AND TRUSTEES UPDATES

Summer Stewardship: St. Mark's Financial Outlook

Happy July to everyone! As of the writing of this article, we just closed the books on May, 2024. We are in the middle of June so it always seems like this newsletter article is old news by the time you receive it at the beginning of the month. So, let us jump right in to the figures. St. Mark's ended the month of May with \$49,021 in the checking account and \$64,461 in the savings. Always keep in mind that \$39,420 of the savings can only be used for improvements to the St. Mark's campus. Our loan at Park National is now down to \$25,793. All payments are current and paid on time. We have also continued to pay the apportionments to District. We are hoping that we will be able to continue to keep that on track as we progress through the rest of the year.

Giving fell off during the month of May. We received \$21,229 in giving while we spent \$21,894. Which equates to \$665 more being paid out than what was received. I just wanted to point out those specific numbers to everyone since we are on the brink of the summer months where giving usually slows down. We ask you remain engaged with your giving to St. Mark's.

As we recently discussed at the Finance Committee meeting, we know everyone is feeling the inflation burnout right now. We on the Committee are also feeling that burnout. It is our hope that St. Mark's will remain an active mission in your daily life through your prayers, presence, and gifts. Feel free to let us know if you have any questions or comments regarding the status of the finances for St. Mark's. If we do not have an immediate response, we will certainly research it and get back with you. As always, we thank you for your support of St. Mark's and its ministries. Gale Goodman, Finance Committee Chair Bill Schumacker, Treasurer



TRUSTEES UPDATE

"Sparkling for the Savior: <u>A Church-Wide Clean Sweep-Up!</u>

Happy Fourth of July! This month has hot weather, bright sunshine, daylight that seems to go on forever, cookouts, and fireworks! This time of year, also means a lot of landscaping maintenance and trimming.

All of the work we did in April, May, and June is already begging to be done again!

This is your chance to get involved and help! Saturday, July 13, the "Helping Hands – All Church Workday



is scheduled at 9:00AM. Matt Snyder will be the lead Trustee on this one. There will be plenty of trimming and weeding outside, as well as cleaning and small projects like wiping down pews, dusting, and changing light bulbs, inside.

In addition, your Trustees have been busy with building/ facility improvements such as gutter maintenance and replacements where needed. We are also in the process of replacing the worn and broken lighting fixtures at the front/north, and side/west entrances of the church. Lastly, a much-needed new storm door will be installed on the parsonage front entrance. As always, we appreciate everyone who helps by donating their time, talents, and resources. Thank you for continuing to let us know what you feel needs to be done in, and around St. Mark's. It is an ongoing effort, and we appreciate your input.

The next Helping Hands, All Church Workday, will be held on September 7, with Penny Dole as the Trustee Lead. 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 Lequina









WEEKLY AND MONTHLY GROUPS

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.

WEDNESDAYS WALK/EXERCISE CLASS

Join us every week at 10AM 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.



LADIES FELLOWSHIP "SUMMER SWAPS & SHARED DELIGHTS"

Get ready for a delightful twist, ladies! Our next event promises to be a thrilling 'Swap' in August! It's time to dust off those gently used items you no longer need but someone else might cherish. *The rule is simple*: bring items to swap, and you'll get to choose the same number of items to take home! It's a fabulous way to refresh your possessions and find new treasures.

Are you eager for a change?

Start rummaging through your closets and drawers, and get ready to join us for an evening of swapping fun! This event is not to be missed! For more information, contact Sue Luken. Stay tuned for more details!



RATT PRIDE: CELEBRATING UNITY and DIVERSITY AT HAMILTON PRIDE!

On June 1, the Room At The Table (RATT) ministry took an inspiring field trip to Hamilton Pride. The day was filled with joy and celebration as we honored the beautiful diversity of all people, each created in God's image. It was heartwarming to witness everyone being accepted and celebrated in a safe and welcoming space. Several churches had booths, providing wonderful opportunities to connect and engage with festival-goers.

However, the festivities were briefly interrupted by protesters who arrived, shouting hateful and obscene remarks. Despite this, our group stood strong. We shielded the crowd from their harmful signs with vibrant rainbow umbrellas and drowned out their negativity with our own spirited noise. This act of solidarity is captured in our photos, highlighting our commitment to love and acceptance. We are already looking forward to next year's Pride festivals, hoping to set up our own table to meet even more people and extend an invitation to join us at St. Mark's. Let's continue to celebrate love, acceptance, and the diversity that makes our community so special.











CHILDREN and FAMILY MINISTRY

SUMMER BREAK FUN FEST FOLLOW-UP

The Summer Break Fun Fest in May was a vibrant and joyous event that brought families together under a beautiful sunny sky. Children bounced on inflatable houses, created colorful chalk art, and played games, filling the day with laughter and excitement.



We were thrilled to see many families sign up for our upcoming Vacation Bible School (VBS). The enthusiasm from the Fun Fest has set a wonderful tone for an exciting and enriching VBS this summer.



In line with our July theme, "Red, White, and Renewal: July's Spiritual Sparkle," the event brought renewal and joy to our community. The connections and memories created will sparkle in our hearts.



Thank you to everyone who attended and to all the volunteers who made this event a success. We look forward to more fun, learning, and fellowship, continuing to spread our spiritual sparkle throughout the summer!



ANNUAL BACKPACK BLESSINGS AUGUST 11 (During Worship)

Join us for our Annual Backpack Blessings! As the new school year begins, we invite all students to bring their backpacks to church for a special blessing.

This meaningful event helps students start the year with a sense of purpose and God's guidance. Each backpack represents the dedication to learning and the community's support. Let's come together to pray for our children's safety, growth, and success throughout the year. Teachers and school staff are also welcome to join as we extend our blessings to them. We look forward to seeing you and celebrating this special moment together. Contact Peggy Smith for details.





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)



	JULY BIRTHDAYS	
07/01	Owen Becker	13*
07/01	Rick Kiefer	
07/01	Judy Klingel	
07/02	Merianne Cardas	
07/03	Jody Cooper	
07/03	Devin Goodman	
07/03	Kayla Goodman	
07/04	Viola Pater	94
07/06	Carson Randall	11*
07/07	Ann McWilliam	95
07/08	Don Kemen	
07/09	Debbie Brewer	
07/14	Vicki Cavender	
07/14	Cheryl Kemen	
07/17	Ben Chambers	
07/17	Becky Mendenhall	
07/22	Marilyn Stewart	
07/24	Pablo Leguina	
07/25	Mark Hensler	
07/27	Elizabeth Bunte	
07/27	Carol Gering	
07/27	Gale Logan	
07/27	Brodie Theiss	
07/29	Penny Dole	
07/29	Iris Jones	94
07/30	Zach Dichtl	



Sparkles of Appreciation

To all my Bible Study Friends!!

The year has ended and we successfully finished John, the Book of Acts and got Paul to Rome - although he is sitting in prison. Thank you all for sticking with us and continuing to learn.

Thank you all so very much for the Amazon Gift card and the petunias. I'm not really good with plants but I hope to have success with petunias. Someone once told me that you really can't kill them - so here goes. On the other hand, I am really good with Amazon! I appreciate your thoughtfulness and believe me, I'll spend the gift card in my head many times before I totally decide on something. So exciting!!

Have a great summer. We will continue in the New Testament in September with Romans. Hope to see you all there. Remember, this is not a "have to" be there every week, just come as often as you are able. Everyone is welcome! Prayers to all for a safe and healthy summer.

Love, Sue McDaniel



	JULY ANNIVERSARIES	
07/01	Dick & Edith Davis	73
07/11	Shane & Brooke Becker	16
07/11	Tim & Julie Mislansky	26
07/15	Bob & Carol Pittman	52
07/26	Bob & Sharon Hamp	27
07/30	Ira & Mary Begley	47

Sparkle & Shine: Our Heartfelt Thanks

Thank you, from the bottom of our hearts for the donation of items for VBS. We only needed to buy a couple of items for VBS snacks. Your generous donations were greatly appreciated!

—Pam Guynes and Cindy Booker





ST. MARK'S CHURCH EVENT FOLLOW-UP:

VBS: CAMP FIRELIGHT HIGHLIGHTS

CAMP FIRELIGHT MEMORIES: VBS Highlights & Heartwarming Moments

This year's Vacation Bible School, themed "Camp Firelight," was an incredible journey filled with laughter, learning, and love. Our VBS kicked off with an open assembly and then children were divided into three vibrant camp groups: The Lady Bugs, The Dragonflies, The Fireflies. Each child experienced a rotating schedule packed with enriching activities. each child experienced a rotating schedule packed with enriching activities.

Highlights of Our Camp Groups:

Story Time with Ms. Sue: Engaging storytelling brought Bible stories to life in a fun and memorable way.







Crafts with Mrs. Tari and Ms. Kristin: Creativity flourished with beautiful keepsakes reinforcing the week's theme.





Music with Mr. Chris: Joyful songs had everyone singing, clapping, and dancing along.





Snack-n-Silly Time with Mrs. Pam and Mrs. Cindy: Silly antics and delicious treats kept the children energized and ready for more fun.







Game Time with Mrs. Debbie: Laughter and teamwork helped children build friendships and cooperation.









Pastor Mark as 'Lou' the Firefly Puppet: Lou the puppet and Pastor Mark brought joy and valuable lessons to each assembly. On the final day, we gathered with the Boy Scouts to roast marshmallows and make s'mores, creating sweet memories. After our tasty treats, we played games as one big group, ensuring the last day was filled with laughter and camaraderie.



Our Camp Callout, "Whenever I'm afraid, I put my trust in you (God)" from Psalm 56:3, resonated throughout the week, reminding everyone of the strength and comfort found in faith.

A heartfelt thank you to everyone who made VBS a



success. The kids had a blast, and we are grateful to volunteers and parents for their support. The memories made at VBS, Camp Firelight will last a lifetime. Until next year, let the light of Camp Firelight shine in our hearts!





Fairfield, OH 45014

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

SPIRIT OF ST. MARK'S JULY 2024

RED, WHITE AND RENEW: JULY'S SPIRITUAL SPARK!



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:**

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Sundays 9:30 am