The 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.

Welcome to The Spirit of St Mark's newsletter. For most of you, you have been here before, but you may notice things look different.

Due to some circumstances beyond our control, changes have happened to our newsletter I know many of your value. First, the software the church office has used for publications (MS Publisher) was officially discontinued on 10/1/2026. This change has meant we have had to convert hundreds of files to make sure we have them available for future use, it is also requiring us to learn new software to meet our publishing needs. For this reason, you will notice this newsletter is more 'basic' than previous versions. As we get more experience with the software things will develop and change which leads us to our second challenge.

There have been some changes to bulk mailing that have made mailing physical copies prohibitive. As a result, the newsletter will be moving to a digital format. If you still prefer a hard copy of the newsletter those will be made available to you at the narthex. I know many of you value the listing of birthdays, however for security reasons we will not include the full date nor ages in the digital copies that will be emailed. There will be a separate publication containing the birthdays available for you, also at the narthex welcome center. *Please make sure the church office has an updated email address.*

If you want anything in the newsletter, please be mindful of the monthly due date. That date will be made public in the newsletter and the weekly bulletin. Items received after that date will not be included in that month's newsletter. This helps us keep things moving in a timely manner.

I ask for your understanding and patience as we make these necessary transitions.

As I write this, we are wrapping up our sermon series on The Lord's Prayer. Next up is "Anger Management." Anger and frustration are a nature part of life and being a human being. However, we are also aware of how anger can express itself in ways that destroy relationships and even ourselves. Join us this fall as we look at our anger, and what the Bible has to say about how we manage that in Godly ways.

I know many of you have received the news, but if you have not, we would like to make you aware that New Covenant UMC will be moving out and into their own building on October 18th. New Covenant has been meeting in our facility since the summer of 2023. I know you all join with me in wishing them well in this transition and pray that God blesses them in their new facility. We have been blessed by our time of sharing with them and pray all the best for them in the future. Their last Sunday in our building will be Sunday, October 11.

God Bless
Pastor Mark

ST MARKS MISSIONS AND OUTREACH

Our church family has been busy serving our neighbors near and far. Our volunteers have served at **Matthew 25 Ministries** on several occasions, but this time brought a fun task—sorting ducks! A little "thrift shopping" afterward added to an enjoyable day of service and fellowship. Our next visit is November 21. **Healing Center**, volunteers organized personal care and household items on September 26. Clothing donations are especially needed; contact Cindy Miller.

Sharing food continues to be an important part of our outreach. On September 16, **Serve City** volunteers shared a fall cookout meal with 27 grateful residents. Our next opportunity to serve is November 20, when we'll provide a Thanksgiving-themed meal. Donations of prepared dishes are needed and appreciated! On October 5, nine **Shared Harvest** volunteers, led by Debbie Bryant, packed 250 food boxes for seniors. In July, we also donated 30 birthday kits to the **Fairfield Food Pantry**, helping families celebrate a special day.

Thank you for the generous August food donations to **Broken Bus**! Michelle was overwhelmed by your support. The next opportunity to contribute is October 17; contact Jenni Hensler for details. **Lasagna Love** will take place on October 23, from 12:00-5:00PM. Help is needed with ingredients, preparation, and deliveries. Sign up at the Welcome Counter or contact Cindy Miller.

Our NAMI 5K Walk team has raised $580 toward our $800 goal for the October 10 walk in support of mental health awareness. Thank you to everyone whose time, gifts, and kindness make all these ministries possible.

ST. MARK'S FELLOWSHIP

A Prayer & A Bead Jewelry Making Class – September 14

Twenty women gathered for a wonderful evening of creativity, prayer, and fellowship as we learned to make our own UMC prayer bead necklaces. With hundreds of beads, charms, and accent beads to choose from, each woman created something uniquely her own. Drawing from the book, A Bead and a Prayer, we explored how prayer beads can help us slow down and focus our prayers.

The evening was filled with conversation and laughter, and many of the ladies shared how much fun they had. It was a joy to spend this time together and leave with a beautiful necklace to use in prayer.

SMUMC Family Picnic & Cornhole Tournament – September 20

Our church family gathered for an evening of good food, conversation, and friendly competition. The picnic offered a chance to relax, catch up with friends, and enjoy time together while the cornhole tournament added excitement to the evening.

Mike Fitzpatrick and Debbie Bryant faced Steve and Kym Nguyen in the final round, with the Nguyens taking the championship. Congratulations to our winners and thank you to everyone who joined in the fun!

Carol Gering's "***Sopapilla Cheesecake Pie***" was another crowd favorite, with many asking about the delicious dessert. If you missed it—or would like to make it yourself—pick up the recipe at the Welcome Counter.

Thank you to everyone who helped make the evening enjoyable and to Children, Youth, & Family Ministry for sponsoring the picnic.

UPCOMING GATHERINGS

OCTOBER 16, FRIDAY, RUTH CIRCLE, 1:00-2:30PM
Join us in Fellowship Hall for an afternoon of women's fellowship, light snacks, and a special program presented by Steve Nguyen. Enjoy time to visit, share conversation, and connect with one another. For more information, contact Pam Guynes.

OCTOBER 18, SUNDAY, FALLFEST TRUNK or TREAT, 4:00-5:30PM
Sign up at the Welcome counter so we get an idea who is coming. Decorate your cars and pass out candy. For more information, contact Peggy Smith or Sue Luken. Sponsored by Children, Youth, & Family Ministry.

OCTOBER 24, SATURDAY, ROOKWOOD POTTERY TOUR, 9:00AM
Please let Sue Luken know if you plan to attend the Rookwood Pottery Factory Tour on Saturday. We will meet at the church to carpool at 9am. The cost is $15.00 each.

OCTOBER 27, TUESDAY, LUNCH BUNCH, 12:00-2:00PM
Enjoy a friendly time of food, conversation, and fellowship where everyone is welcome! We are going to Snow's Lakeside Tavern located at 4344 Dryridge Road, Cincinnati, OH 45252. For more information and to reserve your seat by October 25— Sue Beckett.

NOVEMBER 17, TUESDAY, CHURCH CONFERENCE 7:15-8:30PM

CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILY MINISTRY

OCTOBER 25, 3rd GRADE BIBLE SUNDAY, 9:30AM DURING WORSHIP SERVICE
If you have a 3rd grader, please let Peggy know so that we have bibles for all of the children.

NOVEMBER 1, YOUTH STUDY WITH PEGGY, 9:30AM (DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME)
Grow in faith, ask big questions, and connect with friends! Join Peggy for our monthly youth study group during Sunday worship. Save the dates: 11/01/26,12/06/26, 1/03/2027, 2/07/27, 3/07/27, 4/04/27, and 5/02/27.

NOVEMBER 15, YOUTH FELLOWSHIP, 6:00PM
Youth, come join the fun! Connect with friends and enjoy an evening just for you at Youth Fellowship from 6-7pm. Contact Peggy for details.

FAITHFUL STEWARDSHIP - FINANCE

Hello, St. Mark's Family! It is good to be back communicating our financial position to you once again.

Let's jump into the information that everyone is interested in. All of the accounts for St. Mark's have been reconciled through the end of August. With that being said, as of August 31, 2026, the Checking Account has a balance of $42,299.80; while the Savings Account has a balance of $42,890.65. It is important to point out that only $7,152.53 in the Savings Account can be used for daily expenses. The rest, $35,738.12, has been marked as designated funds. Please note, that our expenses and apportionments have been paid and are up to date.

As occurs every summer, the giving drops during the summer months with vacations and weekend get-a-ways. We are hopeful that now that life is returning to a more normal schedule that the gifts that St. Mark's receives will also return.

As you may have noticed, the Restroom Renovations are complete. If you haven't had an opportunity to see them, please take time to check them out. Both restrooms have been updated and are now ADA compliant to ensure that the facilities are safe and easier to use for all. The overall cost of those renovations was $30,000. We are about $3,000 short of the goal to fund that project. We are hopeful that we can still raise that amount. There are other projects that need to be taken care of in our Church building. We are asking that everyone assist us in completing the funding for the Restrooms so that we can move forward with those other projects that need to be addressed.

We want to let you know that we have had some staffing changes in the Finance Area of our Congregation. Penny Dole has accepted the position of Treasurer. She previously worked with Carol Gering as a Financial Secretary. With Penny moving to Treasurer, that created an opening to work with Carol. Mary Begley has stepped into that position. Once again, we are fully staffed in the Finance Department. We want to take this opportunity to thank Bill Schumacher for his service to St. Mark's as Treasurer for the last several years. In that same spirit, we want to welcome Penny and Mary into their new positions. If you have an opportunity, please thank Bill for his service and congratulate Penny and Mary on their new positions.

Carol and Mary will be generating Mid-Year Giving Statements after September's giving has been posted. Those statements will be going out at the beginning of October. Please take time to review your statement. If you have any questions or your statement doesn't appear to be correct, please contact Carol or Mary. They are the only ones that will be able to assist you with any corrections that are needed. If you call the Church Office, please leave a message for one of them and they will contact you back. The goal here is to avoid any issues before the year-end statements are generated. As year-end gets closer, please know that we, the Finance Team, are doing our best to be diligent and accurate with the inflows and outflows of the finances at St. Mark's. We ask for your support as we transition with new staffing and the new year that is coming.

Just a note to close out, we appreciate the weekly support from you, the Congregation, through your prayers, gifts and presence during worship. As always if you find that you have any questions regarding the finances of the Church, please ask and we will try to answer the questions or find out the answers for you.

Gale Goodman, Financial Representative to the Lead Team
Steve Nguyen, Financial Representative to the Lead Team
Penny Dole, Treasurer

APPRECIATION AND GRATITUDE

A Special Visit from Bishop Jung

St. Mark's welcomed Bishop Hee-Soo Jung on August 27, for a morning visit with our church family. We appreciated the opportunity to spend time together and connect with our bishop.

Thank you to everyone who helped prepare our church and offered a warm welcome. We are grateful for these opportunities to strengthen our connection with the wider United Methodist community.

Celebrating Pastor Mark: With Grateful Hearts

October is Pastor Appreciation Month, a time to pause and say something we may not say often enough: *Pastor Mark, we are grateful for you*. Thank you for sharing your faith, your heart, and your life in ministry with our St. Mark's family.

The work of a pastor reaches far beyond the message shared on Sunday morning. It is found in a listening ear, a comforting prayer, and the willingness to walk beside others through both joyful days and difficult seasons. Some of that care happens quietly, away from the congregation's view, but it matters deeply. Thank you for the time and compassion you give, and for encouraging us to grow in faith and care for one another.

On Sunday, October 11, we will observe Pastor Appreciation Sunday. Throughout October, consider sharing a personal note, a favorite memory, or a few words about how Pastor Mark's ministry has touched your life. Please also keep him in your prayers, asking God to renew his strength and bring him joy in his calling. Special love offerings may be placed in the marked box at the Welcome Center in the Narthex. Checks should be made payable to Mark Gregory.

Pastor Mark, we hope you know how much you mean to this church family. May the love and encouragement you share with others return to you through our words, our prayers, and our care. Thank you for being our pastor and for walking this journey of faith with us.

FRESH UPDATES TO OUR CHURCH HOME

There is much to appreciate as we look back on the improvements completed at St. Mark's this year. Thanks to the Lead Team's planning and the continued support of our church family, our renovated restrooms and new community room are now ready to serve our congregation and visitors.

Renovated Restrooms
The two restrooms nearest the sanctuary received much-needed updates. The former women's restroom was renovated to meet current ADA accessibility requirements, and the former men's restroom was updated as a family restroom.

Before work began, the Lead Team spent considerable time reviewing plans, selecting a contractor, and choosing materials—including an evening spent picking out tile! These improvements help make our church more welcoming and accessible to those who worship, gather, and visit here. Thank you to everyone who supported this project.

Our New Community Room
A facilities audit in late 2025 identified a need for additional meeting space. Although our fellowship hall continues to serve us well, another room was needed for meetings and activities. The underused choir and music room offered an opportunity to meet that need.

That space has now been transformed into our new community room. The room was cleared out, the carpets were cleaned, the walls were painted, and new shades were installed. This completed space gives our church additional room for programs, fellowship, and ministry.
The music ministry also moved into the former Heritage Room, bringing rehearsals and music resources closer to the sanctuary. If you have not yet seen these updated spaces, take a moment to stop by and look around!

Behind the Scenes
Alongside these visible improvements, the Lead Team worked on the annual evaluations, goals, inspections, audits, and reports required by our conference. This behind-the-scenes work supports responsible care of our property and keeps our ministry accountable.

We are grateful for the time and care devoted to these projects and for the generosity of our St. Mark's family in supporting the "Flush Fund." Our renovated restrooms now offer greater comfort and convenience for members, visitors, and community groups alike.

The renovations are complete, but we're not quite ready to "flush" this campaign away! We are still a little short of our fundraising goal and would appreciate your help crossing the finish line. Every gift, large or small, brings us closer to fully funding these improvements. Thank you for helping us care for our church home.

BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

October Birthdays

Cheryl Klug	October 01
Jack Nguyen	October 03
Richard Shaw	October 03
Linda Thomas	October 03
Rich Turner	October 04
Gale Goodman	October 05
Don Menke	October 09
Beth Zimmerman	October 13
Sue Mullen	October 15
Heather Chambers	October 16
Hugh Guynes	October 16
Don Ault	October 17
Larry Creach	October 17
Anne Hennen	October 20
Jenni Hensler	October 22
Marty Kubik	October 27
John Smith	October 30
Shirley Howell	October 31

October Anniversaries

		Years Married as of 2026
Dole, Gil & Penny	October 11, 2008	18
Robinson, Kyle & Alex	October 15, 2011	15
George, Brian & Marla	October 23, 1999	27
Meyer, John & Katie	October 23, 2010	16

IMPORTANT REMINDER:

November newsletter submission deadline:

Monday, October 19.