

Messenger

Happy
New Year

We gather, connect, and serve so all may experience the love of Christ.

Volume 66
No. 1
January
2026

St. Mark's Messenger

January 2026

2026

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Epiphany invites us to do more than marvel at the Christ child. It calls us to follow him. Beginning January 4, St. Mark's will enter a six-week worship series, *From Manger to Mountain: Learning the Way of Jesus*, grounding us in the Beatitudes from Matthew 5 as Jesus teaches what life in God's kingdom looks like.

Each week we will explore the Beatitudes alongside real-life experiences many among us carry—aging, grief, job loss, illness, family struggle, conflict, and the challenge of living faithfully in a polarized world. These teachings are not abstract ideals; they are Jesus' words spoken into human vulnerability and everyday life.

This series is designed to meet us where we are—honoring the realities of our lives while inviting us to deeper trust, courage, compassion, and hope. Epiphany reminds us that the child in the manger did not come only to be adored, but to show us how to live.

Join us each Sunday as we follow Jesus...
from the manger to the mountain,
learning again the way of love.

It's time to dust, (re)sort and reshelve our library books!

Due to the generosity of two of our St. Mark's members we have new, beautiful furniture in the Library!

We have decided to sort and reshelve our books by content area, such as prayer, biblical studies, world religions, and liturgical seasons. That means that all the books need to be removed from the shelves, dusted and cleaned, then put into boxes. We will dust and clean the shelves, make labels for the content areas and then reshelve the books! We need your help.

Starting in January The Library Project will be open to volunteers that would like to help! Each Wednesday we will start at 10 am and work until 1 pm. If you would like to be a part of this important and fun endeavor, please contact Pastor Deb by phone 406-894-0440 or email deborah@umcstmarks.org.

Hope to see you on Wednesday, January 7th and every Wednesday after that until we get The Library Project done!



Come Play Farkle!

Looking for a relaxed way to connect and have some fun? Join our new Farkle group, meeting the first Tuesday of each month at 1 pm in the Fellowship Hall. This casual gathering is all about good conversation, laughter, and enjoying a friendly game of Farkle. The game is simple to learn, and no experience is needed—just come as you are. Whether you love games or simply enjoy being together, all are warmly welcome!

Adult Spiritual Growth

Faith is a journey!

Adult Sunday School - 9:30 am Sundays in Rooms 17/18 and via Zoom. All are welcome! Please register online or contact leader Rick Farnsworth to obtain Zoom information.

Seekers Sunday Bible Study – Sundays at 11:15 am in rooms 17/18. Seekers will begin studying the Book of Joshua on January 4: a new book for the New Year! The story in Joshua begins with the Israelites getting ready to enter the promised land, after all the years of wandering in the wilderness. Joshua, then, is the story of how God remembers his promises and stays faithful to his covenant. Please register online or contact facilitator Brenda Hunter for Zoom information.

A Bible study is held at **Mountain View Retirement Village** on Monday mornings at 10:30 am in the 2nd floor conference room. All are welcome, even if you don't live in the Village! Our new study begins on January 5th: *Waiting For God*. We all experience times of waiting in the midst of uncertainty or suffering. In the waiting it can seem like God is silent, but God is always with us. A copy of the lessons and Bibles are provided. Contact Marge Sogn for additional information.

ALL REGISTRATION IS ONLINE AT
umcstmarks.org/classes/adult_spiritual_growth-opportunities

Or sign up at the Adult Spiritual Growth board on the Magee Campus on Sunday mornings. Please pre-register and acquire books from your favorite resource.

After the Amen - Sundays at 11:15 am Library. Join us for deeper conversation around the sermon.

Wednesday Morning Study - Wednesdays at 10 am in rooms 17/18 Contact Marcia Rostad for more information.

Roadrunner Book Club - 9:30 am Wednesdays at Roadrunner Coffee, Linda Vista and Thornydale. Please contact Carol Witherspoon for more info.

Bible and a Bite - Thursdays at 12:30 pm at the home of Chris Shafer. Reach out to find out more.

Bible Study at Country Club at La Cholla - Thursdays at 1:30 pm in the chapel. See Linda Walker for more information.

Open Minds Book Group - Friday, 01/23, at 9 am on Zoom will discuss *The Shepherd's Life: Modern Dispatches from an Ancient Landscape*, by James Rebanks (2015). Readers are taken through a year in the life of a shepherd and his family who have a deep connection to the land that most of us have lost. Rebanks is concerned about survival of the landscape, the life it has fostered, and a sense of belonging in an age that now promotes mobility and self-invention.



The **Marksmen** are a group of friendly retired and semi-retired men. They generally meet the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays in the Fellowship Hall for a program, breakfast, and fellowship. Contact them at marksmen@umcstmarks.org for more information.

Rainbow Fellowship meets on the 3rd Sundays in the Library on the Magee Campus at 9am. Contact Kitty Tobin for more information.

Pub Theology - 6 pm the last Mondays at Serial Grillers on Cortaro. Drink and think (and eat) while discussing life and faith. Contact info@umcstmarks.org

Common Grounds - 6 pm the 3rd Saturday of each month. A space for youngish adults (in their 20s - 40s) in any walk of life to meet and connect.

The **Mark-a-Ritas** are a group of women who believe it's important to have girlfriends at church, too! The Mark-a-Ritas meet monthly and take turns planning the activities. Whether an event is strictly social or includes a study or service project, you can count on plenty of conversation and laughter! Contact markaritas.tucson@gmail.com

Pickleball meets 8 am - 10 am Wednesdays at the court in the Magee campus north parking lot.

The **Veteran's Breakfast Group** meets 4th Fridays at Cracker Barrel at 8400 N Cracker Barrel Rd in Marana from 8:30 to 10 am. Come and join them for great conversation and sharing. Contact Marcia Rostad for more information.

♪ NOTES ♪ FROM JANE...

Many thanks to all who participated in our beautiful cantata last month – special thanks to Abe Gibson for the many hours of preparation, to the instrumentalists and choir members for their joy and commitment and to our incredible collaborative pianist, Devin Gardner. The cantata was a lovely way to prepare for Christmas.

Christmas Eve was a glorious celebration of the birth of our Lord and Savior. It takes a village to prepare for and provide FOUR worship services. Those who decorated did a beautiful job, the lectors, ushers, communion assistants, A/V team, choirs, pastors and staff helped create beautiful services for us to celebrate the birth of Jesus.

Would you like to be a part of a great group of people?

CALLING ALL SINGERS AND BELL RINGERS

The choir is for you. We have two incredible choirs to join. Each group sings three Sundays each month and provides lovely anthems, and more importantly, they lead singing for our Sunday services.

Celebration Singers – rehearses Wednesday evenings 6:15-7:15 in the music room. For more information, contact Jane Anderson at jane@umcstmarks.org.

Chancel Choir – rehearses Wednesday evenings 7:30-9:00 in the sanctuary. For more information, contact Abe Gibson at abe@umcstmarks.org.

If you prefer to give bell ringing a try, our bell choir meets 6:30-8:00 in the sanctuary on Monday evenings.

It may feel a bit early to start thinking about Holy Week and Easter, but it will be here before we know it. Our combined choirs will be presenting a musical drama in preparation of on Sunday, March 29th. If you are interested in being a part of the drama team or assist with costuming, please contact Jane at jane@umcstarks.org.

MIDWEEK

GATHER CONNECT SERVE

Advent Midweek was such a great opportunity to join with our church family in so many meaningful ways. We had over 30 people each week join for worship, dinner, study, choir, fellowship and activities!



SELECT SUNDAYS AT 3 PM Magee Campus sanctuary

January 11 - Unscrewed Theater Improv

Join us for a very different Sunday Concert Series experience - chuckling or even belly-laughing as the comedy group entertains us. This is a family-friendly event so please bring your kids or grandkids.



January 25 - Skyline Flutes

Enjoy the lovely sound of several shapes and sizes flutes in different musical styles.



February 1 - Harp Synergy

This is a concert you do not want to miss. The sound of a dozen harps of different sizes is pure magic.





Missions Ministry

It started with a conversation with Pastor Lynn at Barnes and Noble...

... time with God in prayer, and saying with God's help "I believe I can do that"... and resulted in a beautifully orchestrated trip to Chinle, Az.

We packed the van Tetris-style with all the wonderful food donations from the St. Mark's church family. Circled for prayer with Pastor Lynn. Received special personalized cards from our youth group to read. And made our way North to the Navajo Nation in Chinle, Az. Singing, Laughing and receiving a wonderful morning devotion "Holy moments" for all of us to reflect upon.

Stopped to have lunch, gassed up and drove the fastest route of 336 miles.

Arriving at the Holiday Inn we freshen up. Then we made our way to meet Amber, the founder of Chinle Planting Hope. She graciously took us to Canyon De Chelly National Monument to enjoy more quiet moments with the views of God's Handiwork at Spider Rock and White House in the Canyon.

Our next day started with morning devotions around the breakfast table. Then it was all hands on deck. Our little but mighty group worked very hard. Cleaning, computer inputting and filing children's books for their book mobile. We were able to deep clean their sparse pantry and fill it with all the abundant food donations. We were welcomed with wild horses in the afternoon. And in the evening we were blessed with a Navajo Taco dinner made with Love.

After dinner the ladies surprised Amber and her team with a check from our St. Mark's Mission Committee. "Thank you Missions Committee for your most generous donation".

On our last day we had a beautiful devotion and more singing with our ladies and Ambers team. Amber from Chinle Planting Hope shared her heart and gave us a tour of the property.



Chinle Planting Hope is a non-profit caring for the Children in Chinle and the Elders of the Navajo Nation called Dine'. Amber and her team work to provide a children's book mobile, thrift store, food bank, hub for collecting and distributing food to senior centers and a garden for planting seasoned crops. And the start of the children's imagination station. (COMING SOON!!!!)

You can check out their website at www.chinleplantinghope.com

You can also be a partner to support them financially by going to their website.

Our ride home was again filled with guitar singing and many more laughs.

God miraculously graced us with a "rainbow" as we arrived in Tucson and finished our evening with a beautiful "sunset".



Build Community. Live with Hope. Walk in Beauty.

A HUGE Thank you St. Mark's family for making this Missions Trip such a wonderful success! To God be the Glory!





more Missions Ministry

IN 2025 ST. MARK'S SUPPORTED THESE ORGANIZATIONS, USING 7% OF THE CHURCH'S UNDESIGNATED GIVING.

Chinle Planting Hope
Emerge
ICS
La Frontera
Nash & Estes
Our Family Services
Pasqua Yaqui
Primavera
Rise Against Hunger
Sierra Service Project

TMM
TiHAN
Tohono O'ham
Tucson Refuge Ministry
Youth on Their Own
... and more!

Plus all the groups supported by the Marksmen, our UWF chapter, Children's Ministry, and more!

Many, many thanks to our fall Primavera Teams!



Pictured: The Roadrunner Book Club meal team

October - The Rainbow Coalition
November - The Roadrunner Book Club
December - the Lori Grimsey family

So many thanks to all involved!



"Only \$10 for up to 60 pounds of food?!"

**MARKET ON THE MOVE
JAN 3. 8-10 AM**

For a donation of \$10 you can get up to 60 pounds (it varies each month, sometimes more, sometimes less!) of fresh produce and food that you can share with family, friends, neighbors, and people in need.

Drive up and make your \$10 donation per order (cash only). Then pop your trunk, pull forward and we'll load your vehicle! Questions or to volunteer text Lenna Burnham or the church office.

Let's Get Ready To Rise Against Hunger March 15th

This event provides an opportunity to assemble a start-to-finish meal of rice, soy, dehydrated vegetables and a packet of 18 vitamins and minerals. Last year we packaged 11,000+ meals! The food stores easily, transports quickly, has a long shelf life and meets the nutritional needs of people facing food insecurity. Watch for additional information and a registration sign up to help. We have done this a few times and it is an enjoyable time with excellent benefit.



"I'm here; send me" - Isaiah 6:8

Sierra Service Project (SSP) is a wonderful organization that St. Mark's has partnered with for 40 years. Since 1985, St. Mark's has sent youth, chaperones, young adults, and adults to many different service projects.

2025 was SSP's 50th Anniversary Celebration, where they offered fellowship, seeing old friends, fundraising, and of course Mission! Lisa Foree and Rachel Mosher attended the event on behalf of St. Mark's, and our very own Addison DaDeppo did an amazing job at coordinating the entire event. Our Marksmen and Missions Committees were honored for their support at the event. Lisa reflected on her experience with this fantastic program, *"I first attended SSP with the St. Mark's Youth Group in the summer of 2002. It was a life-changing experience to say the least! I continued to go back every summer throughout high school, and I completed projects like fixing roofs, building ramps, and painting homes. In that time, I also built lasting friendships and a stronger relationship with God. Serving as a student had such a profound impact on my life, that I became a staff member where I served various roles for five summers. Again, the leadership skills and life lessons that I learned through those summers played a pivotal role in shaping me into the person I am today. I am forever thankful for the experiences that the St. Mark's Youth Group provided for me, and that I still get to enjoy the lasting benefits today!"*

Help us send 20 youth and 4 chaperones to the Navajo Nation for SSP 2025, so that they, too, can have these amazing experiences! As expenses and registration goes up, so must our fundraising! It costs approximately \$1,000 per volunteer for a full SSP experience. We do our best to keep the costs very low for families, as we want all students to have access to this experience. But this means we need to fundraise. A lot. If you are interested in helping us to offset these costs, sponsorship is a simple way to do so! Any amount helps, and this form offers options at any amount.

<https://umcstmarks.breezechms.com/form/SSPsponsor>

Thank You!



United Women in Faith

***All contact information can be found in your Breeze directory**

We seek to connect and nurture women through Christian spiritual formation, leadership development, creative fellowship and education so that they can inspire, influence and impact local and global communities.



Looking for a quick, easy meal? Come to church on Sunday, January 11 and pick up a variety of soups in 16 oz containers (freezer and microwave safe) for just \$5 each. All proceeds support the mission work of United Women in Faith.

Grace Circle meets at 9 am Tuesday, January 20, in Rooms 17/18 at the  Magee Campus. After devotions, the group will go to ReStore.



Tu Nidito

No Child Grieves Alone

Our unit meeting will be Tuesday, Jan. 13, in Rooms 17/18 at the Magee Campus. Refreshments and fellowship begin at 9:30 am.

At 10 am, we will learn more about Tu Nidito.

Craft Circle meets at 9 am Tuesday, January 27, in Rooms 17/18 at the Magee Campus. The group will do inventory and discuss ideas for the coming year.



thank you



THANK YOU FROM MISSIONS:

The Missions Team passed out 1,000 Christmas cards at both campuses for the congregation to support a service member by writing a message inside the card. We were able to make 675 service members aware that we at St. Mark's appreciate their work and sacrifice during this time of the year.

Thank You for participating in this important event!

And Thank You to all of you who helped make this Christmas possible by donating toys and gift cards to brighten the holidays for children in Tucson's HIV+ community. You have no idea how much your generosity and care mean to those who are living on the margins and often feel isolated. A special thank you to Susan, Karen, David, and Marcia for staffing the table and hauling gifts for transport, and to Lora and Tricia for helping spread the word. Your kindness truly made a difference.

Blood Drive Results!



Your Blood Program Leader reports--our pre-Christmas blood drive had 28 people present to donate. We had A+, A-, B+, O+, and O- types. We had 7 deferrals but what great intent. 24 units of blood were collected, 2 of which were Power Red, which counts double! Those 24 units are now broken down into 3 components with each pint possibly helping three different people. Thank you to our pastors, office staff, volunteers, weekend custodian, all donors scheduled and walk-ins, successful or not. I have a fabulous team here that makes these blood drives successful for St. Mark's. The Red Cross was very pleased! See you March 1, 2026!

In November, I received a pocket prayer shawl at the 8:30 service! Not even an hour later I got a huge jumping cactus stuck in two of my fingers. Unfortunately, not tweezers, or anything else in the Wesley House, were able to remove the cactus. My mom had to drive me to Urgent Care, where the nurses used a tool that resembled a combination of scissors and pliers. While my right hand was getting needles pulled out of it, my left hand was holding on tight to my pocket prayer shawl. The same pocket prayer shawl that had been prayed over and gifted to me earlier that morning soothed my fears and sped up my trip at Urgent Care.

-Jocelyn C., 9th Grade



Youth Ministry

LATEST NEWS FOR HIGH SCHOOL, MIDDLE SCHOOL, AND PRETEEN STUDENTS

St. Mark's Youth Group is a space for 6th-12th grade students to gather for fun, faith, friendship, and fellowship. We meet in the Wesley House for Sunday School Sunday mornings at 10, and Youth Group meets most Sundays from 4-6. The Messenger and our social media pages have the most up to date information!

we come bearing gifts



EPIPHANY PARTY!

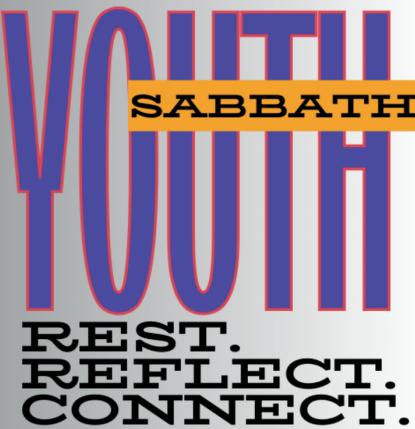
Jan. 4 4-6 PM

Come to Youth Group on January 4th and party like a Magi! You are cordially invited to wear your most royal outfit to come play some games, share some gifts, and keep the joy of Christmas going...even as you prepare to go back to school!

Laughter is the BEST MEDICINE, right? Come laugh with us at 3PM for an amazing Improv show! That show ends right around 4PM. As soon as the show ends, we will work the Marksmen to take all of the beautiful lights we up...down. Many hands make light work and maybe while we take the lights down, we can try out our own jokes!



Jan. 11 3-6 PM



Resting is such an important way to connect with God. Here at St. Mark's, we observe this practice especially on weekends that are long weekends from school.

Civil Rights weekend is a time to practice this sacred practice of resting. I am thankful for each of you, and thankful for rest!

Jan. 18

I said, "I'm here; send me."
-Isaiah 6:8b

Let's show love of our neighbors together at this Service Sunday. Come see how fun it can be to be the hands and feet of Jesus.



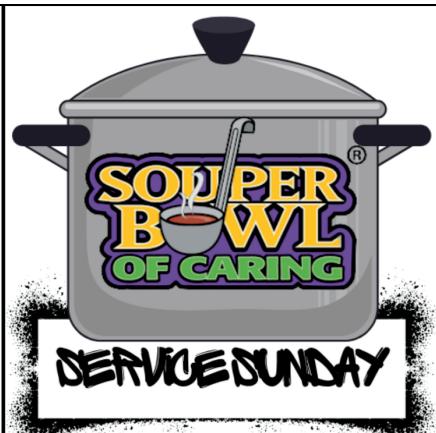
Jan. 25 4-6 PM



Back by popular demand—the Wesley Cup! This popular competition in the South District is a fun competition of SUPER proportions!

Come compete in some trivia games, Oddball, and more! Don't forget to wear your 2025-2026 St. Mark's Youth shirt!

11.2 lbs of potato chips are eaten each year on Super Bowl Sunday. But what about people who are hungry on this HUGE food holiday? Before the BIG GAME, let's do so BIG SERVICE! After each worship service on the Magee campus, youth will hold soup pots on the patio to collect money to donate to the Community Food Bank. There will also be a soup pot for collection at the Sanctuary campus!



Feb. 1 Time TBA

Feb. 8 4-6 PM

Sunday School meets weekly 10-11 in the Wesley House on 1st-4th Sundays. On 5th Sundays, join us for Family Worship!



Lent and Easter

Lent and Easter in the Youth Department are what we call a "BIG DEAL"! First, during Lent is everyone's favorite series- PEEPS!! For Easter, the Youth have a history of leading a beautiful Sunrise Service on the labyrinth and provide Easter morning brunch! Mark your calendars now! Saturday (April 4) we will spend the day setting up and practicing for the service (on the labyrinth) and prepping for brunch. Easter Sunday we get to church nice and early, worship as the sun rises over the Catalinas, and then we serve brunch between services. Mark your calendars now to be a part of this special day!

Hey Seniors!

May is coming faster than you know it! You will be honored on the Magee campus with a continental breakfast for your family and a special graduation video on both campuses. As you begin to take your senior pictures this semester, be sure to send in your favorite one to Rachel for the video!

Goodbyes are Never Easy

You may have noticed the last few weeks that our staffing looked a little different! Unfortunately, in November Ms. Jessica P had to resign from her position in the youth department. We are bummed to see her go, but excited for her next chapter. Thanks for the super fun year here at St. Mark's, Jessica!

Winter Camp 2026

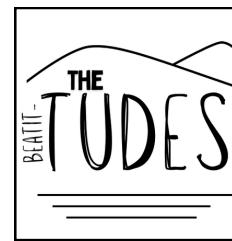
Back by popular demand! St. Mark's Youth are planning to head UP the Mountain for Winter Camp at Mingus February 27-March 1! St. Mark's will cover part of registration, so you need to see Rachel for registration details. This is a really fun event with students from around the conference. And hopefully with SNOW!!

LINK TREE



What's a Linktree!? Think of it like a bulletin board- a one stop shop, if you will! Scan this QR code to find the links to all things Youth! Sign up for events, Pay for registrations, get a new permission slip...it has it all!

YOUTH SUNDAY SCHOOL



Blessed Be...

This Epiphany season, we move from the wonder of the manger to the wisdom of the mountain. In the Beatitudes, Jesus speaks blessings into the hardest places of human life—grief, uncertainty, loss, injustice, and longing for what is right.

Through scripture and storytelling, we will explore how Jesus' words guide us in every season of life, calling us toward mercy, peace, courage, and trust in God. These are not easy teachings, but they are life-giving ones. Join us as we learn the way of Jesus together.

Sierra Service Project



Summer 2026 Registration is OPEN!

Yay! Registration for this summer's high school mission trip for students currently in 8th-12th grades. Don't miss out, spaces are limited! Please sign up at <https://umcstmarks.breezechms.com/form/SSP26REG> today! If you have any questions at all, do not hesitate to reach out!

CONFIRMATION '24-'25

January Field Trip

Hey Confirmants! We have a field trip coming up! This is always a popular Confirmation retreat, you don't want to miss it! January 24, 25 we will explore our connection to the wider faith community as we visit San Xavier Mission. Meet at the Wesley House at 9am. We will have lunch together at the Mission (mmmm fry bread!) and be back to the Wesley House at 1PM. See you on the 24th!



January Birthdays!

Did I miss your birthday this year!? I'm so sorry if I did! Make sure to fill out a permission slip, and include your birthday!



January 18th – HUMAN RELATIONS SUNDAY - Why Does It Matter?

Human Relations Day (January 18, 2026) matters because it supports the Church's work in creating communities where everyone can flourish. When we give, we support church-based programs that work in local neighborhoods to build justice, offer hope, and walk alongside those who need a second chance.

It's a day to remember that every person deserves a chance to thrive. It reminds us that living out our faith means building stronger, caring relationships, especially with those who have been pushed to the margins of society.

Special Sundays give us a chance to focus our prayers and support on important ministries all year long, uniting our gifts to multiply our impact. Your generosity strengthens communities working toward the vision of the "beloved community," making these ministries possible:

Your support funds ministries of advocacy and community engagement



57% of your donation funds the Community Developer's Program

This program helps churches serve their neighborhoods—especially communities of color—by focusing on local needs like education, employment, and empowerment.

33% of your donation funds Youth Offender Rehabilitation Programs

These church-supported programs help young people rebuild their lives through mentoring, leadership training, and positive, faith-based community experiences.

10% of your donation funds United Methodist Voluntary Services

This program equips volunteers and congregations to tackle injustice through hands-on projects, community organizing, and service-learning opportunities.

You can give online on the St. Mark's "Giving" page or via check with Human Relations indicated at the lower left corner.

Building stronger connections between the church and the communities they serve.

Finance Report

We hope you and your loved ones have had a blessed holiday season. We are grateful for all your prayers and pledges of financial support over the last quarter of 2025. We will have the results of our Generosity Campaign next month and plan to present a 2026 budget to Covenant Council in the January meeting.

| Description | YTD | Budget | Variance |
|--------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Contributions | 1,052,167.00 | 1,156,155.00 | (103,988.00) |
| Other Income | 69,418.00 | 57,299.00 | 12,119.00 |
| Total Income | 1,121,585.00 | 1,213,454.00 | (91,869.00) |
| | | | |
| Expenses | 1,139,203.66 | 1,225,175.00 | (85,971.34) |
| Net Income (Loss) | (17,618.66) | (11,721.00) | (5,897.66) |

At left are the results of income and expenses through the month of November. Contributions continue to be behind budget, although it is doubtful we will make up the full difference, December collections are generally higher than average and this variance may improve. We also review designated and restricted funds in December for appropriate transfers to the general fund, which will provide an increase in other income. Regarding expenses, the budget allows for a large insurance bill in December. However, we have changed insurance carriers, and the bill will be deferred until April. Currently, we anticipate a deficit lower than the budgeted loss of \$40,380.

meet our

PRAISE TEAM LEADER Cindy Pastorius



We are excited to welcome Cindy Pastorius as our new Praise Team Leader on the Sanctuary campus. You may recognize Cindy as she and her husband, Collin, have been members of St. Mark's for several years and both have been members of the Praise Team.

Cindy has been on a praise team since she was 14 years old! She has a love for worship and even got her Bachelor's Degree in Church Music. She plays piano and percussion, and she loves to sing. Before moving to Tucson, she served as the worship leader for her church, Lexington Park UMC, in Maryland. In her free time, Cindy loves to travel, play board games, work on puzzles, read a good book, or go for a walk (when the weather is nice!) Together, she and Collin have 3 fur babies, a dog and two cats, whom they adore!

Please welcome Cindy.



The Sanctuary Campus praise team is looking for new musicians! We especially have a need for a drummer, but we would love anyone who is interested in singing or playing an instrument to reach out!

If you are interested in joining the praise team, please email Cindy, cindy@umcstmarks.org, for more information or to set up a time for an audition.

Children's and Family Ministries



What does it mean to make room for God in our lives?

Over the last several weeks, we started the Advent journey by spending time reflecting on God's promises. The children heard the story of Mary's visit from the angel, who delivered God's message that she would be the mother of God's Son. We also talked about how God chooses everyday ordinary people to play important roles in God's story.

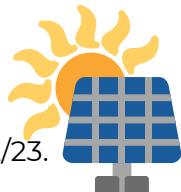
Throughout Advent, our lessons focused on the people who prepared the way for Jesus' birth. The children learned about Jesus' family tree and the many people God loved and used to bring about God's plan of salvation.

It was a meaningful time of learning and reflection as we continue preparing our hearts to welcome and make space for Jesus. We look forward to continuing this journey together into the new year!

Solar Project Status

Work has begun on our solar project for the parking lot, although you won't see much action quite yet. Here's an update and what to expect in the new year, with our project plan showing completion on 12/15/2026.

- This is driven by worst case delivery of the solar panels, end of the 3rd quarter.
- Our solar contractors, TFS, will be ready to start construction of the structure in April.
- If confirmation that the solar panels delivery is sooner, TFS will pull everything back.
- Safe Harbor hardware (to qualify us for the federal rebate) was scheduled to be received on 12/23.
- Creation of the preliminary layout is in process.





We invite your prayers for these individuals - some for health reasons, some for facing hard times, some just because! We would like to pray for you. Submit prayer requests by email to prayerchain@umcstmarks.org or on our website at umcstmarks.breezechms.com/form/PrayerRequest

Family of Larry Davis
John & Sherri Lennarson
Family of Pat Long

Greta & Al Roberts
Priscilla McInnis
Clara Campbell

Paula Boettcher
Charles & Sonya Moore
Kathy Fujan

News from Congregational Care

On December 4, 2025, 18 people from St. Mark's completed our Lay Visitation Team training and are now being assigned to visit those from our church who are homebound, in care facilities, or recovering from surgery or other illnesses. I'm so grateful to these caring people who have taken the time to receive training in how to listen well, provide spiritual resources, understand grief and loss and just generally be a sign of Christ's presence to people. Keep them in your prayers!

If you know of someone who is homebound and has not received a call from us to see if they want visitors, please contact Pastor Sharon on the Care Line at 520-783-8837 or email: pastoral_care@umcstmarks.org (That's pastoral, followed by one underscore, care@umcstmarks.org)

Speaking of the Care Line, if you or someone you know needs to talk with a pastor, call or send an email to the Care Line. The Care Line was set up in summer, 2025, to provide an easy way for people to contact a pastor when they need to talk to a pastor about being hospitalized, having surgery, in need of conversation or spiritual care.

Put the Care Line in your phone: 520-783-8837 pastoral_care@umcstmarks.org (that's one underscore_ after pastoral). Through Congregational Care we connect people to God and one another.

Rev. Sharon Ragland, Associate Minister of Congregational Care



(520) 297-2062
Email: info@umcstmarks.org
Website: umcstmarks.org
YouTube: UMC St. Mark's AZ

Magee Campus
1431 W Magee Rd
Tucson, AZ 85704

Sunday Worship 8:30 & 10 am
live streamed at 10 am
on our website and YouTube

Sanctuary Campus
8000 N Silverbell
Tucson, AZ 85743

Sunday Worship 10

Lead Pastor:
Rev. Lynn Bartlow
Sanctuary Campus Pastor:
Tu'ulauena Lolohena
Associate Pastor:
Rev. Deborah Christine
Associate Pastor:
Rev. Sharon Ragland

Incredibly
Grateful
With Gratitude...
Thanks to Kathy Parrish!

For over 30 years, St. Mark's Counselor in Residence Program has existed to provide counseling services, support groups and educational programs for our church and community members. Kathy Parrish has been part of the Counselor in Residence Committee for all of that time and has been the chairperson for much of it. On Thursday, December 11th, we honored Kathy at lunch as she retires from the Counselor in Residence Committee. We are so grateful for her leadership for these many years and know that she will continue to advise us as we move into the future. Other members of the committee will try to fill her shoes, but we know that will be hard! We offer our sincere thanks to Kathy and her husband, Gil, for their service to St. Mark's.

Rev. Sharon Ragland, Associate Minister of Congregational Care & Members of the Counselor in Residence Committee

Thank you

Christmas Eve is one of the most meaningful nights of our church year, and it takes many hands and hearts to make it so. Thank you to our ushers, greeters, liturgists, choirs, special musicians, and staff—and to all who served behind the scenes—for your generosity and faithfulness. Your presence and preparation helped create a welcoming, holy space where the good news of Christ's birth could be shared with care and joy.

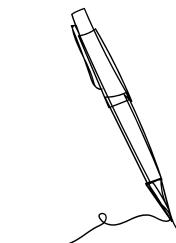




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words from our Pastor

Called and Sent: A Word of Gratitude

From the earliest days of the Methodist movement, the church has been shaped and sustained by its laity. Lay preachers, class leaders, and small-group facilitators carried faith into everyday life, reminding us that ministry belongs to all God's people.

At St. Mark's, that legacy continues. As we begin a new year, we offer sincere gratitude to those who are stepping aside from formal leadership roles. Your faithfulness, time, and care have strengthened this congregation and made our shared ministry possible. Stepping aside is part of the holy rhythm of leadership—creating space for rest, renewal, and new voices to emerge. Thank you.

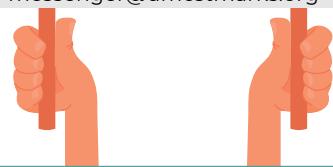
We also invite each of you to prayerfully consider how you might share your gifts in the year ahead. St. Mark's is an active church, and to continue this work, we need everyone to believe they have a place in leadership and service. There is room for every gift, every season, and every calling as we move forward together. Take our Volunteer Accelerator if you want a suggestion of places you might serve.

See you soon,

Pastor Lynn

<https://volunteeraccelerator.ministryarchitects.com/SMUMC/survey.php>

If you would like to receive the Messenger electronically and discontinue your paper copy, please submit your request to messenger@umcstmarks.org



In addition to various committee members whose terms have expired, these Chairs and long-term members are stepping back. Give them a big thanks next time you see them!

- Harold Putt (Finance for 9 years)
- Darcy Halvorson (Worship Committee Chair for 4 years)
- Kathy Parrish (30 years of Counselor in Residence Chair)
- Mary Beth Barone (Missions Chair for 3 years)
- Chris Shafer (Growth and Outreach Chair)

