



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

Messenger

Volume 66
No. 8
August 2026

St. Mark's
United Methodist

St. Mark's Messenger

August 2026



On July 5th, twenty students and five chaperones headed north towards the Four Corners to serve elders in the Teec Nos Pos chapter of the Navajo Nation. We contributed to five projects being lead by Sierra Service Project, three accessibility ramps and two roof repairs.

Yá'át'ééh! (Hello!)

Over 450 miles Northeast of Tucson, 12 minutes from the Four Corners, is the small and vibrant community of Teec Nos Pos on the Navajo Nation. T'iis Názbas, meaning "trees in a circle" is bustling with pride and heart for their culture. Everyone we encountered was generous and kind; ready to tell stories, share food, and laugh with our students. Along side our construction projects, we were also invited to join in the community's *Just Move It* healthy lifestyle event. Many families on the reservation live in Food Deserts (geographic areas with limited access to affordable, healthy food) and are at greater risk for hypertension, diabetes, and other health issues. The *Just Move It* events happen all around the reservation promoting exercise and healthy eating habits. All twenty-five of us voluntarily participated in the community fun run - even after working in the heat all day. It was the highlight of the week for many of us! Being in community with our neighbors is one of the best parts of the Sierra Service Project experience each year.

Read more about SSP on pages 8 & 12



The Desert Southwest Annual Conference met June 18-21, 2026 at Lakeview UMC in Sun City, AZ. St. Mark's was well represented at this Conference. I represented our clergy, as Rev. Lynn Bartlow has been on renewal leave. Our lay members to AC are: Diane James, Cindy Flannery, Cindy Pastorius, Collin Pastorius, and Kerry Powers, who were faithfully present for all of AC. Diane had been to AC before as a Lay Member from St. Mark's; all the others were there for the first time. They all represented St. Mark's very well.

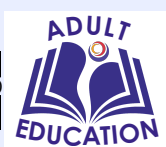
Others there from St. Mark's were Don Booth, Alberta Farnsworth, Bob Holliday, and Rachel Mosher. The Lay Members were all asked to turn in some of their impressions and thoughts about AC; those reports are included here, throughout the Messenger. It was my joy to share AC with our Lay Members and others from St. Mark's.

Read Annual Conference Reports on Pages 5, 6, & 10

-Sharon Ragland

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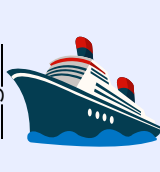
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REGISTER
ONLINE AT

umcstmarks.org/classes/adult-spiritual-growth-opportunities

ADULT EDUCATION

ST. MARK'S
UMC

We have a
seat at the
table for you!

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

Seekers Sunday Bible Study - 11:15 am Sundays in Rooms 17/18. Seekers Bible Study wants to learn about the whole Bible, including books that often are not preached. Therefore, we alternate studies from the New Testament with studies from the Old Testament. Please register online or contact the leader, Brenda Hunter, to obtain Zoom information.

Monday Mornings at Mountain View Retirement Village - 10:30 am in the 2nd floor conference room. All are welcome, even if you don't live in the Village!

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

Wednesday Morning Study - 10 am Wednesdays in Rooms 17/18 and via Zoom. The Wednesday Morning Study class resumes **September 2, 2026**. Led by Marcia Rostad [Read more on page 4!](#)

Our Favorite Scriptures - 1:30 pm Thursdays in the chapel of the Country Club of La Cholla. This study will begin on **August 20, 2026**. Led by Linda Walker [Read more on page 4!](#)

Small Group Scripture Study - Read A Chapter A Day - Various. Join 2,000 people worldwide in reading and reflecting on the same chapter each day. [Read more on page 4!](#)

Open Minds Book Group - The Open Minds Book Group does not meet during the summer. We will resume meetings on Friday, September 18th, when we'll discuss This Tender Land, by William Kent Krueger. Led by Celeste Pardee and Ann Reaban.



Service & Fellowship

Rainbow Fellowship meets on the **3rd Sunday of each month** in the Library on the Magee Campus at 9am. Contact Kitty Tobin for more information.

Pub Theology - 6 pm the last Monday of the month at Dove Mountain Brewing Co. Drink and think (and eat) while discussing life and faith. R.S.V.P. to Cindy Pastorius @ info@umcstmarks.org.

Play Farkle! 1st Tuesday of each month in the Fellowship Hall at 1 pm. All are welcome! We will teach you!

Pickleball meets 7 am - 9 am Wednesdays & Saturdays at the court in the Magee campus north parking lot.

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.

The **Veterans Breakfast Group** meets on the **fourth Friday of each month** 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.

Mark-a-Ritas - Women who believe it's important to have girlfriends at church, too! The Mark-a-Ritas meet monthly and take turns planning the activities. Contact markaritas.tucson@gmail.com.

Primavera Meals - Various. Teams of 5-7 people making a meal and serving it at the Primavera men's shelter once a month. Contact Kathy Howard.



You're invited to join **On Your Mark's Walking Group** for indoor walking at our summer walking place, the Tucson Mall! We will meet on **Monday, 8/10 and Monday, 8/24** at 9:40 am in the North parking lot of Magee campus (near the basketball/pickleball court). Or, meet in the Food Court at Tucson Mall at 10 am. Bring water and plan on 2 hours, for 2 miles. Contact: Cheri Schwartz

Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it.
Proverbs 22:6

CHILDREN & FAMILY MINISTRY



SPECIAL SUNDAYS

Aug 2 is celebration Sundae! we will celebrate summer with sundaes today!

Aug 9 is move up day. Incoming 6th graders begin in elementary class to say goodbye and move up to the Wesley House.

Aug 30 is family worship! Join us in the Sanctuary



Special thanks to Pastors Judy, Evy, and Bob for bringing communion to our Sunday School class!

Bible Classes for 3rd graders begin in September



Meet Our Teachers!

Barb Sargent, Kathy Hale, Julia Younggren, and Pam Howard - our tried and true team for many years- are once again at the helm! Each one brings joy for children and a love of teaching our Faith to our young people!



The 5:1 Effort

Kids need 5 non-related adults in the community who make them feel seen and valued on Sundays and beyond. This looks like learning the name of a child in the Church, getting to know a family and inviting them to dinner at your house, greeting children and asking them about who they are, then working to remember that and build on the conversation next week. We all want to know we matter, and when the congregation ministers to our children and teens in this way, we are working to grow Disciples of Christ.

PARENT ORIENTATION

11:15 AM

Fellowship Hall

23
AUG





Sticky Faith

What is a "sticky faith," and how do we at St. Mark's live into creating a sticky faith for our children, youth, and adults who find us?

In short, a sticky faith is a faith that sticks with us. The concept was developed by the Fuller Youth Institute and includes a set of principles and practices to promote a life-long faith. This came about after some research among college students to determine

what practices contribute to undergrads continuing to identify in the faith of their upbringing when they are graduating. The Institute offers some simple guideposts for us as a Church.

Now you may be thinking that what makes a sticky faith is a strong pastor, a good Discipleship team, or an excellent Sunday School teacher. Or, you might be pondering the role of the family to instill a lifelong faith in their children. The truth is, it is all of this and more. It builds into another concept coined by Unitarian Universalist religious educator, Connie Goodbread. Connie taught me that:

The congregation IS the curriculum.

And this philosophy is the first principle of the sticky faith concept. It turns out, it takes all of us to help our children and youth (and one another) build a sticky faith. So how do we do it?

And yes, we also need the leadership of our Pastors, Discipleship team, and Sunday School teachers to instill faith at every age and stage of life. A good written curriculum can teach our history, our Scripture, our heritage - but a congregation that steps in as a living curriculum for Discipleship creates a sticky faith. ***Will you join me?*** This month, try to get to know a child or teen in the congregation you are not already acquainted with. Learn their name, their favorite food, and a hobby they enjoy. Notice where they sit during Children's Time, who their grownups are, and whether they play sports. We have an opportunity to build a net and become fishers of men. May we honor God by allowing him to use us to share His Word, love, and guidance with the young people in our Church.

Starr Austin
starr@umcstmarks.org

Continued from page 2

The **Wednesday Morning Study Class** resumes September 2, 2026, with a new 6-week study by Adam Hamilton; **The Holy Spirit- God's Presence and Power at Work in Us** explores what Scripture teaches about God's Spirit. The Holy Spirit is God's active presence and power at work in the world and in our lives. Through the Spirit, we are transformed, led, empowered, and guided in our faith journey.

All are invited to attend one study or all the studies presented throughout the year. If you are new to the class, please email the leader to be included in the weekly email which includes virtual connection information. Study participants purchase their own study book from their favorite vendor. Led by Marcia Rostad

Our Favorite Scriptures

The Bible Study group at the Country Club of La Cholla (8700 W. La Cholla Blvd.) invites the members of St. Mark's to join them for a study of our favorite Biblical verses and stories. This study will meet in the chapel of the Country Club at 1:30 p.m. on Thursdays, beginning **August 20, 2026**.

Each participant is invited to offer 2-3 choices of Bible verses or stories for group discussion. These study choices may be submitted to Linda Walker who will lead the discussions. If you plan to attend, please contact Linda (520-297-4965) with your choices.

By exploring these verses/stories, we hope to learn about the faith journeys of others, share our personal stories, and, perhaps, discover new helps for our own individual journey of faith.

Small Group Scripture Study - Read A Chapter A Day

The UMC Discipleship Ministries is hosting its annual "read a chapter a day" event **September 8th - October 19th**. Join us in reading through Galatians, Ephesians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, and Philemon. Here at St. Mark's there will be 2 groups forming to study the scripture over this 6-week period. You can contact our Associate Director of Discipleship, Starr Austin, at starr@umcstmarks.org to register for a study group. Please indicate if you prefer to meet on Sundays from 4 pm-5:30 pm via Zoom or Mondays at the Magee campus from 1:30 pm to 3 pm.



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.

*United Women in Faith will not have a unit meeting in August. The next unit meeting will be **Sept. 8**.*

Craft Circle will meet at 9 am Tuesdays, **August 11** and **25**, in Rooms 17/18. Even if you are not crafty, we can use your help and it is lots of fun. Please bring finished projects and any ideas you have for sellable crafts.

CAYA will meet at 9 am Saturday, **August 15**, in Rooms 17/18, and **August 22** at the home of Deborah Nelson. All are welcome to this group of fellowship and to explore books on the United Women in Faith reading list. You need not have read the current book to join and meet others. Email DeborahNelson2351@yahoo.com for details.

Our United Women in Faith Grace Circle will meet at 9 am Tuesday, **August 18**, in Rooms 17/18. The group will carpool to the Ronald McDonald House and prepare, cook and freeze casseroles that are given to families who are headed home from the Ronald McDonald House to Home program.



ANNUAL CONFERENCE REPORT As I attended the Annual Conference of our Desert Southwest United Methodist churches last week, the proverb "The more things change, the more they stay the same" kept worming its way into my consciousness. I had not attended an Annual Conference since I went as a young adult in the early 1980's so, of course, many details of this year's gathering were very different from my past experiences. However, instead of this proverb conveying the negative idea that Methodism has been making little progress, I came to believe that the opposite was true. During the 4-day event, it became abundantly clear that much effort has been expended to ensure that congregations in our conference can adapt to current challenges. Many churches in our conference have been creating new programs and partnerships in order to meet the evolving needs of their communities and stay relevant in today's world.

Here are a few observations that I found to be a source of encouragement and hope:

Our conference is ethnically diverse and consistently strives to ensure that this diversity is appreciated. A variety of educational resources are available to help congregations understand multicultural perspectives.

Our conference supports women in a variety of leadership roles, both clergy and laity. This year marks the seventieth anniversary of the ordination of the first woman pastor in Methodism. Several activities celebrated this milestone event. St. Marks helped to lead the way as Alberta Farnsworth served as the conference Lay Leader and Rachel Mosher was commissioned as a new clergy person during Saturday's ordination service.

Our conference supports congregations that are experimenting with new ministries in order to reach unchurched persons. Conference leaders can even provide trend research to help identify these populations that are often located near existing churches.

Our conference values the contributions of young leaders. I was pleased to note that among those elected to represent us at the upcoming General and Jurisdictional Conferences were several young lay and clergy leaders.

So, there were plenty of differences between this conference and those of my youth including these amazing improvements: all documents are digital, voting occurs using one's cell phone, and worship includes multimedia presentations and praise bands. But the "heart" of Annual Conference remains the same. We are called to love God and love our neighbors. Annual Conference has almost always been a great example of how diverse groups can deliberate respectfully, vote prayerfully and worship joyfully. That was exactly as I remembered it.

-Cindy Flannery



**PRIMAVERA
FOUNDATIONS
MEN'S SHELTER**



A HUGE thank you to the Summer Choir for preparing and serving the July Primavera meal!

Special Musical Sunday - August 2nd!

The theme for the day will be:

"Finding Joy in Music...and in Life"

We will focus on the hymns of the church that stress Joy and will also recognize times when we can't find joy in our lives; times we need to take a step back to find the places God provides joy.

Worship and singing will be led by Jane Anderson - a "joy filled" hour of music, prayer and scripture.

Choir Season Starts This Month!

Our choir rehearsals begin Wednesday, August 26.

Celebration Singers rehearse at 6:15-7:30 pm in the music room. This choir sings traditional, contemporary, folk, and gospel music under the direction of Jane Anderson.

Chancel Choir is considered to be the more traditional choir although they sing all genres. The choir rehearses 7:30-9:00 pm in the sanctuary.

Both choirs welcome new singers and would love to have you join our choir family.

Our 2026-2027 Concert Series begins in September.

Be sure to get these dates on your calendar! There will be more information about the upcoming concert season next month.

September 13	The Manhattan Dolls	Andrews Sisters Style Harmonies
September 27	Unscrewed Theater	Improv Comedy for the entire family
October 11	Tucson Concert Band	Band music at its best
October 25	Tucson Flute Club	Flutes of all sizes and shapes

St Mark's '26 - '27 United Methodist SUNDAY CONCERT SERIES



ANNUAL CONFERENCE REPORT

Attending my first annual conference was a very enlightening experience! I wasn't completely sure what to expect, but it exceeded my expectations. Getting to spend a few days with clergy and laity from the Desert Southwest Conference who are passionate about church was a heartwarming endeavor.

We had several worship services which were very meaningful and full of the Holy Spirit, especially the Saturday night Ordination Service. It was especially meaningful because two people that are very dear to me were celebrated. Kevin Lester was ordained and Rachel Mosher was commissioned.

The service is always beautiful, but knowing people being celebrated was even more impactful.

We had a guest speaker on Saturday afternoon, Tyler Sit, a pastor from Minneapolis, who gave a very impactful message about Jesus Moving amongst us, even in the toughest of situations. It was a great reminder that we are the hands and feet of Jesus and He moves through us in everything we do!

I hope I have the opportunity to attend Annual Conference again and to be able to represent St. Mark's as a lay member!

-Cindy Pastorius

Still Interested in Touring Alaska in 2027? Read on...

Join Pastor Sharon and Art Ragland and Julie Ragland on a 9 night "Destination Denali Cruise and Land Tour" leaving 7/14/27, and enjoy the beauty of God's creation with others from St. Mark's and Tucson.

Because the original tour planned by Pastor Sharon leaving 7/11/27 filled up so quickly we added another tour that has two days on land (instead of four in the original tour), leaving from Anchorage, and then joins the original group for a 7 day cruise, ending in Vancouver, BC. Julie Ragland will be leading the land portion of this tour, then everyone from both groups will enjoy cruising Alaska together. For more information and to register visit:

[Destination Denali Cruise & Land Tour with Julie Ragland | July 14, 2027 . EO Tours](#)

These tours are through Educational Opportunities, which we have used for Christian travel many times in the past. We'd love to have you join us on the Alaska adventure leaving July 14, 2027!

Sharon Ragland

If you would like to talk to Pastor Sharon or Julie Ragland about this tour you can email or call:

Pastor Sharon
520-256-7924
revsragland@gmail.com

Julie Ragland
520-979-2412
julieragland@live.com



OPEN hearts ♥ Open Minds OPEN DOORS

Youth Ministry

At St. Mark's Youth, we believe everyone has a seat at the table. Youth Group is a place to belong and it happens on Sunday afternoons from 4-6pm in the Wesley House. We're excited to meet you and want you to feel at home!

Sunday - August 2nd



Feed The Belly & The Soul!

Spencer will cook dinner for everyone and we will share a meal as we pray over the school year and plan faith & service development for the Fall!

4 - 6pm

Sunday - August 9th



Hi Friends!

WELCOME NEW Youth Students

Wesley House 4-6pm

Bring the following:

- Your Favorite Snack/Drink
- A Family Photo (or send to Spencer to print!)
- Two Truths & A Lie
- Ideas for decorating the Wesley House!

Sunday - August 16th



FUNDRAISING TOGETHER

St. Mark's Youth Group

youth2027

in DALLAS, TEXAS from JULY 11-14!

4 - 6pm

Sunday - August 23rd



4 - 6pm

Wear Messy Clothes!

T-SHIRT NIGHT

Sunday - August 30th



POOL PARTY

Miss Starr's House!

Van Leaves At 4pm Or Meet Us There!

Text Spencer To Reserve A Ride Or Get The Address!

Sunday - September 6th



YOUTH SABBATH

REST. REFLECT. CONNECT.

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

Youth Ministry

Latest news for High School, Middle School, and Preteen Students!



Here's What's Coming:

Youth 2027 - July 11th - 14th

Yep, we're already prepping for next summer!

Every four years the United Methodist Church holds a national youth conference and next summer it's in Dallas, TX!

What makes this year extra special? One of our very own students, Jade K., is on the design team and will MC the whole event!

This trip is open to all youth students for the 2026-2027 school year (grades 6-12). We want to gauge the level of interest for



attendance so we can start our travel planning as soon as possible. We will have more information on the trip during the Parent Orientation meeting on August 23rd.

If you're interested in reserving your child's spot, please visit the sign up using the LinkTree below!

SUNDAY SCHOOL

A Doing Faith & A Knowing Faith

Child development happens in key phases throughout adolescence, so faith formation should too! This fall, we will step into a new version of Sunday School, split into Middle & High School studies. This will ensure students are participating in faith development that is appropriate to their age and stage of life. Middle School will focus on an actionable faith while High School will focus on an intellectual faith.

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!

BACK TO SCHOOL PRAYER

God of new beginnings,

We have filled backpacks and now we ask for You to pack their hearts with peace and courage. Fill their minds with the wonder of learning and their souls with the joys of youth. Ignite passion in them for Your people, let them see Neighbors in all they encounter. Guide them to find their worth in You, not academic or athletic success. Grant them a Holy mischief that will change the world for your Glory.

Protect them always, Amen.



Sierra Service Project - 2027

Ready To Go Back!?

What an INCREDIBLE time we had in Teec Nos Pos this summer. It was so wonderful to learn more about the Navajo Nation's culture and community while building accessibility ramps and repairing roofs for elders!

I am even more pumped for next year and what God has in store for our group! If you're interested in attending SSP next summer, fill out an interest form today!



CONFIRMATION 2027

Interested in Confirmation?

Confirmation is open to students 8th grade and up!

We will be having an information meeting on Sunday, August 30th after second service in the Wesley House.

Stay tuned for more details!



Brandon N. - August 2nd
Kieran F. - August 4th
Joshua H. - August 13th
Luke O. - August 31st

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!



Church & Society Committee

Dedicated to living faith, seeking justice, pursuing peace, implementing social principles, and addressing social issues.



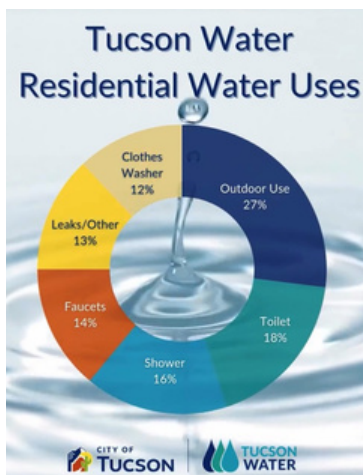
water...

Water is one of our most precious resources,

especially here in the desert. For the Tohono O'odham, water (wa:k) is sacred and essential to their survival, culture, and identity. In the Christian faith, water is central to the creation story and symbolizes cleansing, renewal, and new life through baptism. These traditions remind us that water is both a physical necessity and a spiritual gift.

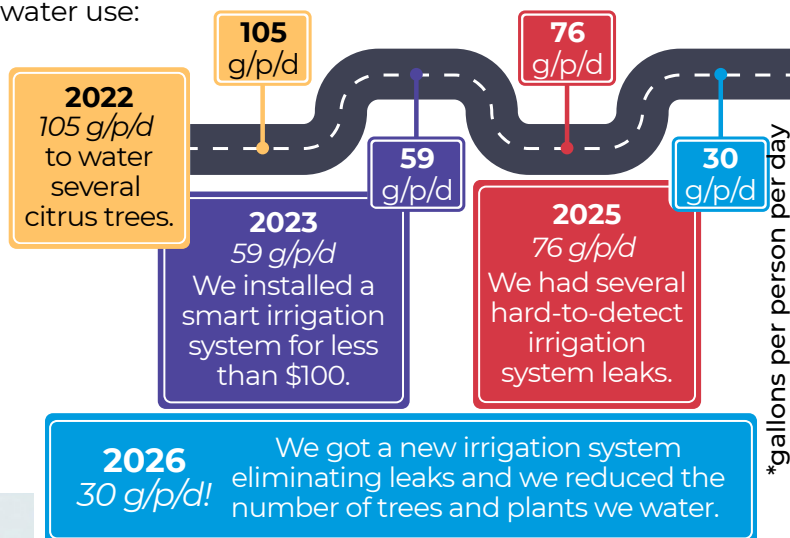
Arizona's water supplies continue to face significant challenges. Reduced snowpack in Colorado has decreased the amount of water flowing into the Colorado River. As a result, Lake Powell is approximately 24% full, and Lake Mead is about 29% full. As faithful stewards of God's creation, we are called to use this precious resource wisely and reduce unnecessary water consumption.

Every gallon saved helps protect our shared water resources for future generations. By caring for creation through responsible water use, we honor both our neighbors and God's gift of water.



A Personal Water Conservation Journey Joylee Gathings

The average Tucson resident uses about **75 gallons** of water per day. Over the years, my husband and I have made intentional changes to reduce our household water use:



How can I use less water?

- Wash full loads of clothes
- Fix leaks
- Use water saving toilets
- Don't leave water running to brush your teeth or wash dishes
- Use low flow shower heads, take shorter showers - set a timer
- Use smart outdoor watering systems, water fewer plants

Now, Let's Talk Plastic and Our Environment

Since 1907 **8.3 billion tons** of plastic has been produced – ½ of that total in the last 13 years.

Microplastics have been found everywhere from the peak of Mt. Everest to the ocean trough in the Mariana Trench.

Plastics can take from 10 to 600 years to decompose – never totally disappearing, just getting smaller.

It is estimated that humans ingest a credit card worth of plastic per week.

Of all discarded plastic: 12% is incinerated, 9% is recycled. The remainder is in landfills or released into the environment.

With this information, it would seem we should avoid using plastic... Since that is not possible, we need to recycle as much plastic as possible.

St. Mark's is making a dent in the amount of plastic that ends up in our environment by recycling Hard-to-Recycle Plastic. In the first 8 months of 2026 We have sent 938 bags of Hard-to-Recycle to ByFusion to be made into building blocks. We are well on our way to surpassing our 2025 total of 1,337 bags.



Thank you for caring for our environment.
- Church and Society



ANNUAL CONFERENCE REPORT

On a personal note, I was again honored to be selected to represent St. Marks at Annual Conference. It is always a pleasure to recognize other members and to meet new ones from our widely welcoming UMC.

Having AC at a church was a very different experience this year, navigating note taking and voting in a pew. I understand that this will be the case next year as well. Although not the easiest for me and others attending I realized that the reason was financial. It is better for the conference and along with most churches these days, including St. Mark's, we have to keep an eye on the expenses in order to move forward. What I also learned is that in today's world in needing to attract younger people, we have to quit thinking that "but we always do it this way". Change is inevitable. We need the energy and new ideas of the younger generation. We were well represented by 3 at AC who have already contributed much to our church.

We need a healthy church for a healthy world. We are the church together. This was expressed often. And a phrase that has really moved me to ponder is "if the doors to your church close, will the neighborhood notice?"

~Diane James

ANNUAL CONFERENCE REPORT

Thank you so much for your nomination to be one of your representatives to the 2026 Desert Southwest Annual Conference. It was hugely impactful for me to be a part of this work and to experience the sermons over the various days. We opened with a meaningful message from our Bishop, Bishop Carlo, where he challenged us as a body to reflect on what it means to be a healthy church. Forgive me for channeling the famed drag queen, RuPaul: *"If you can't love yourself, how the hell you gonna love someone else!"*

I was honored to share in the memorial service where the message was brought by Rev. Gina Pollard. She gave meaningful imagery of rocks being memories—where many are heavy to lift and hold, but they are part of our strong ground, so we hold them with honor. We were invited to consider the lifecycle of the church itself, and how the closing—or dying—of things actually brings space for resurrection. Our faith is rooted in the resurrection of our Savior, aren't we?

We were also blessed with the message brought by Rev. Tyler Sit; he shared that the church is for all of us to learn how to love. I thought this was powerful for us at St. Mark's as we often talk about being a welcoming congregation, but once we welcome folks in, do we do a good job of teaching and learning how to love each other outside the church walls?

Ordination... what can I say? What a beautiful service. To see the full tradition of the UMC on display was



An Update from the Finance Committee: A Budget That Supports Our Mission

At St. Mark's, our mission is to *gather, connect, and serve, so all may experience the love of Christ*. While the Finance Committee spends much of its time working with budgets, reports, and financial planning, we never lose sight of the fact that every dollar supports that mission.

Soon we will begin preparing next year's budget, we aren't simply assigning numbers to line items. We are helping to provide a resource that makes worship meaningful, nurtures children and youth, supports music ministries, cares for those in need, maintains our campus, and strengthens outreach in our community. A budget is more than a financial document—it's a plan for ministry.

Developing a budget requires prayer, discernment, and thoughtful stewardship. We seek to balance today's needs with tomorrow's opportunities while using the gifts entrusted to St. Mark's wisely and responsibly.

Thank you for your faithful generosity. Through your financial gifts, your volunteer service, your witness, and your prayers, you help make it possible for St. Mark's to *gather, connect, and serve, so all may experience the love of Christ*. We are grateful to be partners with you in this important work.

awe-inspiring. It was a bonus to be there in person to see this profession of faith and commitment from two of our own... Pastor Rachel and Rev. Kev... as he will now be known. The message was brought by Bishop Dottie, who has a long-standing place in the DSC. Her message was a powerful reminder that we have obligations as Christians to not turn away from injustice, but to move toward it with love and compassion to challenge the things going on around us. Remember, none of us are free until all are, and hopes and prayers alone aren't going to free us!

Sunday closed with a rich, multicultural service literally spoken in many languages. We had praise music and readings in both English and Spanish and we were blessed with parts of the communion liturgy in Tagalog. It was a great reminder that you don't have to understand every word spoken to feel the presence of the Spirit, and an awareness that there are those in our midst who may not understand any of our services, but come anyway.

Finally, I was inspired to raise my hand and self-nominate for the conference committee on New and Vital Faith. So look out, y'all—more crazy ideas from me are coming!

Thank you again for this opportunity. I look forward to connecting with you all and sharing more of our experiences at the next Covenant Council meeting and other opportunities as they arise.

~Kerry Powers



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 umcstmarks.breezechms.com/form/PrayerRequest

Gail Blevins
Ellen Beene
Liza Carsten
Heather Fish
Brenda Hunter
Jim Johnson

Martha Mazzolini
Priscilla McInnis
Shirley Riley
Ellen Stephenson
Dan Snyder

Friends and Family of:
Velta Hall

Pastor Ash Dotson



*Sanctuary Campus Pastor
Director of Discipleship*

Let me introduce myself. I grew up in a military family, living in places as diverse as Libya, Italy, and Denver, Colorado. After high school, I served six years in the United States Air Force as a systems analyst, spending much of that time in California. Following my military service, I worked in the electronics industry while continuing my education with an emphasis in mechanical and environmental engineering. I began a career in electronics and then as a test engineer with Morton Thiokol (now Northrop Grumman), where I worked on rocket and satellite propulsion systems. During those years, I also pursued studies in psychology and counseling, interests that would later become an important part of my ministry.

At the age of 39, having become a single parent, I found myself at a crossroads. Through that season, I experienced God's transforming grace in a profound way and committed my life to following Jesus. A few years later, I sensed a clear call to pastoral ministry. I resigned from my position as Supervisor of Test Operations at ATK Thiokol and entered Palmer Theological Seminary at Eastern University in Philadelphia.

While completing my Master of Divinity degree, I served for three years as an associate pastor in the United Methodist Church. After graduating in 2006, I was appointed as a senior pastor, a role I served for many years.

Throughout my pastoral ministry, I have been privileged to lead mission teams, develop new ministries, teach, preach, and walk alongside people as they discovered God's presence and purpose in their lives.

After twelve years in pastoral ministry, I felt called to deepen my work of spiritual formation. I completed a two-year training program with the Haden Institute at Mount Carmel Spiritual Centre in Niagara Falls, Ontario, and became certified in Jungian, Mystical Christian Spiritual Direction. I later served in the American Baptist Churches USA, where I was ordained, before returning to the United Methodist Church.

In addition to pastoral ministry, I am a certified Enneagram facilitator and coach and have completed clergy coaching training. I enjoy leading workshops on visioning, spiritual formation, discipleship, and the Enneagram, and I continue to teach classes that help people integrate faith into everyday life.



I am also in the process of writing a multi-volume exploration of the Gospel of John, a project that reflects my passion for Scripture, contemplative spirituality, and helping others encounter God more deeply.

My wife, Mary, is an ordained United Methodist elder, and together we have been blessed with children and grandchildren living from the East Coast of the United States to France. We also share life with our energetic 85 lb doodle, who keeps us both humble and entertained. Whenever we can, we seek out "thin places," especially along the ocean or

while hiking in the beauty of the Sonoran Desert, where God's presence often feels wonderfully close.

Be in peace,
Ash



"Go back and get it"



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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:

Ash Dotson

Associate Pastor:

Rev. Richard Jones



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Over 40 Years of Partnership



Since 1985, we have worked with Sierra Service Project, sending teams all over the Western United States for service learning opportunities. Sites are a mix of urban and rural locations, each offering unique community needs and service endeavors. St. Mark's has participated at sites in six states (Washington, Oregon, California, Arizona, Nevada, and Utah!) completing a variety of assignments; home improvements like roof repairs, painting, and accessibility upgrades to community garden maintenance and invasive species removals. Sierra Service Project trips also include lots of community outreach events like meals for unhoused neighbors, healthy lifestyle promotion, and youth development opportunities.

And youth development is something St. Mark's takes seriously!

Over the years, we've had many church members serve on SSP summer staff, participate on their Youth Advisory Counsel, and even come back as adults to chaperone youth trips! This year, Abigail Chester participated in the Staff In Training program after attending the youth trip (that's two weeks in the dirt & heat!) The lasting impacts of their work and ministry is so evident within the St. Mark's congregation and the world at large. We are grateful for this partnership and look forward to many years of continued ministry!

Spencer Taylor
Assoc. Director of Discipleship

