

# connections

## SUMMER WORSHIP

### ONLINE WORSHIP

We will continue to pre-record our services and have them available online at 8:30 am and 9:45 am each Sunday. At-risk individuals are encouraged to attend our virtual worship services. **Our new sermon series "Identity Shift" kicked off Sunday, June 7.**



### DRIVE-IN COMMUNION

#### 3<sup>RD</sup> SUNDAY EACH MONTH AT 3:00 PM

Let's break bread together and worship. Join St. Mark's the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of each month at 3:00 pm. Partners can gather safely in their cars while we worship and have packaged communion distributed (gluten-free available). Sound will be broadcast to your car radios. Our first Drive-In Communion service in May had over 350 people!



### OUTDOOR WORSHIP

#### KICKS OFF SUNDAY, JUNE 28 AT 10:00AM

We are thrilled to join together in (socially-distanced) worship this summer by hosting Outdoor Worship beginning Sunday, June 28. We will plan on using the "backyard" - the worship band will be set up outside and we'll have seating on the berm as well as a few parking lot spaces available for those with mobility issues. Based upon the needs of the congregation, this may be moved to another location on the grounds after the 28<sup>th</sup>. Visit [stmarks.org/OutdoorWorship](http://stmarks.org/OutdoorWorship) for all information.



## SUMMER IN THE PSALMS - DAILY DEVOTION

Pastor Steve has put together a great daily resource to read through all 150 Psalms from June 1<sup>st</sup> until August 31<sup>st</sup>. It's never too late to start! Reading guides are available in our RightNow Media St. Mark's Library - as well as hard copies are available at the church office. We'll have a Zoom gathering **every Tuesday at noon** to review the Psalms of the week. Contact Pastor Steve for the Zoom invite. We're excited to get started!

*"Where does one find finer words of joy than in the psalms of praise and thanksgiving?" - Martin Luther*

## Dear Partners at St. Mark's,

My love for you and our congregation, and longing to gather together again, grows more and more every week in this time of social distancing. I speak for all the staff when I say we yearn for the day we can safely and appropriately gather together in large numbers. Until that time, and in preparation for it, I want you to know how powerfully God is moving in our midst.

Let me ask you a question: Is COVID-19 and the ensuing society-wide social distancing measures an "interruption" to the way we do things as a church or a major "disruption." Do we expect things to simply go back to the way they were once this is all over or is God wanting to do something new in these times? That's a question I've been asking myself and the answer I continue to hear God whisper in my ear is that this is a major disruption - that God wants to break the church of its addiction to a one hour Sunday morning worship routine and center us once again on the mission of the other 167 hours of the week.

I've asked the same question of the recent racial tensions over the murder of George Floyd. *"God, what are you speaking to your church through this?"* And again the answer is not simply an interruption so that things "return to normal" after tensions settle down, but a disruption forcing the church to address its inherent cultural and ethnic biases. If we believe what the Bible says that God can work all things for good (Romans 8:28), then maybe God is using the compounding of these two society-disrupting events to change the church for the better. I believe this is the case for St. Mark's and I believe God is already moving in powerful ways to change how we "do church".

Let me highlight just a few of the ways God is powerfully moving at St. Mark's:

▶ I am amazed at the **FAITHFULNESS** of the financial support of so many people at St. Mark's! Your generosity is enabling us to move forward with our mission. Year to date, we are only 1% off of our projected giving. Thank you!

▶ Wow! God is bringing gems to our staff at a time when we desperately need them. I can't wait for everyone to get to know **KELLY FRAMPTON**, our new Director of Communications and Marketing (started May 27<sup>th</sup>), **BAILEY COMEGYS**, our new Middle School Coordinator (starting mid-July), and most recently, **JOEL DRYZCIMSKI**, our new Production Coordinator (starting June 22<sup>nd</sup>).

▶ We are now the **PROUD OWNERS** of the house on the corner of East Robins Road and C Avenue! This has been part of our strategic plan for years and it became a reality on June 2<sup>nd</sup>. Praise God!

▶ We're working on a way to grow **DISCIPLES** right now. I won't use this space to elaborate on it, but watch for what we call our "discipleship process" in the future.

▶ We are actively pursuing **BETTER VIDEO AND LIVE-STREAMING CAPABILITIES** for BOTH worship centers and for enhanced online distribution of uniquely St. Mark's resources. Look for more info over the summer.

▶ By God's grace we are not idling sitting by in the face of racism, but beginning conversations and ministry relationships that will move us to greater **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**. This is just beginning, but God has already created connections for us to pursue.

▶ Finally, **THE STAFF** at St. Mark's has absolutely been fantastic in their response to these difficult times. They have stepped up, and for many of them, have put in tremendous extra hours fulfilling responsibilities that weren't in their original job descriptions. Thank you!

God is doing a new thing at St. Mark's! I know this might be difficult to see during these stressful times of social distancing and racial tensions, but I can tell you with absolute assurance that God is moving mightily and we are growing stronger as a church, not just waiting for things to "get back to normal." We are a movement of Jesus followers. Jesus is on the move!

*Paul Hennings*



**KELLY** was raised in Cedar Rapids. She loves Hawkeye football and scrapbooking. She's seen Casting Crowns in concert 10 times.



**BAILEY** grew up in Des Moines and graduated college from UNI. Go Cats! Her life's dream is to open her own coffee shop.



**JOEL** grew up in Mason City. He married his wife Cassidy in 2017, and they are expecting their first child this fall. Joel loves music, art, and fried chicken.

## COVID-19 AND RETURNING TO WORSHIP AT ST. MARK'S

We know the big question is "When can we come together again and worship at St. Mark's?"

Your health and safety is our top priority. We are making plans to join together in socially-distanced worship. A special thanks to our St. Mark's COVID-19 response team and staff who have worked to make this transition back to worshipping together thoughtful and safe. They continue to daily monitor **CDC and Linn County Public Health** guidelines in order to prepare for our safe return. While this may seem like a long process, we want to thank our St. Mark's partners for their understanding and patience during this pandemic.

In the meantime, we have a special summer planned for you (see page 1).

We will continue to pre-record our services and have them available online each Sunday at 8:30 am and 9:45 am. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of each month we'll host Drive-in Communion (traditional service) at 3:00 pm. Beginning Sunday, June 28 we'll start hosting Outdoor Worship at 10:00 am on our beautiful campus. These services allow us the opportunity to gather safely and worship together. We do encourage at-risk individuals to attend our virtual worship services.

*We know Sundays at St. Mark's may look a little different in the future, but we pray that we are all still able to share God's love, welcome others into His church, and grow to become like Jesus.*

St. Mark's sent \$4,000 to **UCI (United Christians International)** to purchase food to distribute during the pandemic. Thank you to our partners for your contributions.

With the country being on lock down, there are no open air markets for people to purchase food, so UCI has been able to purchase and distribute food to many in need. There continues to be a shortage, so please be praying for our partners at UCI and for all those in Haiti.



**Pastor Paul and Executive Director Pam Schulz recorded a video on June 3<sup>rd</sup> outlining our plans to return to worship. It is available on our Youtube channel, Facebook page, and website.**

**For more information and our full Return to Work and Worship document, please visit our website and click on the COVID-19 Information tab at the top of the webpage.**



## FAMILY MINISTRY

The end of the 2019-2020 ministry year certainly didn't end how we had planned! We did make the best of it by continuing to meet over Zoom weekly, held outdoor Confirmation services and celebrated our graduating seniors.

### MIDDLE SCHOOL

We are blessed to welcome Bailey Comegys to our team as our new **Middle School Coordinator**. She joins us in mid-July. We are also excited to announce some changes to middle and high school ministry for our 2020-2021 year. Next year middle school will look a little different: 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> grade will be grouped together. We will be following the lead of schools and meeting the developmental and learning needs of middle school students. The 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> grade students will work on Bible basics, deepening their Spiritual Habits, growing in community, disciple making, and connecting their faith and their life. 7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> graders will continue to work through confirmation. Confirmation will run through the first quarter of their 9<sup>th</sup> grade year with Confirmation happening in October close to Reformation Sunday. We are very excited for this new format.

### HIGH SCHOOL

High school will be changing the day and time that we meet. High school will meet on Sunday afternoons from 4:30-6:30 pm. This will allow us to have more time together. It will also allow for high schools students to volunteer to be mentors on Wednesday nights.

### YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Children's, middle, and high school all need leaders to come alongside our kids. You just need to have a heart for Jesus and enjoy working with kids. Contact **Alice Murray, Director of Family Ministry, at [amurray@faith-life.org](mailto:amurray@faith-life.org)** to volunteer!



*Zoom meetings - we continued to have great conversations with our students.*

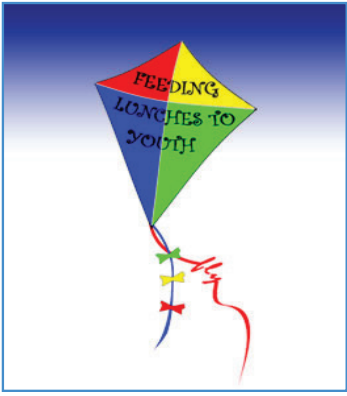


*Confirmation Service - Saturday, June 6*



*Confirmation Service - Saturday, June 6*

## SERVE THIS SUMMER WITH FLY



**FEEDING LUNCHES TO YOUTH (FLY)** serves sack lunches Monday through Friday during the summer months. The lunches are prepared and delivered each day out of the First United Methodist Church in Marion by local church volunteers. FLY aims to spread the message of Jesus Christ and the joy of providing and giving to children.

St. Mark's will be volunteering the third week of each month this summer. There is a greater need than ever for these meals, so we hope you'll sign up and help with prep or delivery of these meals. Sign-up for lunch prep or lunch deliveries on our website under the "Serve" tab. If you have questions, please contact **Marlys Fruhling, Director of Missions and Outreach, at [mfruhling@faith-life.org](mailto:mfruhling@faith-life.org)**.

## THANK YOU!

A big thank you to St. Mark's partners for stepping up and donating to organizations who are on the frontlines helping those in need. Our church family has helped in the following ways during the last couple months by donating:

**MISSION OF HOPE:** 115 pounds of ground meat and continued to provide a monthly meal

**CHURCHES OF MARION FOOD PANTRY:** needed items

**WILLIS DADY:** Personal care items, blankets, rain ponchos, tents, paper towels, etc.

**MARION SENIOR LIVING:** 10 gift bags to "share a smile with seniors" who have had to stay inside

**MISSISSIPPI VALLEY BLOOD CENTER:** Blood donations - there has been a great need these past few months

We hope you'll consider helping with **FLY** during the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of each month this summer. Help us make sure all the children in the Marion area have lunch throughout the summer! Contact **Marlys Fruhling, Director of Missions and Outreach, at [mfruhling@faith-life.org](mailto:mfruhling@faith-life.org)**. if you have questions or want to volunteer.



**FIND MORE SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES AT:**

**[stmarkscr.org/serve](http://stmarkscr.org/serve)**

## RIGHTNOW MEDIA

**rightnow** MEDIA

RightNow Media is the world's largest library of on-demand Bible study videos and resources. Be sure to activate your account, it is free for all St. Mark's partners. Questions? Need a new invitation? **Email Sarah Bartlett, Director of FaithLife Groups at [sbartlett@faith-life.org](mailto:sbartlett@faith-life.org)**.



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#### Church office hours:

Monday - Thursday: 8:30 am - 4:30 pm  
Friday: 8:30 am - 12:30 pm

Phone: 319-447-0100  
Fax: 319-447-0600  
stmarkscr.org

#### Summer Sunday Worship:

Online - Facebook and Youtube

8:30 am | **Traditional:** the majesty of liturgy, pipe organ, & choral music  
9:45 am | **Contemporary:** joyful contemporary worship in a casual setting

#### Summer Sunday Worship:

In-Person

3:00 pm on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of each month  
**Traditional:** Drive-In Communion  
10:00 am every Sunday beginning June 28  
**Contemporary:** Outdoor Worship

## SUMMER SERMON SERIES



*connect faith + life*

### i-den-ti-ty cri-sis - noun

- a period of uncertainty and confusion in which a person's sense of identity becomes insecure, typically due to a change in their expected aims or role in society.

### i-den-ti-ty shi-ft - sermon series

- messages reminding you of your true identity in Christ specifically formatted to uplift and inspire you this summer at St. Mark's.

Our Summer Sermon Series "Identity Shift" kicked off Sunday, June 6. We've chosen some important verses that speak to our true identity, to uplift you and remind you of your value and calling in Christ. Join us for this powerful series each Sunday!