



# connections

## DERECHO RECOVERY

It's been over a week since the historic derecho struck the Cedar Rapids and Marion areas on August 10. We truly are living in "unprecedented times". We hope and pray that you and your families are alright. Our church building is in good condition and we regained power less than week after the storm. Praise God!

Since August 10, we have been in relief and recovery mode and we have seen AMAZING things happen on our street, in our town, and in our state. In a matter of days, we had small teams formed to do yard work and debris removal. A semi-truck provided by Linn County Emergency Management Agency supplying ice, water, and food was placed in our parking lot for four days. The first wave of team members from Eight Days of Hope arrived in less than three days to begin recovery. Our St. Mark's partners have stepped up for any volunteer or donation needs and continue to bless those around them with their willingness to serve.

## EIGHT DAYS OF HOPE

An incredible team of volunteers and crew is set up in our building and working full days in our community. They will serve here until September 5 (they've extended their stay!) You can volunteer for a full-day shift on their website, **[eightdaysofhope.com](http://eightdaysofhope.com)** **NOTE:** same-day registration is not allowed, you will need to sign up in advance for a shift as the needs change daily.

## VOLUNTEER ON A ST. MARK'S TEAM

If you can **GIVE** help, email **[communications@faith-life.org](mailto:communications@faith-life.org)** with your name, contact information, availability in the week, and any special skills. This is for yard work and debris removal. Middle schoolers and high schoolers can help us on small teams as well (with adult supervision). We will have waivers that need to be signed. Our staff is creating teams and schedules on a daily basis.

## DONATIONS AND OTHER VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

The best way to stay up-to-date with these needs is to check our Facebook page and website. You can also reach a staff member by emailing **[communications@faith-life.org](mailto:communications@faith-life.org)**. To receive text message alerts and reminders, text **STMARKSCR to 94-000**.



## DERECHO FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE OPPORTUNITIES

Our office has received many questions about how to support, donate, and give to others after the derecho. Thank you for living our mission of connecting faith + life in our community during this difficult time.

### THRIVENT

If you are a Thrivent member, we encourage you to apply for a **THRIVENT ACTION TEAM!** These funds (up to \$250) can be used to purchase food or hygiene products for others or donated directly to an organization of your choice. Contact your Thrivent representative for more information and to get started.

### EIGHT DAYS OF HOPE

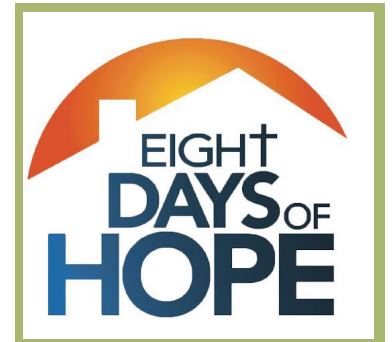
If you are looking for an organization to donate to for derecho relief, we encourage you to donate to Eight Days of Hope. We are a proud supporter of their work and mission and have enjoyed having their volunteers and staff on-site since last week. You can donate directly online at [eightsdaysofhope.com](https://eightsdaysofhope.com).

**NOTE:** With their upcoming Cedar Rapids satellite warehouse location, Eight Days of Hope has a donor matching campaign happening NOW through the end of August. Learn more on their website and mark your calendar for October 17 to attend the Warehouse Grand Opening!

**To donate directly to Cedar Rapids recovery efforts:** mark "Cedar Rapids Rapid Recovery" in the comments section.

Either way you choose to support Eight Days of Hope is greatly appreciated!

Eight Days of Hope has also received a service grant for \$10,000 from the LDA Fund (Lutheran Disaster Assistance) through the LCMC. Praise God!



## DAMAGE AT ST. MARK'S

Our church building did sustain some damage - most notably our outdoor cross was completely uprooted and torn off from the base. Additionally we had roof damage and of course damage to the trees and grounds. We had about ten people in our building when the storm hit and are thankful no one was injured!

We have received a Disaster Assistance Grant provided by the LDA Fund through the LCMC. Pam Schulz, our Executive Director, has been in contact with our insurance regarding coverage, repairs, etc.





DISRUPTION. Have you had enough of that in 2020? I believe most people's sentiment would be a resounding "YES!" From COVID-19 to racial injustice to job losses to a hurricane in Iowa, can we be done yet?

Purposefully, **"Disruption"** is the title of our next sermon series starting September 13<sup>th</sup>. We began formulating it back in July - but we had no idea how disrupted our lives would truly become on Monday, August 10<sup>th</sup>. We were simply thinking of all the ways 2020 had been so different and difficult, and then a derecho hit. Our lives, the lives of our neighbors, and the city we love will never be the same.

This series asks a difficult question: does God use disruptions to cause spiritual growth in our lives? Now before you answer that consider the moments in your life when God was "most real," the times when everything stopped and God was there, the episodes of spiritual drought when all of a sudden it was like a spiritual faucet opened and overflowed in your life. Were those not moments of great disruption for you: not only spiritually, but emotionally, intellectually, and in many cases physically?

If you take a look at scripture, I believe you'll find the greatest moments of growth come in the greatest moments of disruption. If you take a look at world history and the growth of the Christian church, I believe you'll find periods of enormous church expansion



during times of societal disruption. If we look at the disruption in our city today, we'll see opportunities for growth like we've never experienced.

I am reminded of Isaiah 43:19 - *"See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland."* Insert the words "downed trees" and "downed power lines" for wilderness and wasteland. Now what does the passage say about what God is doing? Could it be that God is taking what looked like a wilderness and wasteland after August 10<sup>th</sup> and doing a new thing in our city?

How is God disrupting you right now? However God might be disrupting your life, don't back away from the disruption - embrace the growth God desires for your life and see a new thing happen like never before!

*Paul Hennings*

## WORSHIP TOGETHER

Emily Myers, Director of Worship & Creative Arts

As summer begins to wind down, we want to send a **BIG THANK YOU** to our pastoral staff and worship and production/tech teams for their continued service and ability to prepare and offer weekly worship opportunities. Our Victory Board for the summer has been **Outdoor Worship!** No other church in our area has offered a weekly outdoor service and we're thrilled and inspired each week. As of mid-August, we now offer four (sometimes five) worship opportunities on Sundays. However you worship, we're glad you're spending time with God and your family! Moving forward into **September**, we will continue with our current schedule:

**8:30 AND 9:45 AM** Online services

**8:30 AM** Traditional service in Faith

**10:00 AM** Outdoor Worship



Our online recorded services are reaching an average of 1000 individuals each week.



We hosted four monthly Drive-In Communion services from May- August.



Our indoor traditional service averages 40 in attendance.



Outdoor Worship continues to bring about 180 worshippers together each week.

In **Acts 1:8** Jesus calls us to be his witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth. St. Mark's has opportunities for you to share the story and love of Jesus Christ here in our community and around the world. We have local opportunities with our prison ministry, our FaithWorks team, and Eight Days of Hope. Our partnership with UCI in Haiti and support of our many missionaries around the world give us the opportunity to share the gospel to the ends of the earth. Please check out all of our outreach opportunities and see where God is calling you to join us in sharing the Good News! Learn more at [stmarkscr.org/serve](http://stmarkscr.org/serve).

## LOCAL

## WORLD

### FAITH WORKS

- Beautiful Day
- FLY: Feeding Lunches to Youth
- Mission of Hope: monthly meal
- Salvation Army bell ringing
- Sleep in Heavenly Peace
- Soup-er Saturday: canned goods drive
- Wellington Heights partnership

### PRISON MINISTRY

- Anamosa Penitentiary weekly studies
- Angel Tree/ Outrageous Justice
- Letter writing
- Re-entry/ reintegration team
- Returning citizen housing

### EIGHT DAYS OF HOPE

- Cedar Rapids (Midwest)
- Eight Days of Hope trips: rebuilding
- Safe house

### HAITI: UCI PARTNER-SHIP

#### *United Christians International*

- Annual trips
- Christmas gifts for sponsor children
- Entrepreneurial ideas
- UCI child sponsorships
- University scholarships

### MISSIONARIES

- Alex & Trish Ludvick: MAF
- Ethiopia
- \*Gabe Smith: YWAM
- JeanJean & Kristie Mompremier: UCI
- \*Kyle & Katie Nelson: Navigators
- Lou & Deb Aisenbrey: Senegal
- \*Mark & Maki Wolter: Japan
- \*Scott & Paige Heemstra: Navigators

\* children of St. Mark's partners or originally from St. Mark's!

Thank you to everyone who volunteered with **FLY** this summer. The need was incredibly great the last three months. Thank you for your willingness to serve!



## Beautiful Day

**SEPTEMBER 26:** Save the date for Beautiful Day 2020 - where we make an impact in our community. We'll be doing outdoor projects this year to help our ministry partners and beautify neighborhoods.

We are so very excited to get back to Wednesday night ministry! We have spent the summer coming up with plans on how to safely return. At one point we had 10 options on the table. After much prayer, discussion, and more prayer we have decided on a plan to move forward. We realize that it will probably change throughout the year depending on COVID (or a derecho!)

Please let us know if you have any questions, ideas, or concerns. We appreciate your prayers and support as we make these decisions.

### THE PLAN FOR WEDNESDAY EVENINGS:

We will meet from **6:00 - 7:30 PM**. At this time, only youth ministry will be taking place, there are no other planned events. We are taking over the entire church building!

**GROUP A:** 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> graders and 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> graders begin on Wednesday, September 9<sup>th</sup>.

**GROUP B:** 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> graders and 7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> graders begin on Wednesday, September 16<sup>th</sup>.

On the weeks, your group is not at church there will be activities virtually within small groups and families for middle school students.

### SAFETY PROCEDURES:

Masks will be required while in the church building. We will be able to remove them while we are eating and in small groups once we are to our spaces and socially distant.

A virtual option will be available if families are not comfortable returning at this time or if you are in quarantine.

### HIGH SCHOOL:

As was planned earlier, **THE EDGE**, our high school ministry, will meet on Sundays from 4:30-6:30 PM. We will have time for worship, games, large group messages, and small group time.

*Please know we are also praying for you as you make plans for how your children will participate in school this year and for all the teachers, administration, and staff in schools trying their very best to keep everyone safe.*



Bailey and Alice outline Wednesday night plans. Watch the video at [stmarkscr.org/familyministry](https://stmarkscr.org/familyministry)

*Note:*

Our first two weeks we will **ALL** be virtual!

## Summer Recap

110

activity bags sent to families in June

30

average attendance at Fan The Flame on Wednesday nights

20

families participated in online VBS

439

postcards sent to students in August

## Volunteers Needed

We are looking for volunteers in all areas for our Wednesday night ministry! We need help with food preparation, hospitality, small group leaders, prayer warriors, and clean-up help to name a few. We ask that you prayerfully consider how you can help. Reach out to Alice with questions or interest!



## MICRO MDIV STUDENTS

You've likely noticed these masked folks a lot lately. They've been preaching on Sunday mornings, taking over Pastor Paul's video updates, and serving around our church all summer. Who are they?! They are our **MICRO MDIV STUDENTS**, Phyllis, Jason, John, Michele, and Alice.

What **is** Micro MDiv? This online course (through the Master's Institute) is an 18-month leadership program focused on increasing the competency, character and capacity of participants to optimize their calling in God's kingdom. At the end of their program, they will graduate with their Master's in Divinity certification!

Our MDiv students (who are all St. Mark's partners) meet weekly with Pastor Paul to study, review, reflect, and grow in their faith and leadership skills. We are so blessed to see them develop and grow into leaders in our congregation!



### PHYLLIS HUBLER

- Retired healthcare worker
- Involved in St. Mark's prison ministry
- Drummer in high school

### JASON CHRISTENSEN

- Assistant Worship leader and full-time electrical engineer
- Traveled the country playing music for a living for almost 15 years
- Obsessed with Christmas

### ALICE MURRAY

- Director of Family Ministry
- Has her black belt in taekwondo
- Loves being outside

### JOHN MOSINSKI

- Favorite color is purple
- Has visited every MLB stadium
- Visited all 50 states before he turned 50

### MICHELE JONES

- Small business owner
- Loves mission trips to Haiti
- Her family has farmed since the 1870s

This group has fun together!

Make sure to watch their **PASTOR PAUL VIDEO TAKEOVER** online at: [stmarkscr.org/special-videos](http://stmarkscr.org/special-videos)



## THANK YOU JANE LINDELL!

Our staff gathered for a retirement luncheon for Jane Lindell on August 5. Jane recently retired from the St. Mark's staff. She has served in a multitude of roles since beginning on staff in 2006, but served most recently as the Church Administrator. You'll still see her around the church office some as she wraps up projects and passes off her wealth of knowledge to others! Jane plans to spend more time in her sewing room now that she's retired.



*Air hugs for Jane!*

Connect in community and grow in your spiritual faith by joining a FaithLife group (what we call small groups!) It's a great way to get connected at St. Mark's!

**WHAT'S SO SPECIAL ABOUT BEING IN A FAITHLIFE GROUP?** In short, every one of us is messed up and in need of a Savior and a group of friends to hold on to when the storms of life toss us around. Your FaithLife group is that group of friends!

### SMALL GROUPS

- Create community within the larger church by helping our partners connect with each other
- Hold us accountable to each other; our commitments, our beliefs, and our faith
- Are a part of God's plan for His church (read Acts!)

We encourage you to join a FaithLife group! Please contact **Sarah Bartlett** at [sbartlett@faith-life.org](mailto:sbartlett@faith-life.org) to get involved.

“

*Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms.”*

*1 Peter 4: 8-10*

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS

# August

### 8/23: SIGN-UP CELEBRATION

Join us at our Sign-Up Celebration where you'll have the opportunity to sign-up for Alpha, Family Ministries, and FaithLife Groups!

### 8/30: BACKPACK BLESSING - ALL SERVICES

All students, teachers, and educators are encouraged to bring your backpacks to be blessed for the new school year.

### 8/30: WELCOME TO ST. MARK'S CLASS AT 11:30 AM

Looking to take the next step with St. Mark's? Please join us for the opportunity to learn more about our church, missions, values, and how to connect. A box lunch will be included.

# September



### 9/13: ALPHA COURSE BEGINS AT 11:00 AM

Got questions? Try **Alpha**! Alpha is an opportunity to ask questions and explore the Christian faith in a relaxed setting. Our next 12-week session will begin on Sunday, September 13 with both in-person and online meeting options.

### 9/26: BEAUTIFUL DAY

We'll be doing outdoor projects this year to help our ministry partners and beautify neighborhoods.



8300 C Ave. NE  
Marion, IA 52302

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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  
Text Alerts: Text **STMARKSCR** to **94-000**  
Fax: 319-447-0600  
stmarkscr.org

#### 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

##### In-Person

8:30 AM | **Traditional:** the majesty of liturgy,  
pipe organ, & choral music

10:00 AM | **Contemporary:** Outdoor Worship

## CHURCH COUNCIL



The **ST. MARK'S NOMINATING COMMITTEE** will begin meeting this month to find partners to recommend for two church council positions. As required by our bylaws, we are asking partners to submit names to the committee for consideration. Prior to submitting a partner's name, please verify that the partner is open to serving a three-year term on Church Council. Council positions are filled to ensure that demographic, service, and ministry involvement areas are represented.

Nominations will be brought to the partners for approval at the Annual Meeting in January 2021.

Names should be submitted to **Lois Mulbrook, Chair of the Committee**, by August 28.