

connections

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER
NOVEMBER 2021

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UPCOMING IMPORTANT DATES

- 11/19** MAF movie screening
- 11/21** First Communion, Organ Concert

- 12/4** Salvation Army Bell Ringing
- 12/5** Christmas in Faith Concert
- 12/5** GriefShare course begins
- 12/7** Women's Christmas Dinner
- 12/11** Salvation Army Bell Ringing
- 12/12** Christmas Cantata
- 12/16** Living Story
- 12/17** Living Story
- 12/18** Living Story
- 12/24** Christmas Eve services

- 1/23** Council Forum
- 1/26** Council Forum
- 2/6** Annual Celebration

**WORSHIP
WITH US**

Dear Partners at St. Mark's,
 Ok. This might sound a little pious or super-spiritual, but please know that I'm telling you this as authentically as I can from my most recent experience with it. Here goes.
I am so thankful for the Word of God.

All right. I know what you're thinking: "It's the month of November now, Halloween's over, so we're supposed to think about something we're thankful for and Pastor Paul is thankful for God's Word. How trite. Of course he's thankful for it! It's his job!"

Now, that's completely true and if you're thinking that, I certainly don't take offense. But I do want you to hear me out for why I am thankful at this particular season in my life.

Recently I've been reading through Peter's letters (1 and 2 Peter toward the end of your Bible) and I have been simply amazed by his clarity of conviction, purpose and gospel message. To be honest, I am a Paul guy - meaning I probably read through the Apostle Paul's letters twice as much as Peter's. I'm finding that might be a mistake. While Paul certainly brings a theological depth which I enjoy as a Lutheran, Peter's application to our time is strikingly helpful.

Take Peter's words from 1 Peter 1:13, *"Therefore, with minds that are alert and fully sober, set your hope on the grace to be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed at his coming."*

Peter lived in a time of distractions. The world was constantly changing. To hope in one thing, one god, one person was fleeting. It's certainly the same in our world today. With distractions, rapid change and so much vying for our attention, it's easy to lose hope or hope in things that are ultimately hopeless. But what does Peter say? Set your hope on the grace of Jesus, the victory that he brings to you! When all of life seems out of control, focus on his grace - that's where you find real hope! That's a Word I need to hear daily; how about you?

Or take Peter's words from 1 Peter 4:12-13, *"Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed."*

Are you surprised when you are attacked by the enemy? Or when friends betray you? Or when life seems so hard? I feel like that is our natural response to our broken world, followed by a close second: complaining about it. But Peter gives us good instruction. First, wipe the dumbfounded look off your face when life goes wrong. It's gonna go wrong; stop being so surprised. He's not asking you to accept our broken world, instead, he's encouraging you to recognize it for what it is, which ultimately allows you to make a difference in it. And how do you do that? By doing the second thing Peter mentions: rejoicing! Rejoicing might be one of the clearest ways to defeat the enemy. When you find joy in the Lord and proclaim it to everyone around you, you neutralize the "fiery ordeal." Not that it's not there any more, it's just that it has lost its power over you. That's a Word I need to hear daily; how about you?

Finally, read Peter's words from 2 Peter 1:3, *"His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness."*

Did you read those words? Everything we need. 'Tis the season of shopping when we need everything. Yet God has given us everything already. Obviously Peter is not talking about the physical essentials to sustain life, but he's instead talking about the spiritual truth of what has been given us: everything from God's grace to our faith lived out in godly living to being called in the first place. Everything! That's a Word I need to hear daily; how about you?

Can I make a suggestion real quick? Find your Bible sometime this week or open your Bible app on your phone and look up 1 and 2 Peter. Read them. Take your time with them. I don't think you will be disappointed. You might even want to read more once you're done. It's kind of like all that Halloween candy sitting around your house. All wrapped up it just looks pretty, but opened up and devoured, it's hard to stop with just one piece!

Blessings as you devour the Word of God,

GIVING UPDATE • JANUARY - OCTOBER 2021

Bible-based giving isn't about guilt or pressure. It's about discovering the joy of cheerful generosity in response to God's amazing grace. All we have is a gift from God, and we're created to give, not just consume. Your generosity supports not only the work we do at St. Mark's, but dozens of partner ministries in our city and around the globe.

This summary graph to the right shows our giving through October 31, 2021.



STAFF TRANSITIONS

I'm thankful to God for over 19 years of being part of the St. Mark's family and for 13 years serving on staff. Many wonderful memories have been made, special relationships built and Holy Spirit moments shared. I have enjoyed serving with you in many different areas: Alpha, Prison Ministry, Hospitality, Crossings Café, New Partners' Class, Celebration Singers, Choir, Haiti Trips, Beautiful Days, Eight Days of Hope trips, and many mission events. What a joy it has been seeing God at work through you! You have blessed my life in so many ways!

It is now time for me to move on, find a new church home, and follow wherever God is leading. As Paul says to the Philippians, I say to you, "Every time I think of you, I give thanks to my God. Whenever I pray, I make all of my requests for you with joy, for you have been my partners in spreading the Good News about Christ." May God bless each of you as you continue to spread the Good News!

Here is my new email address in case you need to reach me:
fruhlingmarlys@gmail.com

Marlys Fruhling

We thank Marlys for her many years of love and service to St. Mark's! Marlys has requested that we don't host a recognition event for her. If you would like to send a card to Marlys, they can be brought to our office and we will forward them her way.



Lisa Pritchard

STEWARDSHIP DIRECTOR

At first glance, St. Mark's vision of "Made for More" appears to play into society's insatiable need for bigger, better stuff. The latest and greatest. But as we consider Pastor Paul's challenge from the sermon series of the past several weeks, "How Big Is Your God?" it becomes apparent how believers are called to respond. It's not about more consumerism, but God's yearning love for us and how we respond to it.

Based on the Biblical truths of God's expectations for our financial resources, the capital campaign will provide the opportunity for St. Mark's partners to respond to God's blessings in our lives in like measure. In doing so, we will eradicate the existing \$3.7 million debt that has prevented us from spreading our wings to spread the gospel beyond our walls. The impact of a successful capital campaign will also see site improvement with the creation of St. Mark's Community Park and the launch of satellite churches in Cedar Rapids.

How big is your God? Bigger than we can imagine.

My family and I have called St. Mark's our church home for 18 years. I have been involved in drama ministry, youth missions, small groups and, yes, previous capital campaign leadership teams. Professionally, I have served in marketing/public relations and development capacities for KCRG-TV9, Four Oaks, and other non-profit organizations. I am active in Daybreak Rotary and just completed a term on the Theatre Cedar Rapids Board of Directors. My previous positions...and my heart have prepared me for this role of Stewardship Director. I'm excited to see what God has in store for St. Mark's!

November is Missions Month! Each year we focus our attention on the different areas we can plug in and serve in our community and around the world.

Missions and outreach are for everyone, everywhere! This includes our community impact, our calling, church planting, and global reach.

PLEASE PRAY FOR HAITI

The Short Term Missions Team asks you to keep Haiti in your daily prayers. There continues to be gang violence, food scarcity, gasoline price gouging, and other difficulties throughout Haiti. Our team will continue to monitor the situation for future trips. If you would like to uplift a child (either elementary or university) at UCI by sending them to school in this difficult time, please contact Pastoral Intern Michele Jones at mjones@faith-life.org.

Recently Kristie Mompremier (one of our St. Mark's supported missionaries) wrote the following:
Thank you so much for your prayers! We have a lot that we would love for the church to pray for! Please pray for the safe return of the kidnapped missionaries. It has been so many days. My heart aches for them.

There are roadblocks everywhere—even Pignon and Hinche which are our closest towns. We went to get food for the week for the school lunch program and the university cafeteria and were only able to buy 5 bags of rice. We buy gas for \$15-\$20 USD/ gallon and we are only allowed to buy 10 gallons at a time! Building supplies are being stopped at the roadblocks or not transported, at all, because of the fear that gangs will hijack them. It is really a difficult situation. Our building of houses for the earthquake victims is sooooo slow due to these problems. It is going forward, praise God! Keep trusting God's timing even though we want to go faster.

There are not any significant movements toward re-establishment of our elected government. Without that, gang violence goes unchecked.

We are one of two schools in a large area that is still open. We have been told to close school to protest the government, but we want to not punish the kids! We will remain open as long as possible even though some teachers are unable to come due to road blocks. Some principals and teachers are walking hours a week to get to teach.

There has been a COVID-19 outbreak at our university. Praise God that no one has had to be hospitalized.



MAF MOVIE "ENDS OF THE EARTH" NOVEMBER 19 AT 7:00 PM

Imagine flying over breathtaking landscapes only to land on an airstrip hand-dug by local villagers on a remote mountain deep in the jungle. It sounds like an adventure movie, but it's real life for the pilots of Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF).

The new, faith-based documentary from Change Media and MAF, *ENDS OF THE EARTH*, brings viewers face-to-face with hard-to-reach villages, awe-inspiring landscapes, and the incredible people who are willing to risk it all for the sake of sharing Christ's love.

Watch *ENDS OF THE EARTH* here at St. Mark's on November 19, 2021 at 7:00 pm! Tickets cost \$11 each. Please purchase your tickets ahead of time at stmarkscr.org/missionaries



ALEX LUDVICK, MAF PILOT

We are THRILLED to have St. Mark's supported missionary and MAF pilot Alex Ludvick here at St. Mark's for the movie screening on November 19. Plus, he'll be speaking about his experiences as an MAF pilot at both of our services on Sunday, November 21!

We are also planning a potluck lunch with the Ludvick family on Sunday, November 21! Join us in Cafe Ablaze (lower level) around 11:30 am. Meat and drinks will be provided and everyone should bring a side dish or dessert to share.

November 2021

Sunday Services each week


8:30 am traditional in Faith Worship Center and 10:00 am modern in Life Worship Center | watch live at stmarkscr.org

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7 GOING Missional sermon series begins	8	9	10	11 VETERANS DAY! Thank you for your service!	12 Connections mail date	13
14 Giving Tree begins (pick a tag the next three Sundays!)	15	16	17	18	19 "Ends of the Earth" movie at 7:00 pm in Life Worship Center	20
Learn more at stmarkscr.org/christmas				Buy tickets at stmarkscr.org/missionaries		
21 Organ Concert at 2:00 pm in Faith Worship Center	22	23	24 Thanksgiving Eve service at 7:00 pm at Mt. Zion Baptist (masks & social distancing required)	25 Happy Thanksgiving! Church office closed.	26	27
28 Last day to purchase tickets (\$15) for the Women's Christmas Dinner on 12/7	29	30				

December 2021

Sunday Services each week

8:30 am traditional in Faith Worship Center and 10:00 am modern in Life Worship Center | watch live at stmarkscr.org

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1	2	3	4
	GIVING TREE GIFTS DUE TO FRONT OFFICE				Welcome Class at 6:00 pm Register at stmarkscr.org/events	Bell Ringing One-hour shifts from 10:00 am -8:00 pm at Marion & Collins Road HyVees
5 Christmas in Faith Concert at 3:00 pm GriefShare 13-week course begins at 3:00 pm	6 Register at stmarkscr.org/events	7 Women's Christmas Dinner at 5:30 pm	8	9	10	11 Register to ring: stmarkscr.org/christmas 
12 Christmas Cantata at 8:30 am traditional service	13	14	15	16-17 The Living Story 5:00-7:00 pm each night stmarkscr.org/livingstory		18
19	20	21	22	23	24 Christmas Eve Services MODERN 3:00, 4:00, 5:00 pm TRADITIONAL 3:30, 4:30, 5:30 pm 11:00 pm with communion	25
26	27 Church office closed.	28	29	30	31	1 <i>January</i>
2	3 HAPPY NEW YEAR! Church office closed.			2022 DATES TO KNOW! 1/16 New Alpha 12-week session begins 1/23 Council Forum 1/26 Council Forum 2/6 Annual Celebration		

CELEBRATING CHRISTMAS AT ST. MARK'S

We look forward to celebrating the Savior's birth with you and your family! Our sermon series beginning November 28 is called "Here as in Heaven." It is based off a song of the same name by Elevation Worship. Our website stmarkscr.org/christmas will stay updated with all dates and details.

DECEMBER 5 • CHRISTMAS IN FAITH CONCERT

Join us for a free holiday concert featuring the OPUS 695 organ with vocalists and instruments. Reception to follow.

DECEMBER 7 • WOMEN'S CHRISTMAS DINNER

The Women's Christmas Dinner is an annual St. Mark's tradition complete with a catered meal, entertainment, fair-trade gifts for sale, door prizes, and more. Women of all ages from our congregation are invited to join us.

Tickets are \$15 each and are available to purchase online at stmarkscr.org/christmas OR in-person each Sunday in November (November 7, 14, 21, 28) in The Connections Cafe meeting area. Tickets must be purchased no later than November 28.

DECEMBER 12 • CHRISTMAS CANTATA

"Holy Light" is a complete worship service containing scripture readings, meditations by Susan Palo Cherwien, and twelve carols. Our Chancel Choir and community musicians are excited to share this beautiful service with you at our 8:30 am traditional service.

GIVING TREE

Our display and sign up with gift tags will be in The Connections Cafe on November 14, 21, and 28. We have over 400 potential gifts this year to help those in our community! This year gifts MUST be returned to the church office Monday, November 29 through Friday, December 3. Thank you for blessing others this season!

SALVATION ARMY BELL RINGING

Help us spread Christmas cheer this December by volunteering to ring the Salvation Army bells! We have one hour shifts available on December 4 and 11 at the Marion and Collins Road HyVee stores. Register to ring at stmarkscr.org/christmas

POINSETTIAS

We invite you to purchase either a real plant to help decorate the worship centers or a virtual plant with the purchase price (\$12/each) to support The Churches of Marion Food Pantry. Whether real or virtual, your dedication will be acknowledged. Order in-person in The Connections Cafe or at stmarkscr.org/christmas

Christmas Eve Services

DECEMBER 24

Join us for a hope-filled message and beloved Christmas music. Our services this year will be 30 minutes long with a focus on faith and time with family.

On-Site Service Times

3:00, 4:00, 5:00 pm

Modern Worship in Life Worship Center

3:30, 4:30, 5:30 pm

Traditional Worship in Faith Worship Center

11:00 pm

Traditional Candlelight Service with

Communion in Faith Worship Center

Online Service

We are once again putting together an online service featuring music from both traditional and modern worship. Our "**Christmas Eve Spectacular**" will be available on Christmas Eve morning.

The Living Story



DECEMBER 16-18

The Living Story is back! Last year, our drive-through live nativity brought 1,008 cars through our parking lot to hear the Christmas story. **We need your help** to make this possible! We hope you can volunteer for a shift (or two) at The Living Story. We have split each night into two shifts with a 1.5 hour time commitment (one hour outside in your position). Learn more and volunteer at stmarkscr.org/livingstory

PATH TO PARTNERSHIP

You may have noticed some new faces around St. Mark's (especially now that we're mask optional!)

Please join us in welcoming these individuals!



Deb Charlier



*Neal, Andrea, Ava,
and Leah Hutchinson*



Jan Merta

Are you or someone you know ready to become a partner with us in ministry? After attending a Welcome to St. Mark's class (held quarterly), there are three options to becoming a partner at St. Mark's. Questions? Please contact **Sarah Bartlett, Director of FaithLife Ministries** at sbartlett@faith-life.org to get connected.



Our next Alpha course begins in January 2022!



WELCOME TO ST. MARK'S CLASS

St. Mark's hosts a Welcome Class each quarter. This class is an opportunity to meet staff members, learn more about our church, missions, values, how to use your strengths to connect in our congregation, and tour our building.

There is no pressure to join following this class, but it will give you an idea of St. Mark's mission and vision and help you decide if our church is a good fit for you. If you or someone you know is interested in learning more about St. Mark's, this is your next step! Register for our next class on December 2 at stmarkscr.org/events

Upcoming Welcome to St. Mark's Classes

Thursday, December 2, 2021 from 6:00-7:30 pm

Thursday, March 3, 2022 from 6:00-7:30 pm

Sunday, May 15, 2022 from 11:30 am-1:00 pm

Thursday, September 29, 2022 from 6:00-7:30 pm

Thursday, December 1, 2022 from 6:00-7:30 pm

Questions? Contact Sarah Bartlett, Director of FaithLife Ministries at sbartlett@faith-life.org

WE LOVE OUR STUDENTS!

From birth to high school graduation, our Family Ministry team works to partner with and equip families to connect faith + life. As of this printing, we have 275 students registered for our Wednesday and Sunday programs!

Our Family Ministry core values are always on our minds as we serve our students:

Christ-Centered

It's all about Jesus all the time! We want to know Him in all things we do and find opportunities to make Him known. He is the foundation for all things we do - prayer, scripture, and teaching every single week!

Purpose-Driven

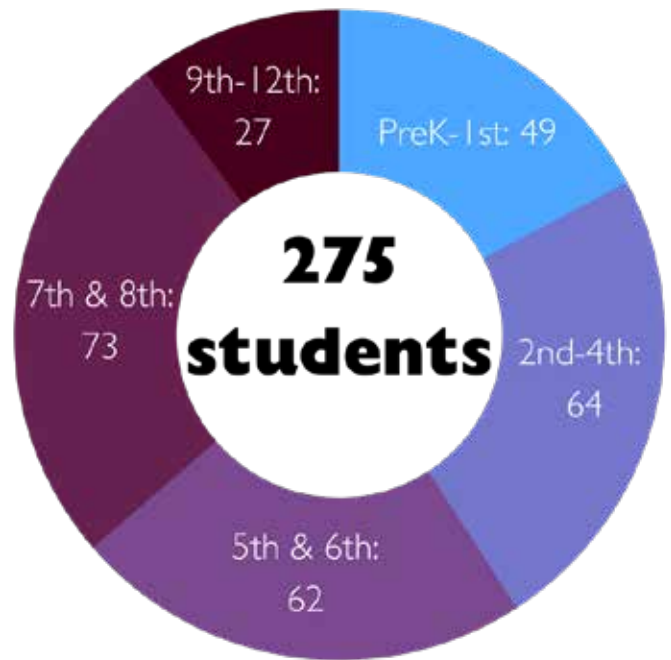
Jesus has the power to change lives for the better. When we know that life-changing power, we know God's purpose of equipping and calling us.

Church-Focused

We should focus on building relationships with others fed by our living relationship with Jesus. Having deeply-rooted friendships within our church community will help us to build friendships outside of church.

Community-Building

We serve the people of God by making disciples. We're more than just a youth group! Instead of looking at ourselves, we want to be outward facing to those around us.



OUR TEAM

- Lynne: Administrative Assistant
- Alice: Dir. of Family Ministry, Children's and High School Ministries
- Sam: Early Childhood
- Bailey: Middle School



OCTOBER 30, 2021: CONFIRMATION

We had the honor to watch 37 of our 9th graders affirm their faith on Confirmation Day. It was a beautiful day for our families. Confirmation is a time-honored rite of passage in the Lutheran tradition - and while some may see confirmation like the finish line, it's really more the starting gate to a journey with Jesus!

SUMMER 2022: PUERTO RICO MISSION TRIP

This summer high school students are heading out on a mission trip to Puerto Rico with Praying Pelican Missions! Mark your calendars - our group will be in Puerto Rico from July 23-30.

Praying Pelican Missions (PPM) began in 2003 serving two communities in Belize. Today, Pelican Missions is currently serving in 14 countries around the world and more than a dozen cities across the USA.





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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

Website: stmarkscr.org
Phone: 319-447-0100
Text Alerts: Text **STMARKSCR** to **94-000**

Current Worship Schedule:

8:30 am | Traditional: the majesty of liturgy, pipe organ, & choral music - in Faith Worship Center

10:00 am | Modern: joyful contemporary worship in a casual setting - in Life Worship Center

WATCH LIVE: A livestream of each service is available by clicking the **WATCH LIVE** button at stmarkscr.org

ST. MARK'S FOUNDATION



stmarkscrfoundation.org

FOUNDATION FACTS

Over the past 43 years, the St. Mark's Lutheran Church Foundation has helped the partners of St. Mark's share their planned gifts with the church. Those gifts have provided nearly **\$800,000** in funds to the church and also purchased, restored, installed and maintained a historic pipe organ in the Faith Worship Center.

Today your Foundation has over **\$1 million** of assets which continue to help St. Mark's fulfill its mission. Please contact Tim Wuest, Foundation President, to learn how you can plan a legacy gift to the Foundation to create a lasting impact for St. Mark's. Other members of the Foundation include: Marlene Hill, Kevin Becker, Rosie Bowers, Caitlin Hartman, Bruce Altorfer, Mike Bringolf, Chris Lindell, and Kristin Roberts.

Upcoming Events **SPONSORED BY THE FOUNDATION**



**NOVEMBER 21
2:00 PM**

Dr. Stephen Hamilton, touring concert organist on our Opus 695 organ. The free concert is open to the public. For more details visit opus695.org



**DECEMBER 5
3:00 PM**

Christmas in Faith holiday concert feat. Barb Ritchie and friends! The free concert is open to the public with reception following.