

Join Us

In this Lenten season, may we connect together in an enriching and fulfilling spiritual journey.

stmarkscr.org/easter

ASH WEDNESDAY - FEBRUARY 17

12:00 pm traditional **OR** 7:00 pm blended service
in-person or online

Join us as we began the Lenten season with safe distribution of imposition of ashes at our services.
5:00-6:00 pm "Drive Through Ashes" - safe distribution of ashes at the Faith Awning in the south parking lot.

WEDNESDAY LENTEN SERVICES

12:00 pm traditional services, in-person or online
We will journey through the four chapters of St. Paul's letter to the Colossians during the five weeks of Lent beginning on **Wednesday, February 24th** and **finishing up on March 24th**. A study guide will be available at stmarkscr.org/easter or at the church office. Colossians is one of the most powerful, succinct, gospel-packed letters in all of Scripture.

MAUNDY THURSDAY - APRIL 1

12:00 pm traditional service in-person or online
A special service celebrating our Lord's Last Supper and the giving of the new command: "Love one another"

GOOD FRIDAY - APRIL 2

12:00 pm blended service in-person or online
A special service focused on our Lord's crucifixion and his final words from the cross.

TRAIL TO THE TOMB - APRIL 1 & 2

A drive-through Easter experience in our parking lot following Jesus's last week on Earth, told from the unique perspective of his mother Mary.

easter

SUNDAY, APRIL 4

SONRISE SERVICE OUTSIDE AT THE CROSS

6:30 am

CONTEMPORARY INDOOR

8:00, 9:00, 10:00, 11:00 am

TRADITIONAL INDOOR

8:30, 9:30, 10:30, 11:30 am

DRIVE-IN COMMUNION AT THE SOUTH PARKING LOT

3:00 pm

LENTEN PROJECT

A 6-week fundraising effort for our friends at Wellington Heights Community Church.

connections FEBRUARY 2021

“The Spirit told me to have no hesitation about going with them.” - Acts 11:12a

Recently my son Theodore brought home a Valentine’s Day list of students and teachers in his class. It described how they will be celebrating Valentine’s Day and what kind of gifts work best for that day. It struck me that in my son’s public school classroom they will be celebrating a Christian holiday. Although the details of St. Valentine’s life are debated, there is no debate that he existed and that every year on February 14th we celebrate love.

You might not see that as a big deal - a public school celebrating a Christian holiday - but I do. I don’t see it as a big deal because some might consider it a breakdown of the so called “separation of church and state.” No. It’s a big deal because it’s a day where our entire country celebrates love. And God is love! **And we are a faith community based on love!** What an opportunity to share the truest love of all, the love of Jesus, with everyone around us!

Now I know, you’re probably thinking “*that’s a bit of a stretch Pastor Paul*”, but that’s the point. Our next sermon series is about stretching a bit. Stretching our missional muscles to be a little more neighborly, a little more evangelistic, a little more open to the movement of the Spirit. It’s entitled “Joining Jesus on His Mission” and it’s focused on a particularly forgotten understanding of mission - that Jesus is already in your neighborhood, through the power of the Holy Spirit, doing the work of preparing people’s hearts and minds for a little love from you. You and I aren’t the heavy lifters when it comes to changing our world - God is.

This is what the verse at the beginning of this article is all about. The apostle Peter hadn’t quite realized that Jesus was already on the move outside of the borders of Jerusalem and the tiny Christian community there. Not only was Jesus already working outside of that band of believers through the power of the Holy Spirit, he was working in the lives of Gentiles, Romans, pagans - unbelievers (deep gasp)! When Peter finally understood what the Holy Spirit was up to, he reported back to the Jewish Christians in Jerusalem that he indeed went to the house of Cornelius and that indeed the Holy Spirit had gone before him.

The Holy Spirit is going before us today as well! If we are willing to open our eyes and see what Peter saw, we too will have no hesitation to go across the street, down the hallway, across town, or wherever God is sending us to share the good news. The opportunities are there if we remember who’s already there!

Which brings me back to Valentine’s Day. Valentine’s Day is an opportunity. Really. What other day do Christians get to freely and without excuse celebrate what our faith is based on: love!? Consider it a day with no hesitation. And go freely to your neighbor with the love of Jesus.

Paul Hennings

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

MARCH 5 & 6: EVEN: IF WOMEN’S CONFERENCE

In partnership with RightNow Media - we’re hosting the “Even IF” Women’s virtual conference in Life Worship Center. Join with thousands of women across the globe to gather together, learn more about who God is, and disciple other women right where they are. Questions? Email Sarah Bartlett, Director of FaithLife Ministries at sbartlett@faith-life.org

APRIL 1 & 2: TRAIL TO TOMB

A drive-through Easter experience in our parking lot following Jesus’s last week on Earth, told from the unique perspective of his mother Mary.

APRIL 10: GREG FINKE WOKSHOP

We’ll have a workshop with Greg Finke, author and presenter of the book *Joining Jesus on His Mission!*



JOINING JESUS ON HIS MISSION

How to Be an
Everyday Missionary

Our next sermon series and church-wide book study for FaithLife groups follows *Joining Jesus on His Mission: How to Be an Everyday Missionary*. The sermon series and book study kicks off March 7th. Learn more at stmarkscr.org/joiningjesus

Joining Jesus on His Mission will alter the way you see your life as a follower of Jesus and take you beyond living your life **for** Jesus to living life **with** Jesus. Simple, powerful, and applicable insights show you how to be on mission and recognize where Jesus is already at work in your neighborhoods, workplaces, and schools. You will feel both relief and hope. You may even hear yourself say, "I can do this!" as you start responding to the everyday opportunities he is placing in your path.

**Books are available for \$10/each.
Please order your book(s) by
February 14, 2021.**

stmarkscr.org/joiningjesus

Questions? Contact Marlys Fruhling,
Director of Missions & Outreach at
mfruhling@faith-life.org



Save the Date!

**In-person workshop with Greg Finke,
author of *Joining Jesus on His Mission***

Save the Date for Saturday, April 10 from 9:00am - 3:00pm.
We'll have a workshop with Greg Finke, author and presenter of the book *Joining Jesus on His Mission*! Lunch will be provided. Greg will also preach **AT** St. Mark's on Sunday, April 11 at our services!

Register to attend at stmarkscr.org/joiningjesus

THE LIVING STORY RECAP | DECEMBER 17-19, 2020



1,008

cars through
our parking lot

150

volunteers

52

trees with lights

5

beautiful narration tracks
feat. St. Mark's musicians

1

awesome camel!

CELEBRATING CHRISTMAS



Consider this: in 2019 we had 2,400 people attend worship at Christmas with almost zero online presence.

This year we estimate that over 4,000 people saw and heard the Christmas story through The Living Story, we had **over 800 people attend** in-person worship on Christmas Eve and **over 1,000 views** of our Christmas service online - and who knows how many people were viewing at a time.

When you put it all together, in 2019 we shared the Christmas story with 2400 people the week of Christmas. **In 2020, that number exceeded 6,000 people.** (Wow!)

ANNUAL CELEBRATION RECAP | JANUARY 31, 2021

On January 31 we met for our Annual Celebration (also known as the Annual Meeting.)

We joined in-person and online to review how God worked in 2020 and prepared our focus for 2021. We are SO thankful for technology - especially in Iowa during the winter. With the hard work of our staff, the patience of the congregation, and the power of technology, we were able to host our first hybrid Annual Celebration.

We had about 30 people in attendance, as well as 70+ people on Zoom that were able to participate in the meeting. It went about as well as it could - even when Jason

Christensen kept interrupting Pastor Paul and breaking into song!

Jason Freeman, the outgoing church Council President presented a report, as did Pastor Paul. Pam Schulz, Executive Director, and Cheri Presley, Finance Manager, presented the financials for 2020 and 2021. Lois Mulbrook led us through nominating new members for church council, the nominating committee, and St. Mark's Foundation. Finally, we did vote regarding the sale of 3.55 acres to the city of Cedar Rapids for the upcoming Tower Terrace Road project.



“For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them.” - Matthew 18:20 (NIV)

SIMPLYFYING SYSTEMS



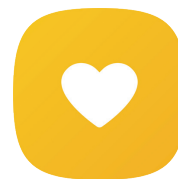
At the beginning of 2021, we transitioned to a new Church Management System, called **CHURCH CENTER**. Church Center is a mobile app and web experience where our congregation can explore, engage, and get involved throughout the week. Our staff has been working for months to make this transition smooth and to get all the pieces in place. Moving to Church Center has helped simplify a lot of processes and log-ins. Thank you for your patience as we get our new data system set-up!

We've had over 200 people download the Church Center mobile app since January 1, 2021!!



CALENDAR AND REGISTRATIONS

Our calendar and registrations work together - when you're searching the calendar for events, sign-ups for service, classes, and more are easily found in the same place!



GIVING

Church Center allows for safe giving - on our app or online at stmarkscr.org/give



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Marion, IA 52302

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Address Service Requested

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**

Sunday Worship:

8:30 and 10:00 am | **Traditional:** the majesty of liturgy,
pipe organ, & choral music - in Faith Worship Center

10:30 am | **Contemporary:** joyful contemporary worship in
a casual setting - in Life Worship Center

WATCH LIVE: Our 8:30 am and 10:30 am services by
clicking the **WATCH LIVE** button at stmarkscr.org

CHURCH COUNCIL



2021-2022 COUNCIL MEMBERS

President	Kristin Roberts
Vice President	Greg Voss
Secretary	Cindy Culbertson
Treasurer	Aaron Loan
Chaplin	Eric Knoll
Member	Anita Haughenbury
Member	Mike Jones
Member	Amy Steinbach

We thank Jason Freeman and Lois Mulbrook for their years of service on the Church Council! We are thrilled to welcome Kristin Roberts as our incoming President!

