

May the God of hope
fill you with all

joy and peace

as you trust in him,
so that you may
overflow with hope
by the power of the
Holy Spirit.

Romans 15:13

connections

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 2022

It came as a surprise recently when a partner at St. Mark's randomly came up to me and said, "Happy three year anniversary!" I had no idea what she was talking about until it dawned on me that it has been three years since Ellie, the boys, and I moved here to be part of St. Mark's ministry. Wow! How time flies!

Let me say: God has been good to our congregation these last three years! We are moving in the right direction. We have a great staff. We continue to improve. We're growing. And we have plans for the next three years such as:

- Becoming a multi-site church up and down the Corridor
- Investing in our community by providing basic needs such as housing
- Providing tools for individuals to share their faith in today's cultural climate
- Taking advantage of our Tower Terrace location
- Empowering parents to disciple their children
- Creating engaging and unique Biblical digital media
- Seeing hundreds of people come to faith
- Knocking out our debt

These are just a sampling of what I believe God wants to do through us as a congregation over the next several years. And I know with the help of the Holy Spirit we will! Thanks for a great first three years - here's to the next three!



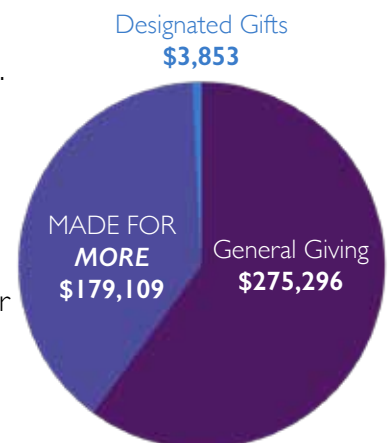
CHURCH BUSINESS

AMENDMENTS

The church council brought forth thirteen amendments to the Constitution and two amendments to the bylaws. The amendments provided clarity, aligned to current practice, and removed inconsistencies between the bylaws and Constitution. All amendments were passed at the August 21 Annual Meeting and at the called Congregational Meeting on October 23.

GIVING UPDATE • FISCAL YEAR 2023

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 also dozens of partner ministries in our city and around the globe. **This summary graph shows our giving in our new fiscal year (July-September 2022).**



CARE MINISTRY

The St. Mark's Care Team exists to provide love and support to people who are struggling with life's challenges. At one time or another we all need the help of others to see our way through a difficult time. Our team makes weekly hospital and in-home visits to those in need. Please contact me at amurray@faith-life.org if you know someone who would appreciate a visit from our team of skilled and caring volunteers!

HOSPITALITY

"All believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to prayer." - Acts 2:42

The goal of our St. Mark's Hospitality Ministry is to provide a welcoming environment for visitors, partners, guests, and friends in order to enhance their worship experience, encourage fellowship, and help build community. We love our times of fellowship and connection on Sunday mornings in the Connections Cafe to reflect on the message, catch up with old friends, and meet new ones.

Our hospitality and cafe teams are an important ministry at St. Mark's that can always use more support. When you see someone new, smile and say hello ... you may be their only connection on a Sunday morning. *All ages can participate - we would love to have families and students serve together!*

If you have a heart for people and sharing the joy of Christ in us by serving in hospitality, we would love your help. If you are interested in serving, please contact me at amurray@faith-life.org

MAKE AN IMPACT

PS: If you serve in ANY area or ministry at St. Mark's, mark your calendar for Wednesday, January 25, 2023 for Impact Night! We want to encourage our volunteers and offer additional training and support.



GRIEF SHARE: SURVIVING THE HOLIDAYS SEMINAR

When you're grieving the death of a family member or friend, you may dread the holiday season. Thoughts of social gatherings, family traditions, and obligations leave you anxious and overwhelmed. Your sadness can seem unbearable. You may wish you could skip these next two months and go straight to the routine of the next year—but you can't. What can you do to lessen your stress and loneliness?

To help encourage and support each other who are experiencing grief, we will be offering a *Surviving the Holidays* GriefShare event. This is a free two-hour seminar and will be offered the following dates:

Tuesday, November 8 from 3:00-5:00 pm
Monday November 14 from 6:00-8:00 pm

Participants only need to attend one session.

Register at stmarkscr.org/events or by calling the church office at 319-447-0100. Please make sure to invite your friends, family, or someone you know who would benefit from this seminar.

CELEBRATING CHRISTMAS AT ST. MARK'S

We look forward to celebrating the Savior's birth with you and your family! Our website stmarkscr.org/christmas will stay updated with all dates and details.

NOVEMBER 13 • ADVENTURE INTO CHRISTMAS

Participants will learn what Advent means and be given ideas for creating family Advent traditions to cherish for years to come. Participants will receive an Advent kit that includes ornaments for creating a Jesse Tree and other Advent activities. Cost is \$25/participant that includes an ornament kit & menu of other Advent resources. Limited to 12 attendees. Register at stmarkscr.org/christmas

DECEMBER 4 • CHRISTMAS IN FAITH CONCERT

Join us for a free holiday concert beginning at 3:00 pm featuring the OPUS 695 organ with vocalists and instruments. Reception to follow. *Reception sponsored by the St. Mark's Lutheran Church Foundation.*

DECEMBER 6 • 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. This year's entertainment is the Celtic Chamber Trio featuring Terri Hodge, and Rodney Ocenosak, and Sarah Schmidt. Tickets are \$18 each and are available to purchase online at stmarkscr.org/christmas OR in-person in The Connections Cafe on November 13, 20, and 27. Tickets must be purchased no later than November 27.

DECEMBER 11 • CHRISTMAS CANTATA

"Small Dancing Light" is a complete worship service for this year's cantata. The prophets gave us a description, a definition, and then came the revelation of the Word in Bethlehem at that moment, a small dancing light in a manger. 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 13, 20, and 27. We have over 300 potential gifts this year to help those in our community! This year gifts MUST be returned to the church office Monday, November 28 through Friday, December 2. Thank you for blessing others this season!

SALVATION ARMY BELL RINGING

Help us spread Christmas cheer by volunteering to ring the Salvation Army bells! We have one-hour shifts available on November 19 and December 3 at three grocery stores in our community! Register at stmarkscr.org/christmas

Christmas Eve Services

SATURDAY, 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.

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

Modern Worship in Life Worship Center

3:30, 4:30*, 5:30*, 11:00* pm

Traditional Worship in Faith Worship Center

*with communion

• livestream service

Christmas Day Service

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 25

We will host one service on Christmas Day beginning at 9:30 am. Join us for an acoustic carol sing in Faith Worship Center. We will NOT livestream this service.

The Living Story




DECEMBER 15-17

The Living Story is back for the third year! We are excited to tell the Christmas story from a new perspective - we'll be comparing the CHAOS of Christmas to the PEACE and LIGHT that hope in Jesus brings! **We need your help** to make this possible! We have split each night into two volunteer shifts with a 1.5 hour time commitment (one hour outside in your position). Learn more and volunteer at stmarkscr.org/livingstory

November 2022

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 <i>Connections mail date</i>	3	4	5
6 All Saints Sunday at both services	7	8 Surviving the Holidays GriefShare seminar 3:00-5:00 pm Register at stmarkscr.org/events	9	10 PANAMA MISSION TRIP November 10-19 <i>Please keep our participants in your prayers!</i>	11 VETERANS DAY Thank you for your service!	12
13 Opus 695 10-Year Anniversary Hymn Sing 8:30 am	14 Surviving the Holidays GriefShare seminar 6:00-8:00 pm Register at stmarkscr.org/events	15	16	17	18 Mission of Hope Monthly Meal	19  Bell Ringing One-hour volunteer shifts 10:00 am-4:00 pm Register to ring: stmarkscr.org/christmas
20 Giving Tree Get your Giving Tree tags on 11/13, 11/20, and 11/27	21 Decorate The Church Help us deck the halls any time from 9:00 am - 4:00 pm!	22	23 Thanksgiving Eve service at St. Mark's 7:00 pm on-site or online	24 Happy Thanksgiving! Church office closed.	25	26
27 Last day to purchase tickets (\$18) for the Women's Christmas Dinner on 12/6	28	29	30			

December 2022

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
	GIVING TREE GIFTS DUE TO FRONT OFFICE			1 Welcome Class at 6:00 pm Register at stmarkscr.org/events	2	3  Bell Ringing One-hour volunteer shifts 10:00 am-4:00 pm Register to ring: stmarkscr.org/christmas
4 Christmas in Faith Concert at 3:00 pm	5	6 Women's Christmas Dinner at 5:30 pm Buy tickets by 11/27 at stmarkscr.org/christmas	7	8	9	
11 Christmas Cantata at 8:30 am traditional service	12	13	14	15-16 <i>The Living Story</i> 5:00-7:00 pm each night stmarkscr.org/livingstory		17
18 Holiday Flair Wear your best Christmas sweaters and flair to services!	19	20	21	22	23	24 Christmas Eve Services MODERN 3:00, 4:00, 5:00 pm TRADITIONAL 3:30, 4:30, 5:30, 11:00 pm
25 Christmas Day 9:30 am service on-site (no livestream)	26 Church office closed.	27	28	29	30	31
1 <i>January 2023</i>	2 HAPPY NEW YEAR! Church office closed.	3	4	5	6-7 2023 DATES TO KNOW! 1/8 Chosen Season 3 begins 1/25 Volunteer Impact Night 2/10 Night to Shine	

FAMILY MINISTRY UPDATE

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 **301 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

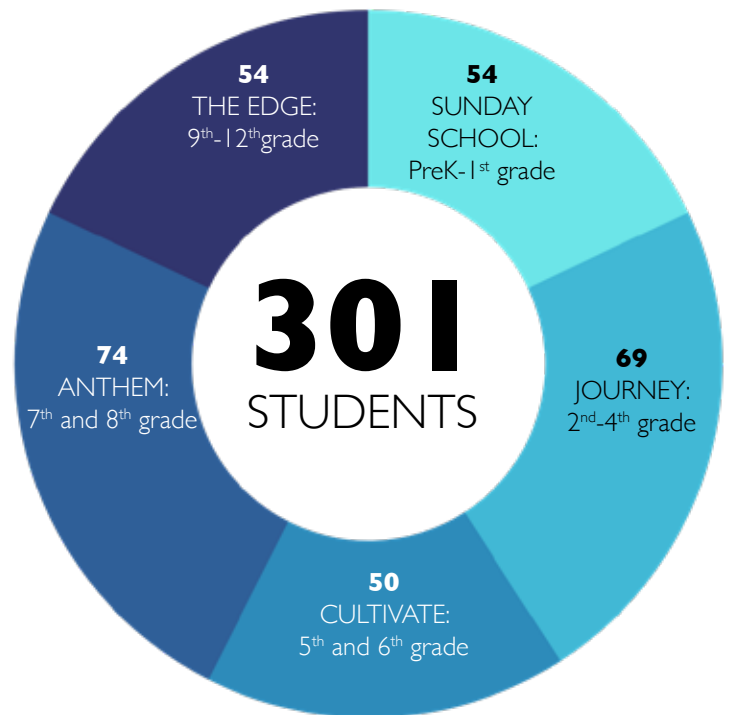
Jesus has the power to change lives for the better. When we know that life-changing power, we know God's purpose of equipping and calling us.

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.



OCTOBER 29, 2022: CONFIRMATION

We had the honor to watch 40 students 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 faith. While some may see confirmation like the finish line, it's really the starting gate to a journey with Jesus!

BAILEY
Middle School



JAMES
High School



LYNNE
Admin Assistant



SAM
Early Childhood



MISSIONS & OUTREACH

PANAMA MISSION TRIP

A team of St. Mark's partners is headed to the Tierras Altas district of Panama! The team will serve with the organization CALMS from November 10-19. Team activities will include serving in local schools, experiencing different denominations of worship, and learning more about the culture of the area. Please keep **Sarah Bartlett, Michele Jones, Natalie McDonald, Julie Peet-Woolf, Crystal Schwandt, James Swanson III, Dale and Joy Thompson** in your prayers.



NIGHT *to Shine*
SPONSORED BY THE **TIM TEBOW**
FOUNDATION

On February 10, 2023, Night to Shine will celebrate its ninth anniversary as thousands from around the world will come together to honor those with disabilities. St. Mark's is proud to host Night to Shine for our community for the sixth year!

Night to Shine is a night for St. Mark's and the Cedar Rapids community to shine, for volunteers to shine, our honored guests to shine, and most importantly, God's love to shine!

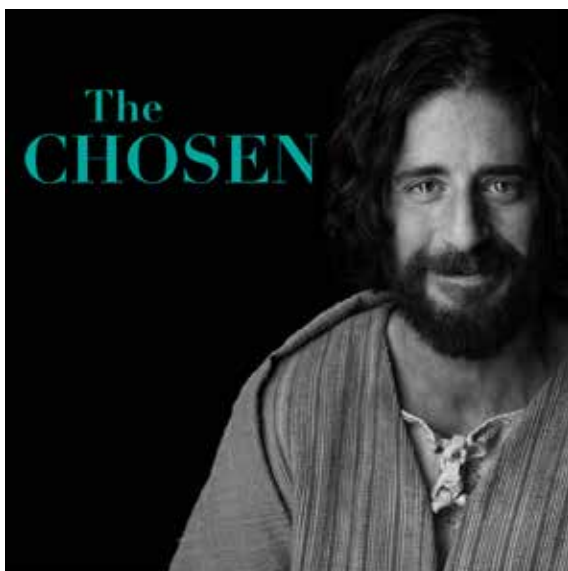
We have over 300 volunteer roles that need to be filled to help make it a smooth and fun night for our community guests. Read our volunteer descriptions and sign up to serve at stmarkscr.org/nighttoshine

Questions? Contact Nicole Studt at ndstuds@gmail.com

THANK YOU FOR MAKING IT A BEAUTIFUL WEEK!

In October we hosted Beautiful Week - a chance to shine God's love in our community. We had **139 volunteers** serving throughout the week - donating supplies, preparing meals, doing physical labor, delivering gift baskets, and more! We are already making plans for next year!

THE CHOSEN WILL BE BACK SOON!



SAVE THESE DATES FOR THE CHOSEN SEASON THREE

BIG NEWS for all you **Chosen** fans: Season 3 is in post-production and they will be releasing episodes 1 and 2 in limited theaters in November! On Sunday, November 20 Marcus Theatres on Blairsferry Road is showing both episodes throughout the day!

Our plan is to begin show Season 3 in Life Worship Center in 2023! Mark your calendars for Sundays, January 8, 15, 22, 29 and February 5, 12, 19, and 26 to watch and discuss the episodes of **The Chosen** Season 3. We'll follow the same format as before, meeting from 3:00-5:00 pm each week. Questions? Contact Sarah Bartlett at sbartlett@faith-life.org

RECENT PHOTOS



SEPTEMBER: God's beautiful promise



OCTOBER: The Aisenbreys retire from ministry in Africa



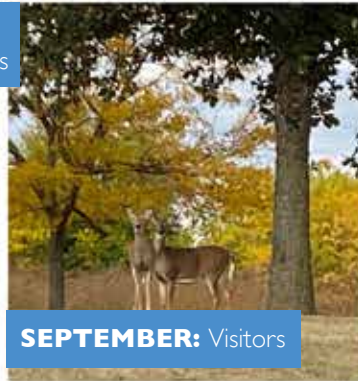
OCTOBER: Organist Ken Cowan celebrates OPUS 695 10-year anniversary



OCTOBER: Red carpet removal



OCTOBER: Beautiful Week volunteers compiled freezer meals



SEPTEMBER: Visitors



AUGUST: Sending Jason Christensen



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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

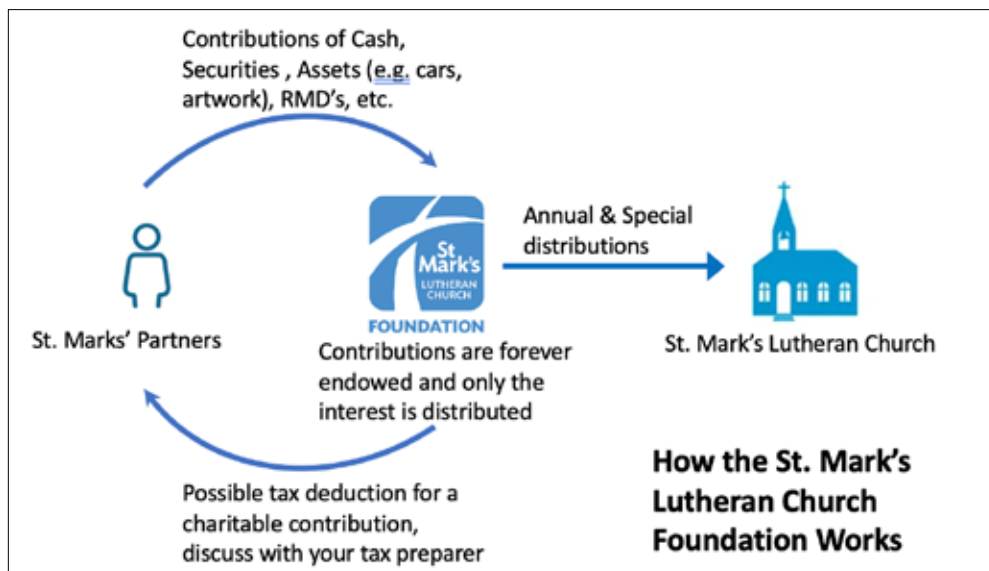
10:00 am | **Modern:** joyful worship in a casual setting
- in Life Worship Center

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

ST. MARK'S FOUNDATION



Living a life of faith means sharing Christ's love with others. As you plan for the future, your finances can reflect your faith and serve the church forever (see diagram).



The St. Mark's Lutheran Church Foundation helps partners explore ways they can serve St. Mark's today through contributions from an Individual Retirement Account (IRA) or a 401(k) or in the future through a will or beneficiary designations. Contact the Foundation by calling the church office 319-447-0100 or email info@stmarkscrfoundation.org