

OUTDOOR

worship

WE'LL SEE YOU AT THE POND!

The opportunity to worship outside on our stunning campus provides us with the chance to be reminded of God's beautiful creation, to be thankful for the new life we have in Christ, and to worship together.

We are thrilled to join together in Outdoor Worship! Both service times (8:30 and 10:00 am) will meet outside in our "backyard" on the last Sunday of each month from May - September 2022. We'll have seating on the berm as well as a few parking lot spaces available for those with mobility issues.

Nursery will be available at both service times. If there is inclement weather both services will be moved inside. If Outdoor Worship isn't for you, that's okay! We will be livestreaming each service. Enjoy the outdoors... inside! Learn more at stmarkscr.org/outdoorworship

2022 OUTDOOR WORSHIP DATES

May 29
June 26
July 31
August 28
September 25

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IMPORTANT UPCOMING DATES

4/24	Campaign Celebration
5/1	Farewell BBQ & Potluck
5/22	Senior Recognition Sunday
5/29	Outdoor Worship
6/26	Outdoor Worship
7/18-21	VBS
7/22-31	High School Mission Trip
7/31	Outdoor Worship
8/28	Outdoor Worship
8/28	Annual Celebration

So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be awake and sober. - 1 Thessalonians 5:6

“Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!”

Now what? This has been the question that’s haunted Christians for millennia. And it’s not a bad one or a derogatory one or a question that shows a lack of faith. It’s a real, difficult and important question. “Christ is risen. Now what do I do with that?”

The Thessalonians struggled with this question. If you read the apostle Paul’s letters to them, you will discover they were convinced Jesus was coming back immediately, within their lifetime. So what did they do? They quit their jobs! Maxed out their credit cards. And basically sponged off other people (the last two points are my imagination - they didn’t have credit cards back then and I’m pretty sure “sponged off” was not a saying either!)

With the Thessalonians in mind, I’d like to offer four practical approaches for responding to Easter:

- Settle in
- Savor salvation
- Speak welcomingly
- Serve graciously

Settle In

Don’t go to the desert for greater devotion; Jesus has you right where he wants you. Too often we think our response to Jesus has to be some grandiose, aesthetic rearrangement of our life. Go to a foreign country. Take monastic vows. Quit my job for a more “Christian” one. While God may be calling you to these things, in this moment, right now, where you are at, what is God doing? Practically, this means being present. Look around you at what is, not what could be. Even though it might look like the same mundane routine, your reality has changed because of Easter. This is where Jesus wants you.

Savor Salvation

Like a fine bottle of wine, the gospel needs to be uncorked, aerated, sipped, swished about in your mouth, and savored. You’ve been given the most expensive and delicious bottle of wine ever produced through Christ’s death and resurrection. Now savor it. Practically, this means picking up your Bible and letting its words entice and enrich you. It also means experiencing it with others. You were created for community, so don’t forget to hang out with your brothers and sisters in Christ. Bible + community (and maybe even a little wine!) = the finest sip!

Speak Welcomingly

Easter is for everyone. One of the most practical responses to the empty tomb is to tell other people about it. This doesn’t necessarily mean you have to have a sermon prepared for your next door neighbor or coworker on the importance of Easter. What it means is that words of invitation and welcome are terribly important in our day and age. People want to be included, so include them! Obviously invitations to church events and activities are great (e.g. - VBS, service events, worship, FaithLife groups, etc.), but just as important is being a welcoming person in word and deed. How can you be welcoming after Easter?

Serve Graciously

While it took the disciples a little bit of time to figure out their response to Jesus’ resurrection, eventually they found their groove and started serving. What Jesus had begun in his lifetime of earthly ministry, they continued by serving those around them. We get to do this today in our response; we don’t serve just to be good people, we serve as a way of sharing the renewing power of Jesus’ resurrection. Spring and summer are coming and they bring ample amounts of serving opportunities. How can you respond in service?

Hopefully these Ss give you some food for thought on how to respond to the resurrection. Don’t do what the Thessalonians did and bury your treasure; instead, use it for the glory of God blessing others who so desperately need the good news of Easter:

“Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!”

THANK YOU, St. Mark’s, for your continued generosity and support. This summary graph below shows our giving through March 31, 2022.





The MADE FOR **MORE** Capital Campaign was designed to be a spiritual journey to strengthen our relationship with God. With supporting scripture, eight (!) weeks of sermons dedicated to stewardship and giving, plus a ginormous mural illustrating participation and total amount committed, our prayer is that this campaign has been transformational in your faith. Surrendering all things, even our finances, to God requires great trust. But it also delivers on God's promise to provide.

Campaign totals will be revealed at our celebration on Sunday, April 24. As we rejoice at the impact of God's work on the hearts of his people, there are some significant and tender moments that may not make the big screen, but shouldn't be missed:

> The 86-year-old man who stopped me with the words on his heart: ***“Malachi 3:10. We need to remember it and have it posted. It tells us that God will bless us!”***

“Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,” says the Lord Almighty, ‘and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it.’” - Malachi 3:10

> In a conversation with a member who has not attended worship since the start of the pandemic. ***“I regret that we haven't been in church for a while. We have a weekend home and we'll soon be moving there.”*** After a pause, she said, ***“But I'm just not ready to give up on St. Mark's!”*** She made a \$5,000 commitment and was given the assurance of ***“St. Mark's won't give up on you.”***

- > Looking at the campaign goals on the mural in Connections Cafe, the second grade girl tugged on her mother's shirt. “If we wrote a check for \$2 million, look how far we would be!”
- > To date, ten commitment cards have been received from people who are not St. Mark's partners ...yet.
- > Perhaps church finance is a well-kept secret. One member admitted that she didn't know where St. Mark's gets its money to operate. The answer? 100% of our budget comes from within our membership. Glue sticks, palm branches, utilities, computers, chairs, coffee, postage, salaries, paint, equipment, instruments, music, candles, carpet cleaning, communion wafers, etc....all come out of the budget that is funded solely from the stewardship of our members.

Anyone who has completed a pledge card, in addition to those who intend to, has reason to celebrate! If you are still unsure about how stewardship ties into your faith journey, contact Lisa Pritchard, Stewardship Director, at lpritchard@faith-life.org or 319-447-0100. Your participation will be welcomed at any time God places this on your heart.

We are investing in God's kingdom at this time in this place. Could anything be more joyful?!

“Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.” - 2 Corinthians 9:7

EASTER RECAP

EASTER MORNING

What an incredible morning celebrating Christ's resurrection! We began bright and early with our SONrise service. With 98 people + 2 dogs and the service conducted by Pastor Steve and his family, it was beautiful to be together in God's creation. Inside the church building, we hosted seven separate services! In total we had 1602 people join us for Easter services on-site and online.



Easter photos by Alan Erickson



EASTER BREAKFAST

The Easter breakfast returned after a two-year hiatus! Hosted by the high schoolers attending this summer's mission trip, breakfast was served from 7:00-11:30 am. Breakfast attendees were treated to eggs, biscuits & gravy, sausage, and pancakes. The students ended up serving 557 people and running out of basically everything - what a good problem to have!



A free-will offering was available with all proceeds going towards the summer mission trip to North Carolina. Thank you, St. Mark's, for your generosity, over \$4700 was donated! You can still support the mission trip - give online at stmarkscr.org/give and choose "2022 High School Mission Trip" from the dropdown options.

FAMILY MINISTRY UPDATE

SCHOOL YEAR RECAP

It is hard to believe we are nearing the end of the school year and Wednesday and Sunday night ministries! We have felt the spirit moving within our students this year and saw relationships grow! Some highlights:

- > 303 students involved in ministry
- > over 1850 items collected in our Give HOPE food drive
- > 100+ middle & high school students attended our Heart & Soul Retreat in February
- > 73 volunteers serving our students

Thank you, families, for sharing your children with us. We are truly blessed to get to participate in their faith journey. We also want to thank RJ Hojka and his family and crew of volunteers for feeding our students a yummy meal each week!



UPCOMING DATES

- May 1:** Last morning of Sunday School
- May 4:** Last night of Wednesday night activities
- May 8:** Last night of EDGE
- May 11:** Volunteer Celebration & Debrief
- May 22:** Senior Recognition at both services
- July 18-21:** I Wonder VBS
- July 22-30:** High School Mission Trip to North Carolina
- August 22:** Backpack Blessing for 22-23 school year
- September 7:** Wednesday programs begin
- October 29:** Confirmation



VBS - SUMMER 2022

Families, parents, volunteers, EVERYONE! Mark your calendars for **July 18-21** - it's VBS Week!

At I Wonder **VBS**, we want to help kids get curious about God and learn about spiritual habits. Kids will rotate through stations while they are here: Worship with our live band, Bible story/faith time, snacks, STEM activities, games, and more.

I Wonder VBS is from 9:00 am-noon, Monday - Thursday (July 18-21) and is for kids in preschool (and potty trained) through entering 5th grade. The cost is \$10 per child. **REGISTRATION FOR VBS CLOSSES ON MONDAY, JULY 11 AT 11:00 PM.**

i wonder...





SECOND CHANCE MONTH

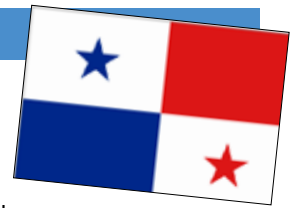
SECOND CHANCE MONTH

The St. Mark's Prison Ministry Team exists to share the love of Jesus to prisoners and returning citizens through advocacy, education, and action.

Join the Prison Ministry Team for a **Community Prayer Walk on Sunday, April 24** rain or shine! It will begin at 2:00 pm at Westminster Church in downtown Cedar Rapids and end at Redmond Park downtown. The prayer walk is sponsored by Prison Fellowship (a national non-profit organization), Hope CDA, and other area churches. There will be stops along the walk to hear testimonies from those who have been positively impacted by second chances.



PANAMA EXPLORATORY TRIP



A team of St. Mark's partners is headed to the Tierras Altas district of Panama! The team will explore mission opportunities through the organization CALMS from April 29-May 6. 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, Julia Christensen, Michele Jones, Crystal Schwandt, Khrystle Sullivan, and Greg Voss** in your prayers.



EIGHT DAYS OF HOPE (EDOH) REBUILD EVENT

It's been three years since EDOH hosted a rebuilding effort. EDOH XVII took place from April 9-16 in LaPlace, Louisiana to help those affected by Hurricane Ida. **St. Mark's partners Phil Christian, Ted Herbst, Todd Neis, and Jim Seiwald**, were among the volunteers from 42 states that served in Louisiana. In all, 38 roofs redone, 355 full projects finished, and work was completed on 132 homes. Praise God!



CONGRATULATIONS AISENBREYS!

Lou and Deb Aisenbrey, St. Mark's supported missionaries, are retiring! They have served as missionaries since 1993 (29 years!) with Wycliffe Bible Translators in Dakar, Senegal.

ST. MARK'S FOUNDATION UPDATE

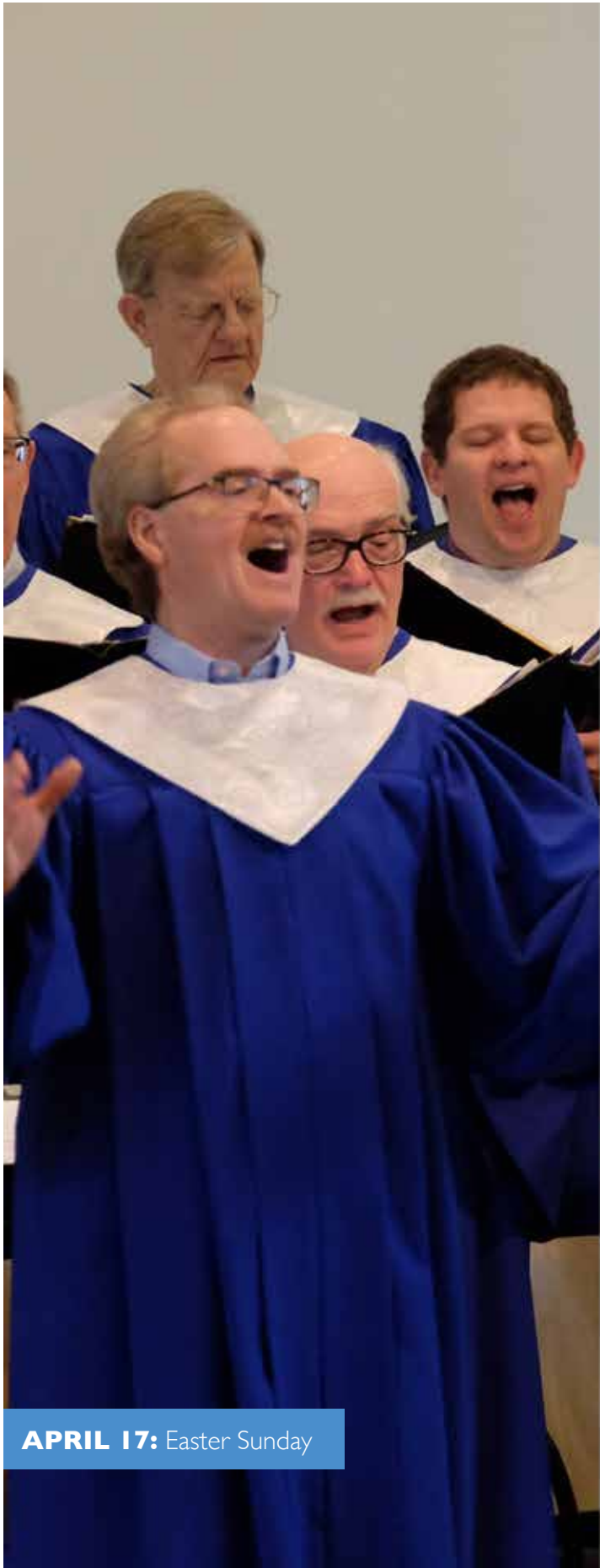


OUR CALL

Our call to share the love of Christ Jesus unites the St. Mark's Lutheran Church Foundation with the mission of St. Mark's Lutheran Church. Over the past 45 years, the Foundation has been and continues to be an avenue for partners to make legacy and end-of-life gifts to an endowment which the Foundation carefully invests and grows to provide income to expand the Church's ministry.

Visit stmarkscrfoundation.org or contact Tim Wuest, Foundation President, to learn more about creating a lasting gift to St. Mark's.

RECENT PHOTOS



APRIL 17: Easter Sunday



MARCH 27: Middle School Baking Bash



APRIL 19: Controlled burn at the prairie



APRIL 15: Serving at Mission of Hope



MARCH: Directors attend Exponential Conference



APRIL 6: Lenten soup lunch & service



APRIL 10: Palm Sunday



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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**

Sunday Worship:

8:30 am | **Traditional**: the majesty of liturgy,
pipe organ, and 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



FAREWELL BBQ & POTLUCK



Sunday, May 1 at 11:15 am

Join us for a Texas BBQ and potluck for
Pastor Steve and his family! Thank you
Qualbens for all you have done at
St. Mark's. Please register at the
Welcome Center or at
stmarkscr.org/events