

# THERE'S A *Seat* FOR YOU

Fall classes and programs begin this month to help everyone *connect faith + life!*



*connections* AUGUST 2022

As we wrap up our Asterisk\* sermon series this month, I'd like to share five simple, but possibly surprising, techniques for your personal Bible study to help you better understand what you're reading.

**1. Skip the Headings** Counterintuitive as it might seem, those italicized headings in your Bible aren't always helpful. First, they aren't scripture, they're just some editor's way of sectioning off scripture. Second, those titles might not actually be what the text is about! For example, your Bible probably has a title like "The Parable of the Good Samaritan" before Luke 10:25-37. While this section does include this parable of Jesus, does Jesus ever call the Samaritan good? No. Actually, the section is really about fulfilling the law and what the law means by "neighbor." So, skip the headings. Let scripture tell you what it's all about, not some editor's title.

On a sidenote, chapter and verse are also arbitrary. While Bibles have had standardized chapter and verses since the 16<sup>th</sup> century Geneva Bible, the purpose of them is about reference more than it is about dividing sections - some chapter and verse divisions are horrid when considering the context!

Try reading your Bible without chapter and verse. You can do this by just ignoring them or go to a website like [biblegateway.com](http://biblegateway.com) and using the page options button, turn off verse numbers (and headings for that matter). Try reading Paul's letter to the Philippians this way. You'll find it actually reads like a letter and not some chopped up research project!

**2. Look for Coordinating Conjunctions** Oh how I love coordinating conjunctions! While I use the term loosely, I'm meaning words like: therefore, so that, but, for, because, in order that, however, if then, etc. These words are essential for understanding the progression of thought throughout scripture.

Let me give you my favorite example of this in a popular passage of scripture (Romans 8:1): "Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." The conjunction is "therefore" and in this context points back to what was just said (and possibly even all of what has been said up to this point!). However, because we've just started a new chapter and verse, we love to quote it by itself without the previous content. The problem with this is that "therefore's" are like strings holding two thoughts together with one usually being the problem and the other being the solution; without the one you cannot figure out the other.

So what's the "therefore" in this context pointing back to? You figure it out! And in this process keep looking for those coordinating conjunctions in your Bible. They are super helpful in understanding the flow of scripture.

**3. Focus on the Narrator's Voice** The narrator is always omniscient in scripture. He (or she if you prefer - the narrator is not necessarily the author!) speaks details, definitions, backgrounds, observations, and many other things into the text. All these things are intentionally written to help the reader "see into or beyond" what the original participants actually experienced.

Here's an example from Genesis 29:22-23, "So Laban brought together all the people of the place and gave a feast. But when evening came, he took his daughter Leah and brought her to Jacob, and Jacob made love to her." This is the story of how Laban tricks Jacob by substituting his older daughter Leah for his younger daughter Rachel on their wedding night (I know, gross!) The narrator has told you more about the situation than even the participants know: the party and feast is a setup, Laban waits for evening when everything is dark to hatch his plan, he brings Leah instead of Rachel, and Jacob makes love to the wrong person! He doesn't even find out what happens until verse 25!

All of this is the omniscience of the narrator and it draws us into the story (and usually causes more questions than answers ironically). Focus on it. What does God want you to know or to question because of it?

**4. Get a Study Bible** Study Bibles are great because they have commentaries at your fingertips. Commentaries are explanations of scripture by people who have studied scripture for years and earned professional degrees in it. My favorite study Bible right now is the NIV Zondervan Study Bible with D.A. Carson as the general editor (*D.A. Carson is the important part as there are lots of "NIV Study Bibles" out there*).

Study Bibles give relevant background information on each book and section of the Bible, they include maps and charts for clarification, they have a plethora of notes on difficult passages, and my favorite part: most include pictures! Who doesn't like pictures in their Bibles!? So get a Study Bible and take time to read the commentary. Maybe read a chapter and then read the commentary. I promise you won't be disappointed.

**5. Reread and Reread and...** My last tip is simple: read your Bible and then reread it and then read it some more! While I commend everyone who wants to read the Bible in a year, you will always hear me admonish you to slow down, dive deep and savor each verse and section. The Bible is not a novel you take with you to the beach and finish in a week's time never to be read again. It's meant to be a constant companion on life's journey, so most of us have many years to get through it!

With that said, have you considered focusing on one book of the Bible for a year? Take for example the Gospel of Luke? What would happen to your understanding of Jesus and his relationship with his disciples, and therefore you, if you were to read and reread the Gospel of Luke for an entire year? I would bet that might be more valuable to your faith than speed reading the entire Bible!

Let me encourage you: use the tips I've outlined here to better understand your Bible. They work. Also, if you'd like to join me for my Bible study on the last book of the Bible, Revelation, feel free to do so starting in September on Wednesday evenings from 6:00-7:20 pm in Faith Worship Center, streaming live at the same time from wherever you're at **or** on Thursdays from 12:00-1:30 pm in Beacon Room.

Keeping the text in context, 

## ST. MARK'S STAFF UPDATES

We are blessed with an incredible staff who all have different strengths and abilities that help our ministries run smoothly. Since our last newsletter, we've added some new faces to our staff as well as some folks you know have taken on new roles. Positions are listed below. Please join us on Sunday, August 28 at both services as we commission our newest staff members and also send Jason Christensen into his new role at Word of Life Lutheran Church.

### **PASTOR**

Paul Hennings

### **PASTORAL INTERNS**

Jason Christensen

Michele Jones

John Mosinski

Alice Murray

### **DIRECTORS**

Sarah Bartlett

Kelly Frampton

Michele Jones

Alice Murray

Lisa Pritchard

Pam Schulz

### **ADMIN**

Carol Beyer

Pam Koranda

Cheri Presley

### **WORSHIP**

Joel Drzycimski

Mark Logan

Barbara Ritchie

Jim Wood

### **CUSTODIANS**

Amy Fortin

Libby Fortin

Paul Fortin

Kevin Sindelar

### **FAMILY MINISTRY**

Bailey Comegys

Sam Crumpton

Lynne Kendrick

James Swanson III

### **NURSERY**

Holly Huggins

Lisa Huggins

Jennifer Mixdorf

Amy Von Alexander

Mia Von Alexander

### **A NOTE FROM ALICE MURRAY, DIRECTOR OF CARE & HOSPITALITY**

I am so excited to be starting my new role as Director of Care & Hospitality, which was announced in May 2022. I am excited to come alongside all of you when you need it. I am here to listen, encourage, and pray with you and your families in your times of need and joy. Please reach out anytime - my email is [amurray@faith-life.org](mailto:amurray@faith-life.org)

I am also working to build our hospitality teams. Do you love to greet people and say hello?! **Then we need you!** I want to not only build our Sunday morning teams, but also find people who can be here in the evenings during the week to welcome those in the community who use our building.



### **THANK YOU JASON!**

In July Jason Christensen announced his new role to the congregation. He accepted a call to be the pastor at Word of Life Lutheran Church in Fairfield, IA. This is a BIG step for Jason and his family and we ask for your continued prayers, support, and friendship to Jason, his family, and the congregation at Word of Life.

We are so grateful for Jason's service at St. Mark's for so many years in a variety of roles and we look forward to celebrating his new call in the future! Please join us on Sunday, August 28 as we send Jason to his new role.

You may be wondering - what's going to happen at modern worship? Our staff and dedicated volunteers will work together through the rest of this year to lead our 10:00 am services. You can expect to hear different voices speaking into your life on Sunday mornings at modern worship!



## MARK YOUR CALENDARS



**ANNUAL**  
*celebration!*

**Sunday, August 21, 2022**  
**at 11:30 am**  
On-site and online

Join us for an all-congregational get-together to review how God worked in 2022 and to prepare our focus for our next fiscal year! According to our constitution, to be considered a voting partner, you need to have 1) attended a service and 2) given financially in 2021 or 2022. Please register by Wednesday, August 17 at [stmarkscr.org/annualcelebration](https://stmarkscr.org/annualcelebration)



**AUGUST 21**  
**BACKPACK BLESSING AT BOTH SERVICES**  
Students, teachers, and school support staff are encouraged to bring their backpack or bag to worship services on Sunday, August 21 for a special blessing.



**AUGUST 24**  
**CHANCEL CHOIR REHEARSALS BEGIN**  
The Chancel Choir begins weekly rehearsals starting August 24, from 7:30-9:00 pm, meeting in the Faith Worship Center. If you enjoy singing and would like to be part of the traditional music ministry, join us as we sing at the 8:30 am service on Sundays. Contact Mark Logan ([mlogan@faith-life.org](mailto:mlogan@faith-life.org)) with questions. **4**



**AUGUST 28**  
**BACKYARD BASH**  
Join us for an outdoor picnic at 11:00 am. St. Mark's will provide the meal (hamburgers, hot dogs, chips, water). You just need to bring a lawn chair or blanket. We'll have lawn games to play too! RSVP at [stmarkscr.org/events](https://stmarkscr.org/events)



**SEPTEMBER**  
**BIBLE STUDIES BEGIN**  
**Revelation:** Pastor Paul will lead a study on the last book the Bible.  
**Crossways:** A comprehensive study of the Bible using visual aids, videos, and each other to focus on Jesus, the Servant-King. \$25 cost.

Register for both studies at [stmarkscr.org/events](https://stmarkscr.org/events)

There's **something for everyone** going on in FaithLife Ministries in the next few months. What might you be interested in joining?

## WOMEN'S MINISTRY

**IF: Gathering Breakout Sessions:** Join us on Monday nights in August as we join together in Life Worship Center from 6:30-8:00 pm to watch the IF:Gathering 2022 breakout sessions. We'll watch two videos each night. All women of St. Mark's (and their friends!) are welcome to join this FREE event. You do not need to commit to each Monday evening, please come to as many sessions as you can! Let's gather together, get equipped, and discover the next steps in our calling: to go and make disciples. Register at [stmarkscr.org/events](https://stmarkscr.org/events)

**2x4:** This fun approach helps you build connections and friendships with other women in our church. Meetings are one-on-one and set at times that are convenient for you. This ministry will take place in September, October and November. Each month you'll be paired with a new partner (2s), then paired together with a second group of two women (4s). Over three months you will build connections with a wonderful group of new friends! Register at [stmarkscr.org/events](https://stmarkscr.org/events)

## FAITHLIFE GROUPS

**NEW FAITHLIFE GROUPS**...which one is just right for you? For questions or to sign up for one of these groups, contact Sarah Bartlett at [sbartlett@faith-life.org](mailto:sbartlett@faith-life.org)

**Woolf Pack FaithLife Group:** Men's group that meets at St. Mark's weekly on Wednesdays from 6:30-8:00 pm. The facilitator is Bruce Woolf.

**Behind the Cross FaithLife Group:** Couple's group for couples 40-something to 70-something. They will meet on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of each month during the school year from 11:00 am - 12:30 pm at St. Mark's beginning September 18. Co-facilitators are Jane Weber and Sarah Mangold.

**Together We Grow FaithLife Group:** Women's mentoring group will be starting this fall. This group is for women of any age. They will meet as a large group each week for an hour-long study, then partner up for 30 minutes of mentoring each other. Co-leaders are Sarah Bartlett and Kelly Kornegor.

**Young Adults/Couples FaithLife Group:** This group will be starting in the fall. Day and time is still to be determined. Co-leaders are Andrew and Aurelie Berta and James Swanson III and Megan Matson.

**Everyone is Welcome FaithLife Group:** This weekly adult study group is for couples, singles, and people of any age and will begin in the fall. It is offered in-person and by Zoom. Day, time and place are still to be determined. The leader is Anne Haeger.

## COMING SOON...

**Strengths classes** will be offered again this fall, led by Pam Schulz and Sarah Bartlett. The CliftonStrengths assessment will help you identify your strength talents -- how you naturally think, feel, and behave. They help you understand who you are, why you do things the way you do, and why you are better at some things than others. For details about our upcoming strengths classes and/or to request the assessment code, visit [stmarkscr.org/strengths](https://stmarkscr.org/strengths)

Coming in January 2023: **The Chosen**, season 3. We'll meet on Sundays beginning January 8, 2023 from 3:00-5:00 pm to watch one episode each Sunday as a large group in Life Worship Center; then break into small groups for discussion. You won't want to miss this!

To learn more about **The Chosen** TV series, visit [stmarkscr.org/thechosen](https://stmarkscr.org/thechosen)

# August 2022

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1 <b>WOMEN'S MINISTRY IF: GATHERING VIDEO SESSIONS</b> 6:30-8:00 PM	2	3	4	5 <b>CONNECTIONS MAIL DATE</b>	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
<p>Have you registered your student for Family Ministry programs yet? Our programs for PreK-12th grade work to partner and equip families to connect faith + life.</p> <p>Register at <a href="https://stmarkscr.org/familyministry">stmarkscr.org/familyministry</a></p>						
14 <b>MISSION TRIP INFO MEETING</b> 9:30 OR 11:15 AM Learn about our Haiti & Panama mission trips this fall.	15	16	17	18	19 <b>MISSION OF HOPE MONTHLY MEAL</b>	20
					<p>Donate or serve at <a href="https://stmarkscr.org/events">stmarkscr.org/events</a></p>	
21 <b>BACKPACK BLESSING</b> BOTH SERVICES  <b>ANNUAL CELEBRATION</b> 11:30 AM RSVP at <a href="https://stmarkscr.org/annualcelebration">stmarkscr.org/annualcelebration</a>	22 <b>HANDBELL CHOIR REHEARSALS BEGIN</b> 6:30-8:00 PM	23 <b>FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL PRAYER VIGIL</b> 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM Come to Life Worship Center and pray for our schools.	24 <b>CHANCEL CHOIR REHEARSALS BEGIN</b> 7:30-9:00 PM	25	26	27
28 <b>BACKYARD BASH</b> 11:00 AM St. Mark's will provide the meal and ice cream after Outdoor Worship! RSVP at <a href="https://stmarkscr.org/events">stmarkscr.org/events</a>	29	30	31 <b>FAMILY MINISTRY VOLUNTEER TRAINING</b> 6:00-7:30 PM			

# September 2022

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1	2	3
4	5 <b>LABOR DAY</b> Church office closed.	6	7 <b>FAMILY MINISTRY FIRST NIGHT</b> 5:30 PM <b>REVELATION BIBLE STUDY BEGINS</b> 6:00 PM	8 Register or volunteer at <a href="http://stmarkscr.org/familyministry">stmarkscr.org/familyministry</a> <b>REVELATION BIBLE STUDY</b> 12:00 PM	9 RSVP at <a href="http://stmarkscr.org/events">stmarkscr.org/events</a>	10
11 <b>SUNDAY SCHOOL FOR PREK-1ST GRADE BEGINS</b> 10:00 AM	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20 <b>CROSSWAYS BIBLE STUDY BEGINS</b> 12:00-1:30 PM	21	22 <b>CROSSWAYS BIBLE STUDY</b> 6:30-8:00 PM	23	24
		Identical studies! \$25 cost. Register at <a href="http://stmarkscr.org/events">stmarkscr.org/events</a>				
25 <b>FINAL OUTDOOR WORSHIP SERVICE OF 2022!</b> 8:30 & 10:00 AM	26	27	28	29 <b>WELCOME TO ST. MARK'S CLASS @ 6:00 PM</b> Learn more about our church, missions, values. Meal provided.	30 RSVP at <a href="http://stmarkscr.org/events">stmarkscr.org/events</a>	1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8 <b>BEAUTIFUL DAY</b>
<p><i>Beautiful Week!</i> Multiple service opportunities around our community will be available. Consider how you, your family, or FaithLife group could get involved!</p>						



## SEE YOU SOON!

The Family Ministry team is so excited for Fall 2022! We can't wait to see our students. Registration for our student programs are now open. Last year we ended our programs with over 300 students in ministry - praise God! We hope to connect with that many students and their families again. Register your student at [stmarkscr.org/familyministry](http://stmarkscr.org/familyministry)

## FALL SCHEDULE

### PRE K-1ST GRADE

Sunday mornings beginning Sept. 11  
10:00-11:00 am

### 2ND-8TH GRADE

Wednesday nights beginning Sept. 7  
5:30-7:30 pm

### 9TH-12TH GRADE

TBD

Register your student(s) NOW for school year programming - sign up at [stmarkscr.org/familyministry](http://stmarkscr.org/familyministry)

## NURSERY

Don't forget - the nursery is available for infants through preschool age at each service on Sunday!



## SERVE OUR STUDENTS

The most effective way to impact students is through significant relationships with caring adults. We know life gets busy, but there is so much value and intention in having adults and parents involved in their child(ren)'s spiritual growth. We have multiple opportunities for you to serve our students in the upcoming school year. Learn more and register at [stmarkscr.org/familyministry](http://stmarkscr.org/familyministry)

## FAMILY MINISTRY FALL DATES

- 8/21 Backpack Blessing
- 8/31 Leader Training
- 9/7 First Wednesday night programming for 2nd-8th graders
- 9/11 First Sunday programming for PreK-1st graders
- 9/18 2nd and 5th graders receive their Bibles
- 10/29 Confirmation
- 11/10 First Communion class
- 11/20 First Communion for 5th graders



**BAILEY**  
Middle School



**SAM**  
Early Childhood



**LYNNE**  
Admin Assistant



**JAMES**  
High School





**JULY 18-21:** I Wonder VBS



**JULY 22-30:** High School Mission Trip



**LOCAL**

[His Hands Free Clinic](#) has a variety of ways that we can serve our community with both our professional and spiritual gifts. They would welcome more doctors, nurses, dentists, and dental hygienists that would like to volunteer twice a month. Also, there is a great need for those who would like to pray with patients or greet them when they enter the clinic.

[October 8 is Beautiful Day](#) - or Beautiful Week! This year we are going to focus on being a blessing to our community all week long.

[The Living Story](#), our drive-thru live nativity for the community is scheduled for December 15-17.

**NATIONAL**

[Eight Days of Hope](#) will be deploying to Eastern Kentucky to serve those impacted by the catastrophic flooding from August 6-20. Learn more and register at [eightdaysofhope.com](http://eightdaysofhope.com)

**GLOBAL**

[Haiti Mission Trip](#) is scheduled for October 10-19, 2022. We have room for 10 participants.

[Panama Mission Trip](#) is scheduled for November 11-19, 2022. We have room for 10 participants.

There is a need for [sponsors for children in Haiti](#). \$180/year provides lunch, uniform, and their education at UCI Haiti.

**WELCOME MICHELE!**

Michele Jones began in July as our part-time Director of Missions. She has jumped right into her new role and is expanding our annual Beautiful Day effort, planning two international mission trips, and staying involved in our local community as well! Michele and her husband Mike have been partners at St. Mark's for over 20 years. Contact Michele with service opportunities and questions at [mjones@faith-life.org](mailto:mjones@faith-life.org)

**SAVE THE DATE(S)!**

Our friends at Wellington Heights Community Church are almost ready to show off their new building! They began as a church in 2020 without a permanent place to worship. Join them for an **Open House** on August 28 from 6:00-7:30 pm.

They'll host their **Grand Opening Service** on September 11 at 10:00 am. Both events will be held at 1600 4th Ave SE in Cedar Rapids.

# RECENT PHOTOS



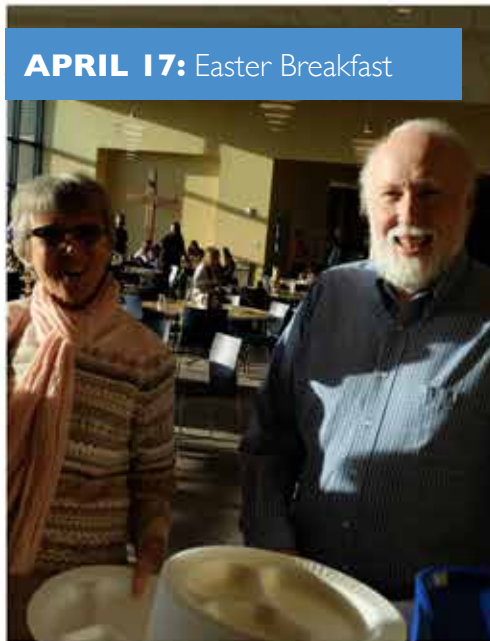
**JUNE:** Fan the Flame



**APRIL 10:** Palm Sunday



**MAY 1:** Anthem Band



**APRIL 17:** Easter Breakfast



**APRIL 24:** Campaign Celebration



**JULY:** VBS



**MARCH:** Lent noon service



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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](http://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](http://stmarkscr.org)

**ST. MARK'S FOUNDATION UPDATE**



**WE ALL KNOW THE IMPORTANCE OF A STRONG FOUNDATION**

Did you know? St. Mark's has a charitable foundation! A charitable foundation is an entity designed to provide financial support for decades and even centuries. We've got one!

The St. Mark's Foundation has been around for over 45 years and is an integral part of St. Mark's mission. **YOU** can be a part of it too. Please contact Tim Wuest of the St. Mark's Lutheran Church Foundation ([info@stmarksfoundation.org](mailto:info@stmarksfoundation.org)) to learn more about the many ways planned gifts can be given to create a legacy to continue Christ's work.

[stmarkscrfoundation.org](http://stmarkscrfoundation.org)