


EASTER BRINGS HOPE



Join us as we reflect on our Savior's redeeming death and victorious resurrection!
Easter Sunday is March 31.

SONRISE SERVICE OUTSIDE AT THE CROSS

6:30 am

TRADITIONAL SERVICES

8:30, 9:30, 10:30 am • *30 minute services!*

MODERN SERVICES

9:00, 10:00, 11:00 am • *30 minute services!*

ASH WEDNESDAY • FEBRUARY 14

12:30 and 7:00 pm

GOOD FRIDAY • MARCH 29

7:00 pm

connections

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2024

I don't know how many partners at St. Mark's know this, but I have been working toward a Doctorate of Ministry degree through Bethel Seminary in St. Paul, MN, for the last three years. Last December, I fulfilled all the classroom credit requirements, and now I am beginning the dissertation work for my degree. My focus is on how congregations experiencing a pastoral vacancy can assess their readiness for change, helping them align well with a future pastor.

Readiness for change: that's what the season of Lent is all about. For 40 days, we prepare our hearts and minds for the eventual suffering and death of our Savior, Jesus. We remember that we are sinners who can only be changed through the blood of Jesus because of his work on the cross and by his mercy and grace. We repent of our sins, acknowledging that we need to change and asking God to create clean hearts in us (Psalm 51) by forgiving our sins.

We do all of this during the season of Lent so that when Easter Sunday arrives, we are ready to be changed!

The day Jesus rose from the dead was the most significant change the world has ever experienced. Death is no longer our master. Its sting is no longer final. Mortality will be overcome, and immortality will be our reality. As the Apostle Paul put it in 1 Corinthians 15:51-52, *"Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed—in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed."*

If this is the change we are guaranteed because of the suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus, and if the

church is the harbinger and deliverer of this good news because we are the disciples of Jesus, then the church has the responsibility and privilege of leading the change the world so desperately needs. The season of Lent prepares us to do this, and Jesus' resurrection compels us to do it.

Have you ever realized that you are a change agent as part of the church? That the church as an organization is fundamentally about change? Sometimes, I wonder if the church has forgotten that. Leadership guru Peter Drucker once wrote, *"Change is the norm; unless an organization sees that its task is to lead change, that organization will not survive."* If you replace the word "organization" with the word "church," you have, in essence, the mission of the church - to lead the world to change.

Lent is a season to prepare for that change. The prophet Joel wrote, *Even now," declares the Lord, "return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning." Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and he relents from sending calamity."* (2:12-13)

The word "return" is the same word the Old Testament uses for "repent," and repentance is essentially a change of heart. I hope that during Lent, we will rend our hearts more than our garments so that when Easter comes, we will be ready and willing to be the change the world needs.

God's blessings as you connect faith and life, changing the world!



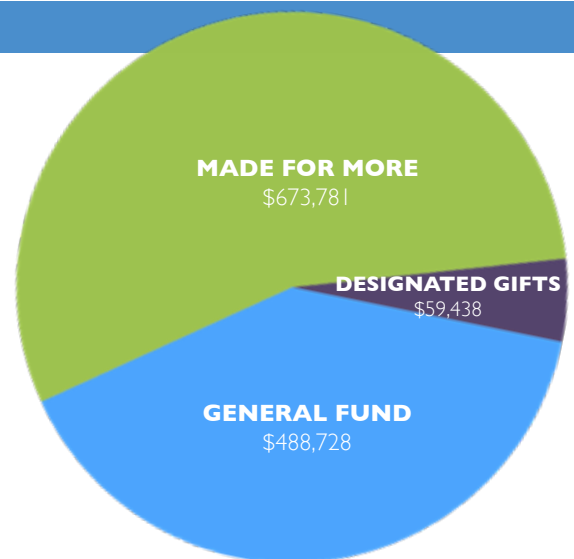
- Paul Hennings

QUARTERLY GIVING UPDATE

The graph to the right shows giving at St. Mark's for the last three months of 2023 (October-December 2023).

The General Fund is where your tithes and offerings go. It provides staff salaries, utilities, our programming, RightNow Media access, licensing for hymns, liturgy, and songs ... the list goes on and on! It's the fund that allows us to reach people with the gospel through our weekend services, family ministries, service opportunities, missions, and more.

Give securely online at stmarkscr.org/give



WOMEN'S MINISTRIES



IF:2024 is a two-day event where women all over the world gather together, get equipped, and discover the next step in their calling: to go and make disciples. Cost is \$25, which covers your ticket, swag bag, and Chick-fil-A lunch on Saturday, February 24. Hurry! Registration closes on Friday, February 16 at noon. Register at stmarkscr.org/ifgathering

PLUS: Monday nights in March and April, we join together to watch the If:Gathering 2024 breakout sessions - a different video each Monday. All women are welcome to join this FREE event! Register at stmarkscr.org/ifgathering

PLUS PLUS: *IF: Table – NEW on Sundays this summer!*
Watch for more details!

MEN'S MINISTRIES

We're excited to launch more Men's Ministries events in 2024! This ministry is focused on helping men grow in their faith, develop relationships with other men, and become better leaders in our homes, churches, and communities. Questions? Contact John Mosinski, Men's Ministry Coordinator at jmosinski@faith-life.org

- **2/17:** Dads, bring your kids to watch local basketball - for free! We'll watch the Coe Kohawks on Senior Day. Mention you're with St. Mark's at the main entrance to receive your free ticket.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- An all-church watch party for Iowa Women's Basketball this March
- Spring afternoon trip to Air FX, the trampoline park in Hiawatha
- Fishing event this summer
- Hiking trip to Pinicon Ridge, Palisades Park, or elsewhere
- Golf outing this fall



The Chosen, season 4 is coming! This season looks intense! We'll meet on Sundays beginning March 3 from 3:00-5:00 pm to watch one episode each Sunday as a large group in Life Worship Center. After each episode, we will break into small groups for discussion. Online attenders, this includes you via Zoom!

Please note: There is a possibility this will be postponed by a couple of weeks as it is unclear exactly when the episodes will be released for streaming. March 3 is the earliest possible start date.

To register, go to stmarkscr.org/thechosen

Connect with your purpose by attending one of the Strengths classes offered this spring! Register at stmarkscr.org/strengths

STRENGTHS-BASED MARRIAGE • FEBRUARY 29

Learn about your spouse's Strengths, why they think, feel, and do the things they do, and how you and your better half can work smarter together.

STRENGTHS-BASED LEADERSHIP • MARCH 19

Learn how to activate your strengths for leadership!

FEBRUARY 2024

SUNDAY SERVICES 8:30 AM TRADITIONAL & 10:00 AM MODERN • ON-SITE • ONLINE • ON DEMAND

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1	2	3
4 Organ Concert feat. Christopher Houlihan 3:00 pm	5 Connect-A-Thon each Monday morning in February	6	7	8	9 Night To Shine	10 SOUP-ER Saturday Canned Food Drive at local Fareway stores
11	12	13 <i>Connections mail date</i>	14 Ash Wednesday services 12:30 pm 7:00 pm	15 50+ Potluck 11:00 am	16 Mission of Hope Monthly Meal	17 Game Day With Dad Free men's basketball at Coe 4:00pm
18	19	20	21 Lenten Lunch & Service 11:30 am: meal 12:30 pm: service	22	23 IF: Gathering Women's virtual conference in Life Worship Center	24
25	26	27	28	29 Strengths-Based Marriage Class at 6:30 pm	Register by 2/16 at stmarkscr.org/lifgathering	
				Register at stmarkscr.org/strengths		

MARCH 2024

SUNDAY SERVICES 8:30 AM TRADITIONAL & 10:00 AM MODERN • ON-SITE • ONLINE • ON DEMAND

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1 Heart & Soul Retreat Lock-In for 7th & 8th graders	2
					Students & Adults register: stmarkscr.org/events	
3 The Chosen Season 4 weekly study tentatively begins 3:00 pm	4 IF: Breakout sessions weekly media study 6:30 pm	5	6 Lenten Lunch & Service 11:30 am: meal 12:30 pm: service	7	8	
Register at stmarkscr.org/the_chosen						
10	11	12	13	14 50+ Potluck 11:00 am	15 Mission of Hope Monthly Meal	16
17	18	19 Strengths-Based Leadership Class 6:30 pm	20	21	22	23
		Register at stmarkscr.org/strengths				
24 High School Mission Trip Envelope Fundraiser	25	26	27	28 Maundy Thursday more details coming soon!	29 Good Friday Service 7:00 pm	30
				Stay updated at stmarkscr.org/easter		
31 Easter Services SONRISE 6:30 am TRADITIONAL 8:30, 9:30, 10:30 am MODERN 9:00, 10:00, 11:00 am						

APRIL 2024

SUNDAY SERVICES 8:30 AM TRADITIONAL & 10:00 AM MODERN • ON-SITE • ONLINE • ON DEMAND

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1 EASTER MONDAY Church office closed.	2 Refugee Simulation at 6:30 pm	3	4	5	6
		Register at stmarkscr.org/events				
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14 Connect + Serve Community Ministry Fair	15	16	17	18 50+ Potluck 11:00 am	19 Mission of Hope Monthly Meal	20
21	22 REVERSE GARAGE SALE SUPPORTING CENTRAL FURNITURE RESCUE -	23	24	25	26	27
		learn more at stmarkscr.org/reversegaragesale				
28	29	30				

SAVE THE DATES

- 5/11 Confirmation Day
- 5/26 FaithLife Home Blessing
- 6/9 Ordination for Michele Jones, John Mosinski, and Alice Murray
- 6/17 VBS Begins
- 9/29 LCMC National Gathering

The new season brings opportunities for St. Mark's to serve our neighbors here in our community and in the world.

PANAMA

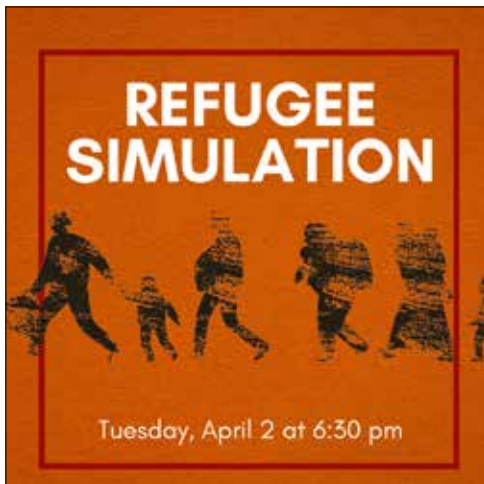
God continues to strengthen our relationship with our friends in Panama. A group of 12 will be serving the community of Tierras Altas and the school of Las Perlas from March 17-26. In preparation for the trip, the team has been meeting to plan and learn best practices with the **When Helping Hurts for Short Term Missions** training curriculum. The team will be sharing the good news of Jesus in the school, helping with some needed school updates, prayer walks in the community, and building current and new relationships.

Please include our team members in your prayers.

- | | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Nancy Hanson | Natalie McDonald | Dale & Joy Thompson |
| Michele Jones | Crystal Schwandt | Sherre Tubbs |
| Lisa Kriegel | Kevin & Karen Sindelar | Robert & Jane Weber |



APRIL EVENTS



St. Mark's will host a Refugee Simulation in partnership with the Catherine McAuley Center and Coe College. In this simulation participants will learn about the difficult choices and obstacles that refugees face when fleeing persecution and the pathway to settlement. Register to attend at stmarkscr.org/events



What is a Reverse Garage Sale?! St. Mark's and the surrounding community is invited to donate gently used furniture and household goods that will then be donated to Central Furniture Rescue. This local ministry provides furnishings and household goods for those coming out of or at the risk of homelessness. Find out more at stmarkscr.org/reversegaragesale

The **FaithLife Homes** renovation continues to progress with a new roof, windows, and siding!

Interior work is currently being done. The FaithLife Homes, LLC Board of Directors will be selecting our first applicant in coordination with our partners at Wellington Heights Community Church.

Mark your calendars for an open house and house blessing on Sunday, May 26.





VBS: JUNE 17-20

At Scuba VBS kids will be immersed in the Word and discover what living water is really all about! We'll dive into an amazing undersea adventure from 9:00 am-noon June 17-20! Students will experience the ever-flowing, never-ending love of God.

Registration for students (ages 3-grade 5) and volunteers of all ages opens on Easter at stmarkscr.org/vbs



HEART & SOUL RETREAT

March 1-2 is our bi-annual middle school **Heart & Soul Retreat!** At this retreat and lock-in, our 7th and 8th grade students will be sleeping over at the church, eating lots of food, playing games, but also learning. We'll be discussing shame and forgiveness, relationships and boundaries, identity, and mental health. We're excited for students to dive deep into these topics so they can apply what they learn to their everyday life!

Registration for both students and adults is open at stmarkscr.org/events



HIGH SCHOOL MISSION TRIP

The official destination of this year's high school mission trip is Louisville, Kentucky! We will embark on our journey on June 23-29 and partner with YWAM. We hope to reflect the kingdom of heaven to all we meet. We humbly ask for prayers of boldness, for safety, and for God to move in the hearts of those we meet. Registration for students is open at stmarkscr.org/hsmt

PS: We'll host an Envelope Fundraiser at services on Sunday, March 24!



We are always accepting new students in our Family Ministry programs! As of February 2024 we have 300 students participating in our weekly activities.

If you've got a student age 3-18, we hope to see them on Wednesdays and Sundays! Learn more and register your student at stmarkscr.org/familyministry



St. Mark's hosted Night to Shine for the 7th year!

We were proud to be one of 725 host churches across the globe hosting an incredible night for our honored guests!





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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 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 LUTHERAN CHURCH FOUNDATION



But who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to give as generously as this? Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand.

- I Chronicles 29 NIV

Please prayerfully consider a planned gift to the St. Mark's Lutheran Church Foundation.
Visit stmarkscrfoundation.org for more information