



St. Mark's United Methodist Church

June 2024

We live to embrace and serve all with the courage of Jesus Christ to heal and reconcile ourselves and the world.

Note from Pastor Alberta

The LORD is my strength and my shield.
In him my heart trusts; (Psalm 28:7)

“There’s a sweet, sweet Spirit in this place, and I know that it’s the Spirit of the Lord.” There truly is a sweet Spirit alive and stirring here at St. Mark’s. In the last couple months, we have celebrated the resurrection of Christ. We have reclaimed our “YES” to God. We have witnessed history being made at General Conference, bringing many changes to how we live with each other. Since my arrival last July, I have truly witnessed the Holy Spirit come rushing through every room and every heart connected to St. Mark’s. We are on our way. The question is, where are we going? I believe our destination is the same but the path we choose may be different. Jesus commissioned the Disciples to make disciples for the transformation of the world. This is our mission as well.

One simple way of preparing hearts for God’s transformation is building relationship with others as we model what it’s like to have God at the center of our lives. Our Focus Forward group has been learning the importance of keeping Christ at the center of all we do. (I’ll let them tell you what they’ve learned.) This may sound like an easy task, but the sometimes we focus more on business than on Spirit, especially in committee meetings or fundraisers. The one question I’ve been asked is why do we need to always bring God into what we do, can’t we just have fun? My answer to this question is, yes, we can have fun, but God’s presence still needs to be acknowledged because we are people of God. We don’t always have to preach and teach. I’m talking about sharing Glory sightings in our conversations and giving credit to God instead of referring to luck or something else. It can even be as simple as a note on the to-go containers at the Chicken Dinner that says, “St. Mark’s is back. We hope you’ll come explore God with us.” There are simple ways to model how God is the center of your life. This is all the beginning of a journey with God.

In these next few months, the Focus Forward group and I will be teaching, sharing, and preaching ways we can be Disciples of Christ by keeping God at the focus of all we do. I’ve found that when I join God, partner with God in ministry, there is laughter, love, and great joy. I’ve heard the comment that God is missing from our world. Let’s bring God into our world here at St. Mark’s. Gods acknowledged through the work we do in partnership WITH God. If we don’t start it who will? If we don’t do it now, then when will it happen? Psalm 28:7 reminds us, “The LORD is my strength and my shield; in him my heart trusts;” which means all is possible when we unite with God.

Will you join us?
Food for thought.

In Christ,
Pastor Alberta

The Garage Sale is this Saturday, June 8th! Are you ready to sell and shop 🤗 We still have tables (\$5 ea) and spaces (\$10) available for you to have a place in one large garage sale! We will be setting up on Friday, starting at 4:00pm. The garage sale will be 8am – 1pm with cleanup until 3pm. Please join us! Contact Brenda Mayer today with any questions!



Summer has arrived! And with that all sorts of fun activities for families and friends! We are inviting anyone that is interested to help us plan a FAMILY VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL for mid to late July. Who knows what we'll have in store - we need you to get involved and help us! We are hosting an organizational meeting Wednesday, June 12th at 6:30 pm at the church. Whether you are two or 22, 92 or somewhere in between, Vacation Bible School will bring us together for laughter and fun, and maybe even a God sighting or two!

There is a sign-up sheet at the welcome table, or email Ann Parker, icparkers4@gmail.com with a note that you will be joining us for this planning session.

For those of you interested in participating in Vacation Bible School, more details will be available after this initial meeting.

Christmas Stockings – Help Needed

Christmas Stockings are coming along but we could really, really use *your* help! We will be meeting June 15 (instead of 6/8 due to the Garage Sale) and June 22, 1 to 4 p.m. We need your help cutting the stockings and decorating. I know, I know...I've heard it before. "I have no imagination!" Well, guess what! Since we give away to so many places (Shelter House, Domestic Violence Shelter, United Action for Youth, Catholic Worker House, Iowa City Rehab and Iowa City Compassion Food Pantry), you can just COPY someone else's! Or maybe you're really good at gluing – partner with someone who needs gluing help! Partner with someone else and ignite each other's imagination!

We can help each other create the most appreciated Christmas stockings in Iowa City! Join us for the fun, the fellowship, the mission...together! Questions? Text Brenda @ 319-936-8118; email @ Brenda-mayer@uiowa.edu OR talk to me whenever you see me! I'll ALWAYS talk Christmas Stockings!

Also, to FILL THOSE STOCKINGS we need:

BOOKS: Board Books for babies under age 3!

Young Adult books for ages 13+

These are our greatest needs for books, although we accept books for all ages 6m to 16y!

GLOVES: Gloves for all ages 3y to Adult size! And Hats, too!

Please help!

Sources for gloves/hats: Crowded Closet has some and are continuing to receive. Also, Amazon! Please note: Any received that are more than needed for Stockings will be forwarded to the Winter Clothing Give-Away in October!

Questions? Text Brenda @ 319-936-8118; email @ Brenda-mayer@uiowa.edu OR talk to me whenever you see me!



St. Mark's Chicken BBQ is approaching fast! Great job selling so far! Thank you everyone! If you need more tickets, they are available in the church office or from Cory or Randy. Money can be turned in to the office or in the offering plate, just make sure to note on the check or envelope that it is "BBQ" money.



Also be sure to sign up to help on June 13th! Sign-up sheets are on the black board in the Fellowship Hall. There are many areas that need volunteers. Thank you to those who have signed up already.

The Council of Religious Communities (CRC) in Iowa City had their meeting May 15, 2024 at St Mark's UMC with a panel discussion on Food Insecurity in Johnson County. Who are the Food Insecure in Johnson County? Refugees, those affected by severe mental illness, those with physical disabilities, those who are Housing Insecure. Many of you may not be surprised by this list. But would you be surprised to know that the largest increase in needs comes from the "working poor" and – the Middle Class?!

There has been a large increase in those considered Middle Class who need a "boost" to get them through the end of the month. Many of the "working poor" are spending more and more on housing and relying more and more on food pantries, especially since Iowa no longer requires Landlords to consider Section 8 Housing Vouchers when computing whether a potential renter can afford their properties. Imagine this scenario: If a Landlord accepts a section 8 voucher, combined with your income to see if you can afford an apartment. But Iowa Law no longer requires Landlords to either accept said voucher nor consider said voucher has payment in their calculations – even if the Landlord accepts the voucher!

Many Landlords will only calculate work income when determining "suitability" of potential Renter. Never mind that the Renter has guaranteed payment in the form of voucher! And that's if you're lucky enough to get to the top of the list of 22,000 waiting list for Section 8 housing.....

And please be aware that the Farm Bill proposals that have been forwarded are calculated to have a major impact on Food Banks by drastically cutting their eligibility to buy and receive commodity foods. And our schools. Hunger will only spread if Congress has its way.
- Info sent in by Brenda Mayer

This month's day for St. Mark's to provide lunch at the Free Lunch program is Monday, June 17th. Pans will be available to pick up this Sunday, June 9th for volunteers to prepare Tater Tot casserole (recipe provided). **Also needed are bars and cookies.** Please bring these donations to church next Sunday morning June 16th. There is also the opportunity to volunteer on Monday, June 17th beginning as early as 10:30 preparing silverware packets, salad and dining room setup and serving food at noon and then cleanup after 1:00. This is a wonderful mission to those in need of a good meal. **Any questions, contact St. Mark's faithful Free Lunch Coordinator, Truda Kruger 319- 354-5595.**

thank you
volunteers!



New Landscaping at St. Mark's

*You who dwell in the gardens with friends in attendance, let me hear your voice!
(Song of Songs 8:13 NIV)*

We have a lot to look forward to at St. Mark's! A landscaping project to beautify the front area near the entrance is well underway. A plan was developed, shrubs and perennials were selected and they are currently being placed!

This refresh will beautify our property that guests, visitors and members will be able to enjoy and a testament to our focus on Discipleship, our future & to demonstrate we are a thriving church community.

We are graciously accepting donations for the project with a goal to finish in time for the Chicken Barbeque which will be held on Thursday, June 13th.

Our goal is \$5,000 – thank you so much to those who have donated so far! We appreciate you!

Please make checks and donations out to St. Mark's noting they are to go toward 'Landscaping'. Boyd Crosby & Jeanne Bennett can answer any questions you might have.

*The Lord will guide you continually, giving you water when you are dry and restoring your strength.
You will be like a well-watered garden, like an ever flowing spring. (Isaiah 58:11 NLT)*

May 2024 Church Council Meeting

The Church Council met Tuesday, May 28, 2024 (moved from May 21 due to severe weather threat). The following is a summary of the meeting.

Loving:

We opened our meeting with a prayer, and sharing of joys, concerns, and Glory Sightings. Pastor Alberta updated us on the Circuit, along with the recent meeting with the Bishop.

Learning:

Pastor Alberta and members of the Focus Forward Team led an exercise to continue work on the mission of St. Mark's. This month's assignment for the Council is to reword the question "Why does St. Mark's exist" into a question that is more engaging. We hope to engage more people within the congregation to give us a "feel" for what St. Mark's is about, which will help with developing a Mission Statement.

Leading:

The various committees reported the following discussions to the Council:

Trustees:

- Shared estimate for the removal of 7 damaged trees, which came in at \$5,600.
- Updated Council on the status of security cameras for the outside of the building, a new window to be installed, and the addition of a Knox Box for a key to be used by the Fire Department

Finance:

- No meeting since April council meeting
- Moved to use money from Memorial Fund to purchase t-shirts for the Chicken BBQ (not to exceed \$1,200). Motion passed unanimously.

Worship:

- Choir and Bells are done for the summer
- Gluten Free bread to be introduced at Communion
- 5 people have been trained on working the Sound/Tech/Video recording equipment for services. Help is still needed for weekday events (funerals, etc).

Church and Society:

Outreach:

- Garage Sale – June 8th
- St. Mark's will be selling BBQ tickets and baked goods.
- Hoping to get volunteers to donate baked goods – Contact Brenda Mayer if interested
- Outreach Team is looking for volunteers to join – right now, it is only Brenda!

Missions:

- Paul Schroeder has joined the Missions Team
- 52 Club members to be recognized with a sticker on their name tag
- \$750 sent to Disaster Relief – money from 52 Club

Pastor's Report:

- Annual Conference is coming up
- There is some yard work to be done at the parsonage – Please reach out to Donna Higgins or Pastor Alberta for more information.
- Discussed possible VBS ideas that have been shared – volunteers that sign up to help will determine the details.

SPPRC:

- Discussed issues with current website – moved by the committee to start over with a new site, with a budget of \$1,000. Motion passed unanimously. Funds to come from the office internet account.
- June 9 Church Service** – open pulpit due to Annual Conference. Council decided to use this time to have an “Open Meeting” style – some aspects of a traditional service, but use the time to update the congregation about what the council and committees have been working on. It will also allow a time for the members to ask questions.

Our meeting was closed with a prayer/benediction sent by Sherry Kesselring.

For more detailed notes from the committees, please reach out to Rob Rindels at robrindels@gmail.com and he will email you committee meeting minutes. We are not able to share the SPPRC minutes due to possible confidential staff information.

June Special Offerings

June 2nd – UMCOR Disaster Relief June 23rd – Iowa City Compassion
June 9th – Domestic Violence Intervention Program June 30th – Iowa City Catholic Worker House
June 16th – 52 Club

Special Offering envelopes are located in the sanctuary door bulletin holders.



2nd – Linda Van Tol 3rd – Jean Skog & Kathryn Bassett 8th – Amy Sanders
12th – Marilyn Tomas 19th – Bob Elliott & Nancy Thuma 20th – Julie Mayer & Mary Frantz Bell
27th – Jenni Bounds 29th – Cindy Opitz
30th – Jane Berwald, Maggie Elliott, Beth Deuel & Donna Tjaden

More Events on the June Calendar:

16th – Father's Day
20th – First day of summer



St. Mark's United Methodist Church
2675 E. Washing St., Iowa City, IA 52245
Office – Shandy Crook – office@stmarks-umc.net 319-337-7201
Rev. Alberta Ervin – alberta.ervin@iaumc.net 712-269-6968
Website: stmarks-umc.net
Worship Sunday morning 9:30am