



St. Mark's United Methodist Church

December 2024

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



Poinsettias

Purchase a Poinsettia to decorate our Sanctuary during December “in loving memory of” or “to honor” someone in your life.

Poinsettia forms are available on the Fellowship Hall table beginning November 24th. Envelopes to place your form and money are on the black box in the narthex. Please place envelopes in black box.

Price = \$12. **Order forms due December 8th.**



The Third Annual Holidays Lights Show is looking for a team of people to help organize the event this year. If you have talents in: driving around to help pick potential contestants, mapping out a route (and possibly making a matching QR code), putting up signs, outreach, baking or buying goods, putting together plates of baked goods, serving baked goods and hot chocolate, fire pit tending, chatting with visitors while giving them cookies, hoping that the weather cooperates etc., we need you!

And of course, members are welcome to enter their homes!

Please contact Kathy Welsh at kwelsh173@gmail.com or call 319 621-4340. We would love to have you!

Severe Winter Weather Guidelines

In the event of severe weather, the church will be closed and all activities canceled anytime Iowa City schools are closed.

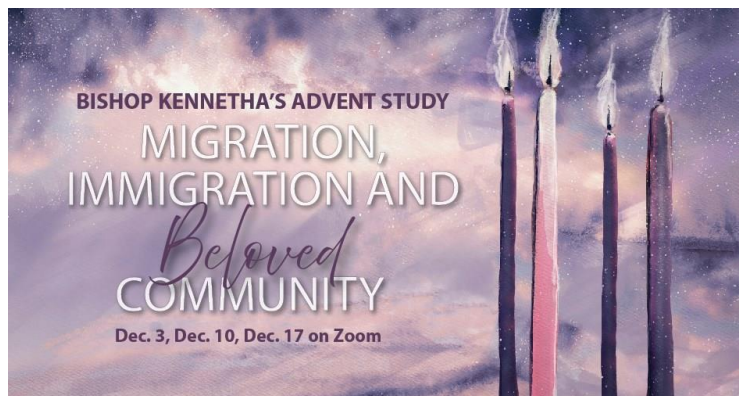
Should severe weather occur on Sunday please check the TV station KCRG, channel 9, or their website for information on Sunday services. In addition, if worship is being canceled due to inclement weather, Pastor Alberta will send out a Flocknote to all members and also put it on the St. Mark's Facebook page.



JESUS a movie first!

WE ARE EXCITED to host a church movie afternoon on **Saturday, January 18, 2025 at 1:30 p.m.** JESUS, Deaf Missions film. God's story is unstoppable when it is in the heart language of a people group. Jesus, A Deaf Missions Film is the first feature film about Jesus in the American Sign Language (with subtitles), using native signers to bring the story of Jesus to life from a Deaf perspective for a Deaf audience.

<http://brushfire.com/faithcontentnetwork/jesus-adeafmissionsfilm/592408> for tickets. \$6.30 ages 13 & over; \$5.25 for children ages 6-12. Childcare is available on site.



All societies are being impacted by global migration, which is surging because of oppression, climate change, and conflict. We know that those who choose to move are in search of survival and a better life. Yet, tragically, immigrants in the U.S. are being demonized, causing some to fear for their safety.

Join us this Advent for a three-week videoconference study focused on global migration, immigration, and beloved community. We will engage the Bible and our Social Principles as we think and pray about our call to love our neighbors as ourselves.

We will learn about the Great Migration, the largest internal migration in U.S. history. During the Great Migration, more than six million African Americans moved from the South to northern, midwestern, and western states to escape racial terror and oppression. This study will present that history through poetry by some of our greatest American poets and through the artwork of acclaimed African American artist Jacob Lawrence.

Gathering at 6:00 pm for a soup supper followed by the study at 7:00 pm.

To register sign-up sheet on the table in Fellowship Hall. We will have the zoom setup in Fellowship Hall on these Tuesday evenings.

Message from Church and Society Committee:

We love our country and the beautiful flag that represents it. Certainly our Veterans have a special place in their hearts for the flag that they fought for. We display the flag proudly on special holidays. But should the U.S. flag stand in the church sanctuary? Not everyone in our community feels the same about the flag due to their personal or their family's experiences in this country. As well as freedom, the flag symbolizes the economic and military power of our country. Should it stand next to the cross which symbolizes the way of Jesus: love, mercy and servanthood?

For more thoughts on this question contact Church & Society Committee, m001brown@gmail.com

Another Successful Event for St. Mark's

2024 Mission Ingathering took place November 2nd in Mt. Pleasant, Here is a partial list of what we donated: 20 personal dignity kits, 30 student kits, 4 layettes, 4 walkers, 1 sewing machine, 1 sleeping mat, 5 baby sweaters, 16 onesies, 6 receiving blankets and assorted school supplies. The value of our donation was \$1,796.90. THANKS TO EVERYONE WHO DONATED TO THIS MISSION.

Graye Matters

The Tuesday December 2nd meeting will be The Briar Club by Kate Quinn. Graye Matters meets in the Youth Room at 9:30 AM.

United Methodist Men

Danille Curtis, with Midwest Mission Distribution Center, will be the speaker for our December 7th meeting at church. Breakfast will begin at 7:30AM, with the program to follow at 8. On December 29th we will be having our pancake breakfast after morning worship. All are welcome to join us.

United Women in Faith

December 18th at 1:00 PM. Join us to learn more about driving electric cars.



2nd – Karen Nobbs 3rd – Diane Thayer 5th – Gene Matthews 8th – Jeanne Bennett, Jacob Parker and Austin Rindels 9th – Cindy McDowell 20th – Barbara Nelson 21st – Angie Bywater 22nd – Annika Rutt

2025 Stewardship Pledge Card

The box for your **Pledge to God** is located in the church office during the week and will be on the altar for a couple of Sunday's in December. If you placed an Automatic Withdrawal form, check or cash in the envelope, please let Kay Seagren(319-330-7495) know as the envelopes will NOT be opened. This is a pledge between you and God.



St Mark's UMC Blue Christmas Service

The Christmas season can be hard for those whose hearts are hurting. The Blue Christmas Service is a service of remembrance and hope. It is a gentle, contemplative service that acknowledges the loss and provides a sense of peace. We need to feel we are not alone.

Pastor Alberta Ervin will lead us in a service that acknowledges the losses we face because there is an empty chair at our table and an emptiness in our hearts. The service is nondenominational. It is open to persons of any or no faith background. It will be a time for remembering and honoring the lives of persons we miss and things that have broken our spirits.

We invite you join us on Saturday, December 21 at 6:30 PM at the St. Mark's United Methodist Church. We look forward to spending a special time together as we remember and open our hearts to God's healing love and grace.



December 24th – Christmas Eve Service 5:00 PM

Free Lunch

This month's day for St. Mark's to provide lunch at the **Free Lunch program is Monday, December 16th.** Pans will be available to pick up this Sunday, December 8th for volunteers to prepare Tater Tot casserole (recipe provided). Also needed are bars and cookies.

Please bring these donations to church Sunday morning December 15th. There is also the opportunity to volunteer on Monday, December 16th 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.

December Special Offerings

December 1st – Missionary Support

December 8th – Missionary Support

December 15th – Missionary Support

December 22nd and Christmas Eve – Local Mission

December 29th – CommUnity Food Bank

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

Coming Soon!

Dinner with Friends!

Plans in the works, more information soon

November Council Minutes

The Church Council met Tuesday, November 19, 2024. The following is a summary of the meeting.

Loving:

We opened our meeting with a prayer, and sharing of joys, concerns, and Glory Sightings.

Learning:

Focus Forward (Angie Bywater) led a discussion on chapters 3 and 4 of “Power Surge.” These chapters discussed a move from a “membership” church to a “discipleship” church.

Leading:

The various council teams reported the following discussions to the Council:

Loving Arms Committee:

- The council discussed the recent developments with the daycare at the church, and delivery of a letter to terminate our agreement to share space with them.
- No further action was taken, although additional meetings with Loving Arms and their representatives will occur in the future.

Trustees:

- New furnace has been installed
- The Boy Scouts and members of St. Mark’s did a wonderful job of clearing leaves off the yard.

Finance:

- No action items noted.
- Discussed Stewardship Campaign – Markus to make announcements in church regarding the possible need to open pledges due to ACH information and checks being included with the envelopes.

Worship:

- Hanging of the Greens on November 24 after the church service
- Blue Christmas on Saturday, December 21
- Christmas Eve – One service at 5:00

Church and Society:

- Presented a letter with information about the American Flag being displayed on the altar at church.
- A discussion followed, where the potential for different points of view on the flag in the sanctuary.
- More discussion to be held after the Advent season – flags were removed to make room for decorations.

Outreach:

- The movie “Jesus” will be shown on January 18, 2025. This movie is completely comprised of deaf actors using ASL and English subtitles.

Missions:

- No report – no action items

Pastor’s Report:

- The Golden Valley District is offering Local Church Leader training on 2/1/2025 in Mt. Pleasant
- Motion brought to the council to donate to the Iowa United Methodist Camps 2025 Campaign. Council approved a donation of \$100.

SPPRC:

- No action items noted.

Discipleship:

- No action items noted

Our meeting was closed with a prayer/benediction by Pastor Alberta.

For more detailed notes from the committees, please reach out to Rob Rindels at robwindels@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.

St. Mark’s United Methodist Church
2675 E. Washing St., Iowa City, IA 52245
Office– 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