

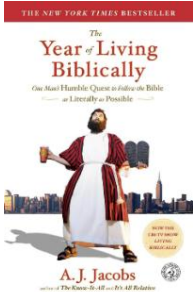


St. Mark's United Methodist Church

January 2026

Our Mission:

Be a community of Jesus' disciples growing in relationship and serving God.



Graye Matters January 6th at 9:30am

The book for December is: **The Year of Living Biblically** by A. J. Jacobs

Graye Matters is a monthly book club that meets in the Youth Room on the first Tuesday of each month at 9:30 a.m.

"From the *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Know-It-All* comes a fascinating and timely exploration of religion and the Bible. A.J. Jacobs chronicles his hilarious and thoughtful year spent obeying as literally as possible the tenets of the Bible.

Raised in a secular family but increasingly interested in the relevance of faith in our modern world, A.J. Jacobs decides to dive in headfirst and attempt to obey the Bible as literally as possible for one full year. He vows to follow the Ten Commandments. To be fruitful and multiply. To love his neighbor. But also to obey the hundreds of less publicized rules: to avoid wearing clothes made of mixed fibers; to play a ten-string harp; to stone adulterers..."

All are invited to attend!

Any questions regarding Graye Matters book club, please see Barb Fisher-Krueger



United Methodist Men

UMM Meeting & Breakfast is January 10th at 8:00am

Januaries guest speakers will be: The Communion Outreach Team

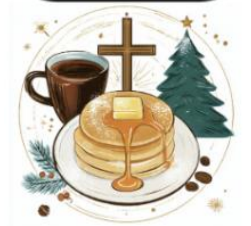
Paul Schroeder, Barb Fisher-Krueger, Lou Schooley, and Jim & Deborah Schoenfelder

Everyone is welcome and invited to join the United Methodist Men for breakfast and fellowship from 8:00 am to 9:30 am on Saturday January 10th in Fellowship Hall. The guest speakers this month are the wonderful men and women of St. Mark's that make up the Communion Outreach Team. These wonderful individuals work together to take communion to home bound individuals in our community and help them know they are a COGPOW and important members of our community and church.

If you, or someone you know, would like to have communion brought to you, please contact these members, or the office, to have home communion arranged. We appreciate all that they do and hope you join the UMM in learning more about them.

The UMM host breakfast with a guest speaker once a month and everyone is invited to attend.

This breakfast is not just for men, but hosted by "United Methodist Men".



United Methodist Men Pancake Breakfast Following Worship:

The United Methodist Men make pancakes each 5th Sunday, of months with 5 Sundays. The next pancake breakfast will be on: March 29th, 2025

Breakfast is following Worship in Fellowship Hall. Please plan to attend – it is always delicious & fun!



The Missions Committee Meeting: January 6th at 1:30 pm

Please plan to meet in the conference room of The Summit of Coralville
3 Russel Slade Drive, Coralville IA 52241.

Please forward any questions to Gene Matthews or Dennis Preslicka



United Women of Faith: January 28th at 1:00 pm

The United Women of Faith will be meeting next on Wednesday, January 28th at 1:00 pm in Fellowship Hall for their pledge service and installation of officers. The program is presented by Lynn Calvert and Hostess is Beth Yeates.



Free Lunch Program: Monday January 19th

1105 S. Gilbert Court, Iowa City



This month's day for St. Mark's to provide lunch at the Free Lunch program is Monday, January 19th.

3 ways to help with the Free Lunch:

1. **Pans will be available to pick up next Sunday, January 11th** for volunteers to prepare Tater Tot casserole (recipe provided) and bring in next Sunday; January 18th.
2. Also needed are bars and cookies. Please bring these donations to church Sunday morning January 18th
3. There is also the opportunity to volunteer on Monday, January 19th beginning as early as 10:30 preparing silverware packets, salad and dining room setup and serving food at noon and then clean up 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.



St. Mark's Backpack Program – We Need You!



St. Mark's Backpack Program is an important outreach provided by our church family to ensure that food insecure students at Grant Wood Elementary have something to eat over the weekends throughout the school year. In serving these kiddos, we deliver bags of food to the school each Friday morning that school is in session. (If school is out on a Friday, we deliver on Thursday.) The bags of food are stored in a locked closet at St. Mark's. We fill tubs at the church with the designated number of bags to be delivered and take them to the school office by 12:00 noon. (A cart makes it easy to transport the tubs to and from St. Marks to the delivering vehicle, the school and back. The tubs and cart are then returned to the office to use the following week.) The school then distributes the bags to the children that have signed up for the program. Start to finish it's about an hour, but what an important hour of the day to provide for the students that need this extra over the weekend.

There is a sign-up sheet in Fellowship Hall. We will need some lead people in the months of February and early March especially. And, if you are interested in co-chairing this outreach program, please let me or our office assistant Mandy know. Many hands make light work!

-Ann Parker, icparkers4@gmail.com – 319-430-3544



CPR/AED Training: January 25th at Noon! Please Sign Up!

A CPR/AED class will be held in the church on Sunday, January 25th at noon. *This will be a class/demonstration only not a certification.*

The goal is to help people be ready in the event of someone who experiences a cardiac emergency.

We are needing an estimate of the number of people that will be attending to arrange for enough equipment and instructors. A sign-up sheet will be available in Fellowship Hall &/or you may also notify Nancy by phone/text: (319) 430-4794 or emailing to: rkrtzfld@aol.com,



January 2025 Birthday List!



January 1st: Rob Rindels
January 3rd: Erica Davis
January 6th: Jenilyn Lewis & Jeremy Nobbs
January 9th: Cheryl Davis
January 10th: Cora Sanders
January 11th: Mark Brock
January 14th: Sherry Kesselring
January 17th: Randy Yeates

January 19th: Ellen Cary-Grimm
January 21st: Dennis Stevens
January 22nd: Nicki Paulsen
January 23rd: Adam Bywater & Larry Kral
January 24th: Elijah Anderson
January 26th: Marge Aldinger & Brom Leopold
January 30th: Francesca Brown

Was your birthday this month but you don't see your name on the list? Please contact the office by phone or email to add your birthdate- we would all love to wish you a very Happy Birthday!



Do you lead a group that meets in the church? Please read:



Please be get your schedule to the office asap – I have only gotten a reply from two groups & if I have not noted your communication in the reservation, your room could be booked by another user.

Please also be on the lookout for a new Building Use & Guidelines Agreement form that will be arriving this month for you to read, sign, and return to the office. This will be sent in email, paper copies will be available and I will send a reminder in the bulletin as well.

Additional reminder: No room in the church is permanently designated to any group. All meeting times need to be on the church calendar (*not spontaneous*) to hold a reservation. You can send your schedule to the office by email: Office@stmarks-umc.net or drop a letter in the mailbox or on the office desk.

Any questions, please don't hesitate to ask: We love for you all to use the church as much as possible so please get those schedules for 2026 submitted.



We have so many things to be thankful for and appreciative of that happened in 2025!

We have such an amazing fellowship here at St. Mark's and it was a pleasure to see all of the love and goodness that was spread to thanks to all of you!



A few special thanks we would like to mention for December of 2025 are:

1. Fleece Blankets – Kay Seagren
2. Christmas Stockings – Brenda Mayer
3. Teacher Gifts – Diane Berwald

I want to thank each of you for your hard work and thoughtfulness in making these missions happen & your special thank you to the congregation is listed below.

Teacher Gifts: Last Day January 11th – Thank you!!

Thank you to those who donated teacher gifts! For those still looking to donate, we will be receiving donations until January 11th, 2025. Please drop your donations in the office. Any questions, please contact Diane Berwald.

Fleece Blanket Distribution

THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU!!

“I feel so blessed to be part of this congregation! Thanks to your help tying over 7,500 knots, 20 fleece blankets were distributed to DVIP, United Action for Youth and the Shelter House. Jesus said “Love your neighbor as yourself”. What a wonderful blessing to be able to provide warmth and comfort to our neighbors in the community.” -Kay Seagren

Christmas Stockings: Thank you!

“A huge thank you to everyone who helped and/or donated to the stockings!

The following organizations received Christmas stockings:

- The United Action for Youth (UAY), The Parent Program: 19 stockings
- DVIP, Domestic Violence Intervention Program: 47 stockings
- Shelter House: 23 stockings
- Iowa City Rehab: 65 stockings
- Catholic Worker House: 20 stockings

The balance of 421 Christmas stockings went to Iowa City Compassion and were handed out by Julie Troyer and Brenda Mayer on Wednesday, December 17th, 2025.

At the end of Wednesday, there were a few left that were designated for families receiving Toys for Tots and to seniors in supported housing to give to their grandchildren.

Again, thank you so much for sharing God’s love to the world here in the Iowa City area.

Look out for the winter clearance sales happening soon! We will continue to need a lot of hats, gloves/mittens, and fluffy socks for Christmas stockings in 2026!” - Brenda Mayer

Looking for ways to give in January + Tithe.ly:



Easter Baskets! –

Easter baskets are next on the list and donations of individually wrapped toothbrushes and Easter plush would be greatly appreciated! Please drop your donations to the office or place in room 103.



New for 2026: We will be collecting for Food Pantries throughout the year, as we have previously done with a monetary collection on the 4th Sunday of each month. We are now adding physical collecting each month of items not available on SNAP or allowed to be bought by food banks. You see, unless specifically indicated at the time of donation, all money received by food banks can only buy food, which is great but we all know there is more than food needed; toilet paper, shampoo, laundry soap, diapers, etc.

To assist in another way, each month, we will be collecting non-food items!

January we will be collecting:

- Shampoo
- Bar soap
- Tampons/pads

These will be divided between Iowa City Compassion and CommUnity Food Pantry.

Thank you, in advance. - Brenda Mayer



Christmas Stockings:

For those looking to donate to the Christmas Stockings for 2026 – keep your eye out for excellent sale and clearance items now and in the coming weather changes! Items such as warm hats, gloves/mittens, socks, are always greatly appreciated. Please drop donations in the church office or Room 103.

Contact Brenda for any questions and, as always, thank you so much!



You will notice something new in the bulletin & slides: Tithe.ly – A new way to pay!

Our Iowa City St. Mark's is proud to now offer an additional way to pay for tithes & offerings called Tithe.ly.

How to Use Tithe.ly: You can download the app &/or use the website to pay using your bank, debit card, or credit card. Simply scan the QR code on the slides screen and complete the online form (*more instructions below, if needed*).

Fee Coverage: You can choose to “Cover the Fees” option or have it taken from your donation.

Purpose: The Tithe.ly platform is a modernized way of giving aimed at making the process of giving more convenient and provide additional options for payment.

How to scan a QR Code using your mobile device:

1. Open your phone's camera app
2. Point your device at the QR code, as though you are going to take a picture (don't take a picture, just hover)
3. A code should appear “**give.tithe.ly**”
4. Click on the link/code which will direct you to the website & ability to download the app, if you choose.

You do not have to download the app in order to use Tithe.ly.

The app should be easy to walk through but please don't hesitate to ask any questions you may have by contacting the office or Diane Berwald.



Tithe.ly





January Special Offering:

January 4th: Self Help International (*Sponsor: Missions*)

Self-Help's mission is to alleviate hunger by helping people help themselves. Our locally-hired team of skilled professionals serve rural communities in Ghana in West Africa and Nicaragua in Central America, to improve the population's quality of life with dignity.

Our approach emphasizes sustainable solutions, focusing on education, training, and leadership development to enable families and communities to meet their needs with dignity. Operating under the principle of providing a "hand up" rather than a "handout," Self-Help International is not a relief organization but a catalyst for long-term development and sustainability. Our proven track record showcases our effectiveness in helping people help themselves, ultimately improving their quality of life.

January 11th: Iowa United Methodist Camps (*Sponsor: Annual Conference*)

The mission of Iowa Methodist Camps is to allow our youth to explore Christ's love in a safe and welcoming environment. Our annual campaign has become vital to the sustainability of our outdoor Christian faith experience for both our youth and adults.

The annual campaign celebrates relationships both with God and with one another. It is an opportunity to share a camp story and the importance of continuing this ministry for our youth.

Over the past three years, these stories have been shared with thousands during the February campaign, and the campaign's success provides both Okoboji and Wesley Woods U.M. Camps to thrive and move into the future.

January 18th: Human Relations Sunday (*Sponsor: General Conference*)

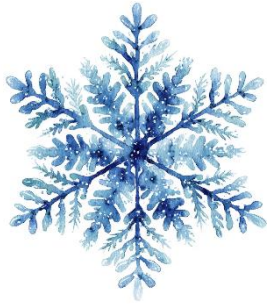
Human Relations Day is one of six churchwide Special Sundays designated to support ministries and causes important to the entire United Methodist Church. This day invites congregations to strengthen communities, especially those facing poverty, injustice, or lack of opportunity. Inspired by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s vision of the "beloved community." Human Relations Day calls us to build relationships rooted in dignity, equity, and love. The Offering Supports:

- Community Developers Program (57%) This program helps churches serve their neighborhoods—especially communities of color—by focusing on local needs like education, employment, and empowerment.
- United Methodist Voluntary Services (33%) This program equips volunteers and congregations to tackle injustice through hands-on projects, community organizing, and service-learning opportunities.
- Youth Offender Rehabilitation Programs (10%) These church-supported programs help young people rebuild their lives through mentoring, leadership training, and positive, faith-based community experiences.

January 25th: CommUnity Food Bank: (*Sponsor: Missions*)

CommUnity Food Bank at Pepperwood Plaza provides produce, bakery, deli, dairy, health, baby, hygiene and non-perishable items. Residents of Johnson County, IA can receive grocery assistance once per week. Clients may choose their own items with some limits based on family size. Pre-made bags are available for individuals who prefer not to shop. Shopping at the Food Bank is completely free and confidential.





JANUARY WORSHIP VOLUNTEER SCHEDULES:



St. Mark's COMMUNION SERVER Schedule	
January 4 th Communion Sunday	Station 1 – by sliding glass doors Nancy Krutzfield & Kay Seagren
	Station 2 – middle section Pastor & Diane Berwald
	Station 3 – by piano Dennis & Carol Preslicka

Acolyte Schedule	
Date	Volunteer
January 4 th	Izzy Berwald
January 11 th	Melanie Rose Justice
January 18 th	Izzy Berwald
January 25 th	Melanie Rose Justice

St. Mark's Usher Schedule	
January 4 th <i>Communion Sunday</i>	1. Lee McKnight 2. Cam Davis 3. David Bywater
January 11 th	1. Boyd Crosby 2. Dennis Preslicka
January 18 th	1. Deb Jansen 2. Donna Higgins
January 25 th	1. Ann Parker 2. Tom Shepherd

St. Mark's Scripture Reader Schedule	
January 4 th Communion Sunday	Lead by Megan Congregation Read
January 11 th	Mary Brown
January 18 th	Ann Showers
January 25 th	Cindy McDowell

Thank you all for your willingness to volunteer during worship! You are all very appreciated.

A copy of the schedule is located in the Narthex, Fellowship Hall, both Usher Stations and in newsletters; as well as a week in advance on bulletin "next week" on cover page. I will continue to send reminders at the end of the week.

Please be sure to get all days/times you are unable to volunteer into the office so we can mark you as unavailable: Once the schedule is made, if you are unable to cover your scheduled shift, please contact someone on the list of volunteers (at each usher station and in weekly/monthly emails) to cover your shift and let the office know of the updates as soon as possible.

I work on limited hours so rearranging the schedule after it is made can be very difficult & time consuming so your assistance in this is necessary as well as greatly appreciated.

If you would be willing and would like to become a volunteer, please see the office or blue sheet hanging on the bulletin board located in the Narthex (near office)

Again, thank you all so very much – you are a part of what makes St. Mark's so wonderful!



December 2025 Council Meeting Minutes Summary:

December Council Meeting Summaries

December 10, 2025 via Email

Email motion from the Nominations Team to approve Julie Troyer as a new member of the Staff Parish Relations Team. Approved

December 16, 2025 via Zoom

Motion that SPRT is not going to hire a replacement custodian.

Discussion:

- SPRT would suggest Trustees execute a contract with Premier Cleaning for custodial services.
- Premier Cleaning did the cleaning earlier this year when the custodian was not on duty and they are temporarily doing the cleaning 15 hours a week.
- Finance has reviewed this and approved the moving of the custodial Staff budget line and merging it with the Trustees Janitorial Supplies, increasing it to \$20,000 (covering the contract and supplies). This would be an increase of about \$6,000.

Premier Cleaning would supply all products except paper goods and soap.

Motion approved by those on Zoom and with proxy vote from Boyd Crosby and Nancy Krutzfield

Motion that Trustees enter into a contractual agreement with Premier Cleaning. Approved by those on Zoom and with proxy vote from Boyd Crosby and Nancy Krutzfield

Next Council meeting January 20th at 6:30 PM



Winter Weather Reminders:

- Please keep an eye on KCRG for Worship Cancellations, in the event of bad winter weather and unsafe driving conditions – stay safe!
- If the Iowa City Community School District is closed due to weather, the office will be closed as well.



Sunday Service Live Streams & Bulletin: Earlier this year, Facebook changed their policy on live streams to where they only stay up for 30 days before being automatically deleted. However, if you need to access a service we keep all our past ones on our website, stmarks-umc.net, under the Worship Services tab as well as on our YouTube page, St. Mark's UMC Iowa City. For any questions, email Sam at media@stmarks-umc.net

The weekly bulletins are no longer being sent via email but can be accessed on the website: <https://stmarks-umc.net/worship-services-and-announcements/>



Thank you for joining us in Worship!

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 mornings 9:30am – 10:30am



The January-February 2026 Edition of The Upper Room is available. Please grab your *FREE* copy in the Narthex!