

upcoming@St. Mark's

the monthly newsletter of St. Mark's United Methodist Church

ADVENT PEACE, ADVENT SHALOM

Advent, which marks the start of the Christian year, begins on Sunday, December 3rd. It is a time of expectant waiting and watching as we prepare for the celebration of the birth of Jesus. As we move through the four-week Advent sojourn toward Christmas, we anticipate songs of angels which proclaim "peace on earth". During this Advent Season, St. Mark's United Methodist Church will explore ways we might embrace peace and Shalom. Advent Candle lighting readings, songs and scriptures will highlight this theme. In every Sunday morning bulletin during Advent, there will be an insert with actionable suggestions as to how we may seek peace and Shalom in our lives and community. Also, on Monday evening, December 11, there will be a "Blue Christmas" Service which will seek to bring comfort and peace to those who are having a hard time during the holidays.

ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS AT ST. MARK'S

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 3RD (THE FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT)

10:30am Sanctuary Worship

3:00pm Bloomington Chamber Singers Concert at St. Mark's

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10TH (THE SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT)

10:30am Sanctuary Worship: Lessons and Carols

with Choir, Bells, Flutes, And Cello

MONDAY, DECEMBER 11TH

7:00pm Blue Christmas Service

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17TH (THE THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT)

10:30am Sanctuary Worship

3:00pm Bloomington Chamber Singers Messiah Sing-Along

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24TH (CHRISTMAS EVE)

10:30am Sanctuary Worship (Fourth Sunday of Advent)

3:00pm Christmas Eve Communion Service with Candle Lighting and Carols

5:30pm Christmas Pageant and Candle Lighting

11:00pm Christmas Eve Service with Candle Lighting and Carols

mark your calendars!

sun 12.03 umw cookie shoppe Chamber Singers' concert

sun 12.09 women's christmas breakfast

12.11 blue christmas service

sun 12.10 lessons and carols deadline to order Xmas poinsettias

12.11 blue christmas service

12.13 xyz christmas dinner

12.13 advent Messiah sing-along

sun 12.24

AM sanctuary worship afternoon service pageant candlelight service

mon 12.25, tues 12.26 fri 12.29 & mon 1.1 St. Marks' building closed

ST. MARK'S BUILDING WILL BE CLOSED ON THE FOLLOWING DAYS FOR THE HOLIDAYS

a observance of the Christmas and New Year's holidays, the St. Mark's building will be closed as follows:

Monday, December 25th-closed Tuesday, December 26th-closed Friday, December 29th-closed Monday, January 1st-closed

There will be no staff members in the building and there will be no events planned at the church. In case of a pastoral emergency, please call 812-325-9406 or 812-219-8377.

AN UPDATE & THANK YOU FROM THE STEWARDSHIP TEAM



An Update & Thank You from The Stewardship Team
As of November 27th, 107 pledge cards had been returned for the 2018
Stewardship Campaign: Where the Heart Is, totaling \$412,385. Also, as of
November 27th, new and additional pledge cards had been returned for the
capital campaign Project St. Mark's: The Sequel (which includes the recent
repaving of the parking lot). *

We deeply appreciate your commitment and pledges to both campaigns. If you have already returned your pledge cards, or are doing so soon, thank you! This will help church leadership determine an estimated budget for next year. We recognize that some of you may need more time for discernment regarding pledges, and are grateful for pledges received through the fall and beyond.

Stewardship packets are available in Garton Hall and in the church office. Pledges can be returned anytime in the offering plate, to the church office, or can be filled out online via the link on the church website (www.smumc.church/pledge). Thank you for your generosity in supporting the ministries and missions of St. Mark's!

* Project St. Mark's: The Sequel is a two-year capital campaign, which began last year. We have added 17 new pledges (as of November 27th) for a two-year total (2017-18) of 100 pledges and a current total of \$206,260. The goal is \$275,000.

You may be eligible for additional tax advantages depending on how your structure your charitable giving to St. Mark's. See the following page of this month's Upcoming for information that has been provided to by Hurlow Wealth Management, the firm that manages the church's endowment fund.

ADDITIONAL TAX ADVANTAGES FOR GIVING A NOTE FROM THE ENDOWMENT AND STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEES

Hurlow Wealth Management, who manages the church's endowment fund, has provided the following information regarding tax advantages for giving to charitable organizations. The article also includes methods for donating appreciated stock and your Required Minimum Distribution (RMD).

1. Consider Gifting Appreciated Stock Instead of Cash

Cash gifts and stock gifts both allow you to take a charitable income tax deduction. When you gift long term appreciated stock to a charitable organization, you receive an additional tax benefit, because you avoid paying tax on the "built-in" capital gain for your stock. If you were to sell an appreciated stock, you would have to pay capital gains tax. The capital gains tax rate ranges from 15% - 23.8% (as of this writing), depending on your income. However, if you were to gift the stock directly to St. Mark's, you could avoid the capital gain all together and an additional tax deduction for the donation. Even better, St Mark's is able to sell the stock without having to pay capital gains tax.

2. If you are over age 70-1/2 and are required to take money out of your IRA each year, you should read this.

Did you know that instead of taking your yearly Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) from your IRA and paying tax on it, you could give it directly from your IRA to the church or other charities? The benefit is that the donation counts as your required minimum distribution but doesn't increase your adjusted gross income, which can be a great benefit if you don't itemize and can't deduct charitable contributions. In addition, keeping some or all of your RMD out of your adjusted gross income could help you avoid the Medicare high-income surcharge or help make less of your Social Security benefits taxable. (You can't double-dip tax breaks and deduct the charitable contribution if you make the tax-free transfer to charity.)

The money needs to be transferred directly from the IRA to the charity in order to be tax-free. If you withdraw it from the IRA first and then give it to the charity, you can deduct the gift as a charitable contribution (if you itemize), but the withdrawal will be included in your adjusted gross income. To make such a transfer, contact the financial institution that handles your IRA and tell them that you want all or part of your Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) to be sent directly to the church or qualified non-profit of your choice.

If you have any questions or need help with either of these methods of giving, please feel free to reach out to John C. Hurlow, Hurlow Wealth Management Group www.hurlowwealth.com 812-333-4726 jhurlow@hurlowwealth.com.

SIGN UP FOR CHRISTMAS EVE PAGEANT: ALL CHILDREN & YOUTH WELCOME TO PARTICIPATE!

All children and youth (preschool through senior high) are invited to be part of the Christmas Eve Pageant at 5:30pm! There are both speaking and non-speaking parts, with roles being age appropriate and matching the interest of the child or youth. Children and youth can also participate by greeting (handing out bulletins), sharing a piece of music or art, lighting candles, etc. There are roles for Everyone! Sign up in Garton Hall, or contact Mary Beth Morgan or Sarah Gettie McNeill. Costumes will be available for selection on Sundays in the Youth Room or by contacting Mary Beth or Sarah Gettie.

There is one Pageant rehearsal on Saturday, December 23rd at 10:30am. (If you cannot be there, let us know.) All interested children and youth can participate, including friends and visiting grandchildren and other relatives. Walk-ons are welcome. Contact Mary Beth with any questions. We look forward to sharing in this great night together!

Christmas Pageant Help Needed!

Regardless of your skill set, the Christmas Eve Pageant needs you! Please contact Mary Beth Morgan if you can help.

Before the Pageant

- *Help children/youth choose costumes
- *Make simple costume repairs, wash or iron
- *Help with simple set-up of Sanctuary
- *Go shopping for needed items

During the pageant and rehearsal

- *Be an adult helper for a group of pageant participants (angels, shepherds, manger animals, magi, main speaking parts, greeters, candle lighters, etc.)
- *Serve as an usher during the pageant, helping everyone find a seat.

After the pageant

*Help reset the Sanctuary or collect costumes.

DINE AND DONATE AT BUCCETO'S

WEDS DEC 6TH 4PM-CLOSING

Benefits St. Mark's Nursery School & Kindergarten

When you dine in or carry out from either Bloomington Bucceto's between 4pm and closing, mention St. Mark's Nursery School and Kindergarten and 20% of the total you spend will be donated to the Nursery School and Kindergarten! Can't make it on December 6th? No problem. This "Dine and Donate" opportunity occurs the first Wednesday of each month.

CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES HOLIDAY SCHEDULE CHANGES: SUNDAYS, DECEMBER 24TH AND 31ST

There will be no Celebration or Sunday School classes these mornings. Nursery care will be provided, starting at 10:15am. Older children are encouraged to stay in the sanctuary for worship, and Busy Bags will be available with Christmas-themed activities to keep busy hands and minds engaged, even as they absorb the worship around them. If you have any questions, please contact Sarah Gettie McNeill, Director of Children's Ministries.

ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS POINSETTIA ORDERS

Ordering continues through Monday, December 10th for poinsettias to decorate the Sanctuary and Garton Hall during Advent and Christmas. Poinsettias may be dedicated in honor or memory of loved ones or friends. You will find an order form at the Welcome Desk. Place your completed order in the OW THRU offering plate, bring your completed order form to the church office, or call the church office at 812-332-5788. The cost for each poinsettia plant is \$10. Checks can be made out to St. Mark's. Please be sure to note "poinsettias" in the check memo.

BRING ITEMS FOR "MUSH" CHRISTMAS TREES

There are multiple MUSH Christmas trees at St Mark's: in the sanctuary, Garton Hall and in the Nursery School

NOW THRU CHRISTMAS EVE & Kindergarten Hallway. You are encouraged to bring in new Mittens, Underwear, Socks, and Hats, for children and adults in need of these items. You are welcome to hang hats and mittens (or gloves) on the trees, and place underwear and socks under the trees. Items will be donated to Monroe County United Ministries.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 9TH, 9:30AM ST. MARK'S WOMEN'S CHRISTMAS BREAKFAST

Please join us for the 3rd Annual Women's Christmas Brunch. Enjoy breakfast, the Christmas story, and Christmas carols in Garton Hall Please RSVP by Tuesday, December 5th to Nina Taylor (823-322-9242) or Linda Crawford (812-336-2277). We don't want anyone to go hungry!



upcoming events

BLUE CHRISTMAS SERVICE

The holiday season, a joyful time for so many, can be very challenging for others.

MON DEC 11 7:00PM In this time of joy, many of us are poignantly reminded of times of sadness and loss. You are invited

to join us for a Blue Christmas service of Comfort and Healing in the sanctuary, sponsored by the Care Ministries of St. Mark's United Methodist Church. Blue Christmas is a contemplative service with carols, readings, reflections, and candle lighting. Everyone is welcome; we hope to see you.

CHRISTMAS TRAINS ARE RETURNING TO ST. MARK'S!

Rev. Robert Sharp and the Bloomington Model Railroad group have again agreed to set up a Christmas Village complete with an ON 30 operating Christmas train! The train will be in operation in Room 12 beginning on December 3rd, before and after worship. The village will be a traditional 1950 vintage town with a winter theme. The NOW THROUGH CHRISTMAS

layout will be open and running before and after church on Sunday mornings in December. Other viewing times can be arranged by appointment. For more information, contact Robert Sharp or Charlie Matson (matsonhoosier@yahoo.com or 812-331-0413), or you can call or email the church office.

OLDENBURG – MINDFULNESS MEDITATION SAT, DEC 9 PRACTICES CARPOOL FROM

Join the group from SM AT St.

Mark's which is making another 7:15AM road trip to the convent at Oldenburg,

IN, for workshop led by Sister Olga Wittekind, PhD & Claire Sherman, PhD. Drawing from the insights of Rumi (a 13th century Sufi Mystic & Poet) & Richard Rohr (a Franciscan Friar whose daily meditations are read online by tens of thousands), the class will explore how mindfulness can reduce the stressful chatter that clutters our minds - and how meditation can then place our minds & hearts into quiet currents headed toward spiritual growth. Register for the class at: http://www.oldenburgfranciscancenter.org/. The \$45 fee includes lunch at the convent. The workshop will run from 9:30am to 2:30pm. Our group will carpool, leaving the south parking lot of St. Mark's at 7:15am & making a quick stop for coffee & breakfast

XYZ CHRISTMAS DINNER

Plan to attend the eXtra Years of Zest Christmas Dinner and Entertainment in Garton Hall. The cost is \$15.00 per person. Dinner will be provided by Bucceto's and also include homemade desserts. Punch and appetizers at 5:30pm precede the six o'clock dinner. Christine Conrad will provide an inspirational musical program.

This is a wonderful opportunity WED, to enjoy time with old and DEC 13TH new friends. If you are new 5:30PM to St. Mark's and 50 years

older, please consider putting this on your calendar. Sign up on the sheet at the Welcome Desk in Garton Hall, or contact the church office by December 10th Make check payable to St. Mark's UMC and note on memo line that this is for XYZ Christmas dinner. If you wish to pay with cash, put money in envelope and mark it "XYZ Christmas Dinner". No reservations will be accepted after Sunday, December 10th. Your name on the sign-up sheet in Garton Hall is your reservation!

or

Upcoming@St. Mark's -6- DECEMBER, 2017

christmas eve at St. Mark's sunday, december 24th

SUN, DEC 24th 10:30AM

SANCTUARY WORSHIP

Christmas Eve falls on a Sunday this year, and we will share in a joyful intergenerational worship celebration at 10:30am. There will be no Children's or Youth Sunday School or Infant/Toddler care, and we will enjoy having everyone together in the sanctuary. We look forward to celebrating together!

SUN, DEC 24th 3:00PM

EARLY SERVICE WITH COMMUNION AND CANDLE LIGHTING

Join us mid-afternoon at 3:00pm in the sanctuary for a service of lessons, carols, Communion, and candlelight.

SUN, DEC 24th 5:30PM

CHRISTMAS EVE PAGEANT

Plan to be here for this wonderful service! It is a special ministry of our children and youth (Preschool through Senior High) to share the story of Jesus' birth on Christmas Eve. Children and youth will share special music; the congregation will sing hymns; the angels will bring good news; the sheep will baa; the cows will moo; the camels will say whatever camels say; the shepherds will keep watch; the innkeeper will have no room; the magi will bring gifts. We will all welcome Mary, Joseph, Baby Jesus (and their donkey). As we end our celebration, we will light candles as we sing Silent Night together.

SUN, DEC 24th 11:00PM LATE CANLELIGHT SERVICE Carols, liturgy, and the story of the very first Christmas as told in Luke's Gospel will guide us through the final hour of Christmas Eve and into Christmas morning. We will all share in the singing of hymns and light candles as we join our voices in the verses of Silent Night.

SUNDAY DECEMBER 24th

CHRISTMAS EVE OFFERING

This year, the offering from the three Christmas Eve services will be divided evenly between The Bishop's Christmas Offering for Children and the St. Mark's Nursery School & Kindergarten Scholarship Fund. The Bishop's offering supports Indiana Outdoor Camp Ministries, Children and Youth Homes, and United Methodist ministries which help feed, clothe, and educate children locally and globally. Nursery School & Kindergarten Scholarships help provide high quality care and early childhood education for children whose families need some financial tuition assistance, especially when faced with unexpected hardships or medical crises. Thank you for your gifts that night, and for the many ways you support the needs of children, near and far.

small groups

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10TH, 6:00PM

Parents of Youth Night, Location to Be Announced

All parents of youth (and grandparents/other loving adults caring for pre-teens and teenagers) are welcome!

Enjoy some food & conversation with other folks raising teens. If you have questions or would like to be on a contact list for future gatherings, contact Dawn Walters at dquillen@indiana.edu or the church office.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 12TH, 5:30PM

Buddies of St. Francis

Buddies of St. Francis is a small group experience for those who love animals and believe that our spirituality is enhanced by their presence in the world and in our lives. This humans-only gathering will be a time to share stories, reflect, and consider opportunities for advocacy. Join us in Room 8 on Tuesday evening, December 12th, at 5:30pm. Contact Jimmy Moore for more information.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 12TH, 6:30PM-8:00PM

Prayer Shawl Ministry

Prayer Shawl Ministry now meets once a month, on second Tuesdays at 6:30pm. We invite those who knit or crochet to help provide prayer shawls for those experiencing grief, change, and life joys. We also make baptism blankets and special projects.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 13TH, 5:30PM—7:00PM

Meal Share Food Repack

Each month, St. Mark's volunteers go to Hoosier Hills Food Bank to repack donated food for agencies which provide food for families. For more information, contact Glenda Murray at glmurray@indiana.edu.

WEDNESDAYS IN DECEMBER, 1:00PM-3:00PM

St. Mark's Quilters & Crafters

Bring your quilting or crafts to Room 10 and spend time with others who enjoy these activities. All skill levels are welcome and encouraged to attend. Quilters & Crafters will meet in Room 10 on December 6th & 13th. On Wednesday, December 20th, the Quilters will meet at 11:30am at Longhorn Restaurant for their Christmas lunch, and they will then go to a quilter's home to quilt and craft. The Quilters & Crafters will not meet on December 27th. Contact Patti Wright with questions.

small groups

THURSDAYS IN DECEMBER, 11:30AM-1:00PM

Women of Wonder and Faith

A group of faithful, journeying women meeting weekly to read and discuss books on various topics of faith. We are reading John Shelby Spong's book Biblical Literalism: A Gentile Heresy through December 21st. The group will not meet December 28th and January 4th; this group will resume meeting on January 11, 2018. Please join us as we move along our faith journey, collectively and individually, as well as build valuable friendships to support each other through life's many challenges and joys. Contact the facilitator, Maria Schmidt marschmi@indiana.edu, with questions and to let her know you are coming.

FRIDAYS IN DECEMBER, 12:30PM AT BELL TRACE

Conversations On Life Men's Group

During December, the Conversations on Life men's group will be reading and discussing several articles from REFLECTIONS: Yale Divinity School regarding the Reformation: Writing the Next Chapter. The group meets every Friday at 12:30pm in the private dining room, at the basement level on the west side of the main building of Bell Trace. Visitors are always welcomed.

opportunities to serve

SUNDAY MORNING BREAKFAST FELLOWSHIP

Our breakfast event each Sunday continues to grow in popularity. It has become a great way to start the morning, to meet new people, and to provide a deep welcome to all who come our way. It is also a great way for those groups who help provide breakfast to receive free-will conations for their own mission effort or a cause they value. Sign up today in Garton Hall to provide breakfast on a future Sunday. Contact the church office or breakfast coordinator, Christine Conrad, at 812-961-2959 or silent2hear@gmail.com

looking ahead to january

MONDAY, JANUARY 15TH, 8:30AM - 11:00AM

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service

Remember Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. through acts of service with others. St. Mark's invites all ages to participate in our day of service opportunities in collaboration with other faith communities and non-profits. The day begins with a light breakfast at St. Mark's followed by two hours of volunteer opportunities. Participants can choose volunteer options in the community or at St. Mark's. More information and volunteer options will be available in early January. If you can help organize this great day, please contact Mary Beth Morgan.

sundays at St. Mark's

our regular sunday schedule:

BREAKFAST	9:00am	Garton Hall
ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL Pilgrims Nomads Bible Banter	9:15am 9:15am 9:30am	Room 13 Room 10 Room 11
INFANT & TODDLER CARE Infants Toddlers	9:30am-11:30am	Room 24 Room 25
Celebration! CHILDREN, FAMILY & FRIENDS OF ALL AGES	9:30am-10:15am	Garton Hall
SANCTUARY WORSHIP SERVICE	10:30am	Sanctuary
CHILDREN AND YOUTH SUNDAY SCHOOL Preschool Kindergarten-1st Grade 2nd-3rd Grades 4th-5th Grades Youth: 6th-8th	10:30am-11:30am	Room 27 Room 28 Room 9 Room 4 Room 3 Room 1,2

adult sunday school: december classes

BIBLE BANTER

The Bible Banter class uses the Scripture text for the morning's sermon as a discussion-starter. Looking at the passage in its larger context, and sometimes exploring a bit of Bible-writing history, we offer thoughts on what the morning's sermon might look like, based on the Scripture the pastor has selected. We leave time to discuss implications of the Scripture on our own lives, and often find ourselves delving into topics that wind up far afield from the morning's original topic. You are invited to bring some coffee/breakfast from Garton Hall into Room 11 and join the conversation. Bible Banter will not meet on December 24th and will meet on December 31st.

NOMADS

On December 3rd & 10th, the Nomads class will read & discuss The Gift of Years: Growing Older Gracefully by Joan Chittister. This book consists of a series of very short essays on many different aspects of life that might change as we approach older age. All are welcome to join Nomads in Room 10 (even without reading the book!). Nomads class will not meet December 24th or on December 31st.

PILGRIMS

Pilgrims' Sunday Morning Class is studying how the five major religions – Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Buddhism and Hinduism – address the same core issues. We are embarking on this effort using a video lecture series titled Comparative Religion by Professor Charles Kimball, Professor and Director of the Religious Studies Program at the University of Oklahoma.

As we explore the nature of faith, the lecture series provides an in-depth look at how the five great faiths address the issues of creation stories, concepts of the divine and ultimate goals.

Pilgrim's December lectures include:

Dec 3rd – Lecture #10 – "Sacred Texts – The Bible and the Qur'an"

Sacred scriptures are central components of many religious traditions. This discussion on sacred texts focuses on the scriptures connected with the Abrahamic religions: Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

Dec 10th – Lecture #11 – "Sacred Texts for Hindus and Buddhists"

The body of literature deemed sacred by various Hindus and Buddhists is massive and somewhat bewildering. This second lecture on sacred texts will help demystify the major types of sacred literature in these traditions.

Dec 17th – Lecture #12 – "Polytheism, Dualism, Monism and Monotheism" Almost all religions include some conceptualization of divinity. The question "What do we mean when we say God" is far more provocative than we imagine.

Dec 24th and Dec 31st – With the Holiday season, the Pilgrims Class is not meeting these Sundays. Join us on Sunday 7 January 2018 for Prof Kimball's lecture titled "From Birth to Death – Religious Rituals".

Each week, discussion follows the video. All are welcome to join Pilgrims in Room 13.



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10:30am Sanctuary Worship: Lessons and Carols

MONDAY, DECEMBER 11TH

7:00pm Blue Christmas Service

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17TH (THE THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT)

10:30am Sanctuary Worship 3:00pm Bloomington Chamber Singers Messiah Sing-Along

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24TH (CHRISTMAS EVE)

10:30am Sanctuary Worship
3:00pm Early Service with Communion and Candle Lighting
5:30pm Christmas Pageant and Candle Lighting
11:00pm Late Service with Communion and Candle Lighting

St. Mark's United Methodist Church of Bloomington, Indiana is an inclusive community bringing Christ-like love, healing and hope to all. We embrace the United Methodist ideal of Open Hearts, Open Minds and Open Doors by welcoming those of all races, cultures, faith traditions, sexual orientations, and gender identities.

Upcoming @ St. Mark's is published each month as an information resource and guide to the activities and events within and around the St. Mark's church community. Copies are distributed at the beginning of each month along with the Sunday worship bulletin. Additional copies are available at the Welcome Center Desk, at the main entrances to the building, or by contacting the Church Office. An online copy of Upcoming @ St. Mark's can be downloaded from our church website (www.smumc.church). To submit articles for publication, please contact the church office.

St. Mark's United Methodist Church

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