



The Spirit of St. Mark's

The Mission of St. Mark's United Methodist Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world...A world of justice, love and peace filled with people growing in the likeness of Jesus Christ.

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Message from the Minister

A Pastoral Letter for the New Year

Happy New Year! Can you believe it? It's 2025—25 years since we stepped out of the 1900s! That feels like a big milestone.

A new year often brings change, fresh opportunities, and moments of reflection. As we say goodbye to 2024 and welcome 2025, I encourage you to take a moment to look back. How was the past year for you? What did you gain? What did you lose? What do you mourn, and what do you celebrate? Reflection is good for the soul, and the new year is the perfect time for it.

First, we want to express our heartfelt gratitude for the generous gifts shared this Christmas. Your kindness and love are deeply appreciated. We feel truly blessed to serve and grow with you here at St. Mark's.

As we move into 2025, we will be transitioning to a lead team model. You'll start seeing these changes take shape over the coming months. One notable change begins in February: our newsletter format will shift. While you're used to seeing reports from various committees, this approach will be evolving. The details are still being finalized, but we wanted to give you a heads-up—stay tuned!

This month, we've also launched a new preaching series titled "Tough Questions." This series tackles difficult questions about

God, faith, justice, and life's challenges. If you have a question you'd like considered, there's a submission box at the Narthex Welcome Counter. While I may not be able to address every question in a sermon, I welcome your thoughts and look forward to exploring these topics together.

As we step into this new year, may God bless each of us with peace, joy, service, and love. I look forward to all that 2025 will bring for our church family.

With gratitude and blessings,
God Bless,
Pastor Mark



***"Behold, I am making all things new. The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; His mercies are new every morning. Great is His faithfulness."
(Revelation 21:5 & Lamentations 3:22-23)
A reminder that in this new year, God's love renews us daily, offering fresh beginnings and unwavering faithfulness.***

CHURCH CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

Mark Your Calendars: 'What's Happening'

We have already stepped into 2025, our hearts are filled with excitement and anticipation for all that God has in store—not just for each of us individually, but for our entire church family. A new year often brings reflection, and we may find ourselves asking, *"What does it mean to have a truly prosperous year?"* While success is often measured in worldly terms, we believe that real prosperity comes through **enriched relationships, deepened faith, and generous service**. It is in **fellowship, spiritual growth, and acts of kindness** that we experience the fullness of God's blessings.

At SMUMC, we are committed to making this year one of spiritual enrichment and meaningful outreach—both within our church family and in our broader community. We believe God is calling us to live out our faith in new and renewed ways, strengthening our walk with Him while extending His love to others.

There's always something exciting happening here! Whether you're looking for worship opportunities, fellowship, or ways to serve, we have plenty of opportunities in the coming months. We invite you to join us, get involved, and step into all the wonderful things God has planned for 2025!

Beginning:

February 2—Chili Cookoff Contest at 5:30-7:30pm in Fellowship Hall. Bring your best chili recipe for a chance to win the beloved Chili Trophy. If you want to attend to sample admission is \$5 per person or \$10 for a family. All proceeds go to support St. Mark's Missions and Outreach projects. Contact: Pastor Mark or Lyn Bucalo.

February 7—Serve City at 5:00pm. We will be serving about 45 residents "Love Themed" meals and desserts. Sign up sheet on the Narthex bulletin board. Volunteers arrive at 5:45pm at Serve City, to set up and serve. Contact: Lyn Bucalo or Tari Randall.

February 9—Souper Bowl Food Drive to support our Lil' Food Pantry. We are tackling hunger together and scoring big for our community pantry. Drop off your donations by Sunday, February 9. We are collecting food for St. Mark's Food Pantry. Pick up a full LIST of items needed at the Welcome Counter.

February 9—Ladies Fellowship: Women's Business Event at 3:00-5:00pm in Fellowship Hall. Sign up at the Welcome Center to participate. Contact: Sue Luken or Peggy Smith. (More info page 5)

February 17—2025 Church Directory News & Update
We are updating the Church Directory! Due to privacy and online security, please let us know whether you would like your name, address, and phone number to be included in the online directory or kept private. Printed copies of the 2025 Directory will be available for people to pick up by March. If you would like to submit an updated photo to be included in the directory. Kindly share your preferences and photo with the church office by February 17, Monday. Please note that we will **not include birthdays and anniversaries** in the updated version. Contact: Lyn Bucalo.

February 21—Ruth Circle at 1:00-2:30pm in Fellowship Hall.
All Ruth Circle is a welcoming fellowship group that meets monthly for a time of connection, inspiration, and spiritual growth. Each gathering is unique, featuring light refreshments or occasional luncheons, a devotional reading, shared prayer requests, and engaging discussions. We often host guest speakers who bring fresh insights and encouragement. Whether through fellowship, faith, or meaningful conversations, Ruth Circle offers a warm and uplifting space for all who attend. Contact: Pam Guynes

February 25—Lunch Bunch 12pm
Join us each month for socializing and fellowship and of course great food at various local restaurants. Everyone is welcome to come; just reserve your seat with Sue Beckett.

March 4—Shrove Pancake Dinner
Shrove Tuesday, also known as Pancake Day, is a long-standing tradition marking the day before Ash Wednesday and the start of Lent. Join us for a fun and festive Pancake Dinner featuring handmade pancakes, a delicious toppings bar, refreshing beverages, and great fellowship—come hungry and ready for a flipping good time! Contact: Sue Luken & Peggy Smith for details.

March 5—Ash Wednesday Service in Sanctuary from 7:00-8:00pm
Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of Lent, a solemn season of reflection, repentance, and spiritual preparation leading up to Easter.

March 8—Matthew 25 Ministries at 11:00am-1:00pm, Saturday.
Join us as we lend a helping hand to those in need by sorting supplies, packing essentials, and preparing resources for distribution. Every small act of service contributes to a greater impact, bringing hope and relief to individuals and families facing hardship. Contact: Lynne Schumacker

March 23—Lasagna Love in Fellowship Hall & Kitchen from 9:00am-5:30pm
We will putting lasagna's together for families within the community. A list of items posted soon for donations. More details coming. Contact: Cindy Miller for details

March 30—UMCOR Sunday Service in Sanctuary at 9:30am.
A special offering day in the UMC that supports the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR), ensuring that 100% of donations to disaster response and humanitarian aid go directly to those in need.

April 8—Shared Harvest from 12:30-2:30pm
We are looking for volunteers to help at Shared Harvest. Contact Debbie Bryant for details.

RECAPPING CHURCH EVENTS

Recap: Senior Christmas Party

The Senior Christmas Party held on December 14, was a delightful afternoon filled with food, music, and holiday cheer in Fellowship Hall. Guests brought their favorite covered dishes and desserts to share, along with gifts for a festive exchange. ***It was a festive occasion, bringing joy and Christmas spirit to all who attended.***



Recap: Ruth Circle Christmas Luncheon & Gift Exchange

The Ruth Circle gathered for a wonderful time of fellowship at our annual Christmas Luncheon and Gift Exchange on December 20. A total of 21 ladies attended, each bringing a covered dish or dessert to share, along with a \$1.00 gift for our fun exchange game.

The tables were beautifully decorated in white and green, each featuring a centerpiece depicting a meaningful scene from Jesus' birth. One table displayed wise men, another a shining star, one held a nativity scene, and another was adorned with a golden angel—all adding to the festive and sacred atmosphere.

The ladies had a wonderful time playing games, enjoying delicious food, and fellowship with one another, and opening gifts. Laughter and joy filled the room as we celebrated the Christmas season together in the spirit of love and gratitude. **The NEXT MEETING IS FEBRUARY 21 @ 1:00PM**



Recap: CYF Ministries Outing to "Winter Wonderettes"

Everyone who attended this lively and heartwarming show on Dec. 8th had a great time. Directed by our very own Sue Combs and Chris Beiser, filled the afternoon with music, laughter, and festive fun, setting the perfect tone for the



holiday season. One of the highlights of the show was the hilarious audience participation, which left us in stitches as the selected audience members ad-libbed their way through their roles in the most entertaining way possible!

It was a wonderful opportunity for our church family to come together, enjoy a joyful performance, and show our support for Sue and Chris. Thank you to all who attended and made this special outing such a memorable and laughter-filled experience!



Sweet Treats & Tacky Sweaters: A Festive Recap of Cookie Diva & Ugly Sweater Contest: On Dec. 15th, our Fellowship Hall was filled with the sweet scent of cookies and the boldest (and ugliest) holiday fashion!



The Cookie Diva Christmas Cookie Contest brought out our most talented bakers, each submitting their most delicious creations. After much cookie tasting and sweet deliberation, the winners were crowned! ***Tari Randall took the coveted "Cookie Diva" title, while Alazae won "Best use of Chocolate", Amelia claimed "Best Looking Cookie", and Molly & Alex triumphed in the "Junior Division."***



Meanwhile, the Ugly Sweater Contest turned into a parade of festive (and frightful) holiday fashion! From Deer's, Cats and Grinches to dazzling Santa sequins, our contestants did not disappoint. After much laughter and "critiquing," ***Denny Mullen earned the title of Ugly Sweater Champion of 2024!***



A big thank you to all who baked, dressed up, judged, and cheered. This event was filled with holiday spirit, joy, and, of course—plenty of cookies!

See you next year for more sweet tasty cookies and questionable fashion choices!



Bonus Holiday Highlight:



If you missed it, Pastor Mark stole the show with his "happy face" Grinch smile, proudly holding a well-loved (and slightly tattered, missing "L") Thankful sign. Whether he was feeling festive or just embracing the chaos of the season, we may never know—but one thing's for sure, it was a picture-perfect moment!

ST. MARK'S MISSIONS AND OUTREACH



Whether it's a homemade casserole, heart-shaped cookies, or a comforting dish made with love, every contribution will bring warmth and joy to those who receive it.

We invite you to take part in this meaningful act of service! You can contribute by donating a meal, baking a dessert, or a monetary donation that goes toward purchasing food. It's a simple yet powerful way to spread love, uplift spirits, and serve our neighbors.

If you'd like to participate, please reach out for more details to Lyn Bucalo or Tari Randall. A sign up sheet is located at the Narthex bulletin board. We'd love to have you join us in making a difference!

At SMUMC, we believe that faith is best expressed through service, compassion, and a commitment to making a difference in the lives of others.

Our church is actively engaged in missions and outreach, partnering with local organizations to provide food, shelter, and support to those in need. Whether it's assisting families facing hardship, offering meals to the hungry, or lending a helping hand to those experiencing crisis, we strive to be a beacon of hope and love in our community.

Through volunteering, donations, and acts of kindness, we are living out Christ's call to serve. Whether you have a heart for feeding the hungry, supporting shelters, mentoring youth, or responding to urgent needs, there are many ways to get involved. We invite you to join us as we extend God's love beyond our church walls and into the community—because together, we can make a lasting impact.

On January 16, a dedicated team of 12 volunteers gathered at Shared Harvest to serve our community with compassion and generosity filling 315 senior boxes. Together, we packed and distributed food to those in need, ensuring that local families received the support they rely on. It was a wonderful time of fellowship, teamwork, and making a real difference!

*Whether you've volunteered before or are looking for a new way to give back, we'd love for you to **join us** at our next Shared Harvest event. Every helping hand brings hope, and together, we can continue to serve with **love and purpose!***



Coming up Friday, February 7, we have a special opportunity to share love through a warm meal as we collect and prepare "Love-Themed" meals and desserts for Serve City (in Fairfield).



This initiative is a way for us to extend kindness, care, and nourishment to those in need, reminding them that they are valued.



FEBRUARY MISSIONS: SHOE DRIVE

We are collecting new and gently used shoes to support those in need within our community—Fairfield City School Students. A simple pair of shoes can provide comfort, dignity, and protection for someone facing hardship.

If you don't have shoes to donate but still want to help, monetary donations are also appreciated to assist with purchasing additional footwear. Every contribution, big or small, makes a difference! If you have any questions or would like to make a donation, please contact Jenni Hensler or Tari Randall.

OPPORTUNITIES TO FELLOWSHIP AND GATHERINGS

The Importance of Fellowship at SMUMC—At SMUMC, we believe that fellowship and gatherings are essential for building a strong, connected church family. Taking time to come together allows us to get to know one another, share in life's joys and challenges, and strengthen our faith as a community. Whether through shared meals, small groups, or special events, these moments of connection encourage, uplift, and unite us in Christ's love. We invite you to join us in fellowship as we grow together in faith and friendship!

LADIES FELLOWSHIP: Women's Business Spotlight Event, February 9, 3:00-5:00PM, Fellowship Hall

Join us for an exciting afternoon of connection, creativity, and community at our Women's Business Spotlight Event! Ladies from our church and their family and friends are invited to showcase unique products, with opportunities to browse, shop, and place orders. To participate, please contact Peggy Smith or Sue Luken to ensure variety—spots are filling up with amazing vendors like Mary Kay, Pampered Chef, handmade jewelry by Lyn Bucalo, handmade jewelry by Chelsea Cavendar, and homemade candles just to name a few! For everyone else, come support these incredible women while enjoying refreshments, fellowship, and inspiration. Sign up at the Welcome Center and spread the word—let's make this event a success! Contact Peggy Smith or Sue Luken.



SHROVE PANCAKE DINNER, Tuesday, March 4, 5:00-6:30PM, Fellowship Hall

Shrove Tuesday, also known as Pancake Day, is a long-standing tradition that marks the day before Ash Wednesday and the beginning of Lent. The word "Shrove" comes from the old English word "shrive," meaning to confess and receive absolution, making this day a time of reflection and preparation for the Lenten season. Historically, people would use up rich ingredients like eggs, butter, and sugar before the fasting period, which led to the delicious tradition of eating pancakes!

Join us for a fun and festive Shrove Tuesday Pancake Dinner at church! Enjoy handmade pancakes and a build-your-own toppings bar filled with chocolate, fresh berries, whipped cream, syrup, butter, and more. Pair your pancakes with refreshing beverages as we gather for an evening of fellowship, tradition, and great food. Don't miss this chance to indulge before Lent begins—come hungry and ready for a flipping good time!



LUNCH BUNCH, Tuesday, February 25, 12pm

Good Food, Great Company, and Fellowship! Looking for a way to enjoy a delicious meal while connecting with others? Join our Lunch Bunch, where food, fellowship, and fun come together in the best way possible!

Each month, we gather at a local restaurant to share stories, laughter, and a tasty meal in the company of friends—both familiar and new. It's the perfect time to socialize, build friendships, and simply enjoy being together outside of church. Whether you're a longtime member or just looking to meet new people, all are welcome to pull up a chair and be part of the conversation!

The restaurant location and reservation deadlines are announced in the bulletin, so keep an eye out for the outings. For more details, contact Sue Beckett. We can't wait to dine, laugh, and share in the joy of fellowship with you!

Come hungry for food and friendship!



WEEKLY AND MONTHLY GROUPS/REHEARSALS

GETTING INVOLVED

At SMUMC, we believe that true prosperity is found in meaningful relationships, deepened faith, and a heart for service. One of the best ways to experience this is by gathering regularly in fellowship, study, worship, and creativity. Whether you're looking to grow spiritually, connect with others, or use your talents for God's glory, we have a place for you!

Our weekly groups and rehearsals are open to everyone—whether you're joining for the first time or have been participating for years. From Bible studies and prayer gatherings to music rehearsals and creative workshops, there are plenty of ways to engage, learn, and serve. Take a look at our weekly opportunities, and we encourage you to step in and be part of something special!



Mondays at 10am, Ladies Craft Group—meets in the craft room. Join our Monday Craft Ladies for a fun

and creative time filled with painting, sewing, cross-stitching, and more—no experience needed, just bring your enthusiasm! Contact: Shirley Aydlett.



Mondays at 6:30pm, Ladies Bible Study. We are working our way through the entire bible one chapter at a time

for spiritual growth and meaningful discussions. The group is open to ALL women, at any time. Contact: Kym Nguyen.



Wednesdays at 7:30am is Men's Prayer Group in the Prayer Room. Start your Wednesday mornings in a

powerful way by joining our Men's Prayer Group. Gather with fellow men of faith for a time of reflection, prayer, and encouragement as we lift up our hearts, our church, and our community in prayer. Contact: Jeff Gering.



Wednesdays at 2-3pm is Bible Study Group.

There is no pre-reading required and anyone can come at any time as we study and have discussion around what we read that day. Contact: Sue McDaniel.



Wednesdays at 6:30pm is Handbell Practice.

Everyone is welcome to join this joyful practice—no prior experience or ability to read sheet music is required. Just bring your enthusiasm! Contact: Sue Combs.



Wednesdays at 7:30pm is Choir Rehearsal in the Sanctuary. We warmly welcome

new voices to join our choir at any time—it's never too late to make a joyful noise! No prior experience or sheet music reading skills are required—just a heart for worship and a love for singing. Contact Chris Beiser.



Ruth Circle at 1:00pm is on the 3rd Friday each month. Ruth Circle is a welcoming community of

women dedicated to faith, friendship, and inspiration. Whether you are seeking meaningful conversations, opportunities to serve others, or a supportive group of women, this is the perfect place for women. Contact Pam Guynes.



Lunch Bunch at 12:00pm is on the 4th Tuesday each month.

Looking for good food, great company, and a fun way to connect with fellow church members? Join us for Lunch Bunch! Each month, more than 20(+) of us gather at a different local restaurant to enjoy a meal, share stories, and build friendships in a relaxed, friendly setting. Whether you're a regular or joining us for the first time, we'd love to have you at the table. February 25 is our next planned gathering at Stone Tavern at 701 Greenwood Avenue, Hamilton 45011. Contact: Sue Beckett.

As we continue to walk in faith together, these gatherings offer a space to grow, share, and support one another. Whether through heartfelt discussions, joyful music, or creative expression, each group provides a unique opportunity to strengthen our connection with God and each other.

No matter your background, experience, or stage of life, there's a place for you in our community. We invite you to step in, try something new, and discover the blessings of fellowship. We look forward to growing, worshipping, and serving with you!

MUSIC MINISTRY NEWS

Ohio Military Band & St. Mark's Handbell Choir Christmas Concert Recap

On December 12, St. Mark's was honored to welcome the **Ohio Military Band for a spectacular holiday concert led by Director Mark Hensler**, who has guided the group for 30 years. The evening was made even more special with performances by Sue Combs, St. Mark's Handbell Choir, Chris Beiser, and other special guests, bringing the spirit of the season to life through festive and beloved Christmas music. It was a joyful way to begin the holiday season, filling hearts with music, celebration, and community spirit.



Christmas Cantata Recap: One Incredible Moment

On a special Sunday worship (December 15) filled with **music, reflection, and the spirit of Christmas**, our congregation gathered for the moving presentation of *One Incredible Moment* by Max Lucado. Through **narration, heartfelt solos, and powerful choral performances**, we journeyed through the **story of Christ's birth**, witnessing the wonder of **Mary, Joseph, the angels, shepherds, Simeon, and the wise men as they each experienced the miracle of the Messiah's arrival.**

With **beautiful solos, duets, and ensemble pieces** performed by our talented choir members, the music brought to life the **majesty of that holy night**. Under the direction of Chris Beiser, with Sue Combs as accompanist, and the support of Rick Kiefer on sound, this cantata was a powerful reminder of the **hope and joy found in Christ's birth**. Thank you to everyone who participated and attended—you helped make this a truly **incredible moment!**



FINANCE NEWS

Happy New Year, St Mark's Family. We are at the beginning of a year 2025. Let me start off with where we stood at the end of November 2024. As of the writing of this article we still had a few weeks until the end of the year. We ended November with \$63,969 in our checking account while our savings account stands at \$64,477. Just a reminder that \$39,420 of the savings account can only be used for improvements to the property on the St Marks campus.

We are working on paying off the Park National Loan in December. We want to thank everyone who has already given extra to help obtain that goal. It is worth noting that the Finance Committee voted to continue to "save" the amount of the loan payment once the loan is paid off. Meaning, we will be putting the amount of the loan payment into the savings account to assist us with major projects that will be coming our way. We think that is a good way to bolster funds so we will not be forced to go to a lending institution for funding major projects.

Remember, if you notice any issues with your statement, please contact Penny Dole and/or Carol Gering as they will be able to assist you with getting the issue resolved.

We are working on the budget for 2025. Committee Leaders and Staff—be on the lookout for your budget requests. We ask that you be conscious of prices for items when completing your requests. We need to have realistic numbers requested so we are not unnecessarily surprised when the actual expenses come in and they are higher than expected. We appreciate your time in completing those budget requests.

As always, if you have any questions or comments regarding the finances of St Mark's, let us hear from you. If we do not have an answer for you right away, we will research and get back to you.

Gale Goodman, Finance Committee Chair
Bill Schumacker, Treasurer



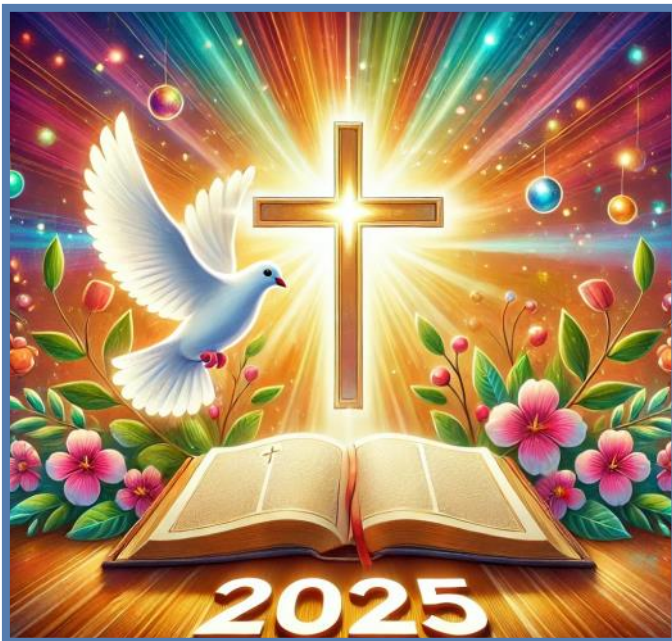
CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILY MINISTRY

RE:FORM TRADITIONS WITH OUR 2025 CONFIRMATION CLASSES!

Our 2025 Confirmation journey is off to a wonderful start! With our first few meetings behind us, participants have begun forming friendships, deepening their understanding of faith, and exploring the foundations of Christian life. It has been a time of learning, sharing, and growing together as we embark on this important spiritual journey. We look forward to the discussions, experiences, and faith-building moments the coming months will bring!

Confirmation Calendar:

- ◇ **Sundays at 9:30 AM – 2/16, 3/16, 3/30, and 4/06**
- ◇ **Sundays at 6:00 PM – 2/23 and 3/23**
- ◇ **Confirmation Sunday – April 20 (Easter Sunday)**
- ◇ **Annual Easter Egg Hunt – April 12**



How You Can Help:

The Confirmation experience is enriched by the support of our church family. Here's how you can be part of this special journey:



Share Your Faith Story – Speak with our class on any 2nd Sunday morning or submit a written testimony of your faith journey. Your story can inspire and encourage our students as they grow in their faith.



Donate a Meal – Before each evening session, our students share a meal together. You can prepare a meal for 10 people or donate gift cards for Raising Cane's, Taco Bell, KFC, or Domino's.



Support Our Mission Work – Consider making a donation to help fund a mission opportunity for our Confirmation students.

Your involvement makes a difference in the lives of our youth as they learn, grow, and take steps toward their confirmation in faith. If you have any questions or would like to help, please contact Peggy Smith. Let's continue to uplift and support our confirmands as they prepare for this milestone in their faith journey!



CELEBRATION OF SERVICE

LEAD TEAM TRUSTEES:

FROM: BILL DICHTL & TONYA LEGUINA

Happy New Year 2025! Spiritual growth is often imperceptible, changing us in ways we may not realize. It is sometimes surprising when we find ourselves responding in a new way, making unexpected choices, and meeting life and service differently than the way we always had. When we listen to our inner voice and trust the Lord within to protect and guide us, it is easier to live in harmony. May peace and harmony be yours as we embark on a new year and new ways of serving.

As we make a fresh start in 2025, we would like to take a moment to look back on what was accomplished in 2024 and thank the former Trustees Team for all their time and work throughout the year.

SPRING:

- Additional handicapped spaces were approved/ added
- Trimming, mulching, weeding, weed and feed applied to church lawn
- Handrails leading into the kitchen were painted
- The large refrigerator fan and interior were deep cleaned
- Interior of the church received additional cleaning, and small maintenance projects including window washing

SUMMER:

- New security and fire alarm system installed
- Annual HVAC and roof inspection completed
- Parsonage ceiling fan installed
- Parsonage air conditioning system maintenance
- Four new exterior lighting sconces installed
- Administrative Assistant's office was renovated
- Trimming, weeding and landscaping work

FALL:

- Bell storage was moved to a new and secure location
- Interior cleaning out and organizing, as well as some painting
- AED inspection – New youth and adult pads and battery installed
- Parsonage heating unit maintenance
- Family Restroom project plan finalized – Transformation taking place in January of 2025

Call out to: Shane Becker, Penny Dole, Kathy Fitzpatrick, Jim Howell, Matt Snyder, and Kristy Theiss, thank you for your service and dedication to St. Mark's. We look forward to working with you all in new ways, and new roles going forward this year.

PARKSIDE GIVING TREE RECAP:

ST. MARK'S DECEMBER MISSIONS

The St. Mark's family was honored to once again support the Parkside Giving Tree this year, spreading joy and kindness to those in need. Through this heartfelt mission, our congregation came together to purchase 76 wrapped gifts for the residents, ensuring that each one received a special present and felt the warmth of Christ's love during the holiday season.



For many, the holidays can be a difficult time, but thanks to the generosity of our church family, smiles were brought to faces that might have otherwise gone without a gift. Each tag on the Giving Tree represented a need or wish, and our members stepped up with open hearts to fulfill them. Every donation made a difference in someone's Christmas.



We are grateful to everyone who participated, whether by selecting a tag, purchasing a gift, offering prayers, or helping with the collection and delivery. Your kindness and generosity reflect the true spirit of giving and remind us all of the joy that comes from sharing Christ's love with others.

Thank you for making this mission possible! We look forward to continuing this tradition and blessing even more lives next year.



MEMBERS SPOTLIGHT

KATHY FITZPATRICK

For more than a year, Kathy Fitzpatrick has been a dedicated and vibrant presence in the church office.

Her upbeat personality, unwavering commitment, and deep love for St. Mark's have been a source of inspiration to all who have worked with her. If you haven't had the pleasure of meeting Kathy yet, you might recognize her voice—she's been a cherished member of the choir for many years. Kathy has a special fondness for music, with one of her favorites being the beloved hymn, "I Come to the Garden Alone." Many will undoubtedly agree that it holds a special place in their hearts as well.

When Kathy isn't brightening up the office or sharing her musical gifts, she's at home with her husband Mike and also her beloved pet bearded dragon, Fred. Kathy's love for animals is well known, and she enjoys all kinds of creatures. Her lighthearted spirit shines through in the fun and quirky moments she shares, from the "show and tell" stories about her grandfather's WWII—Japanese flag to the many jokes that keep Pastor Mark and the office staff smiling.

Kathy is also an avid reader and participates in her neighborhood book club, where she shares her love for literature with others. Recently, she embraced the winter weather with a fun-filled sled ride, reminding us all of the spark of childhood memories that last a lifetime.

Alongside her husband Mike, Kathy has been an integral part of the St. Mark's family for many years. They enjoy road trips to places like Gatlinburg and Florida, and cherish time with their grandchildren, hosting exciting and memorable events. We are so thankful for Kathy's joyful presence in our church family and the many ways she touches the lives of others, bringing smiles and warmth to all.



SHIRLEY AYDLETT

For over 25 (+) years, Shirley Aydlett and her husband, Bud, have been faithful and dedicated members of our church family. Shirley's warm smile and kind spirit are a blessing to everyone she meets, and her commitment to serving others has made a lasting impact on our St. Mark's congregation.

Shirley is an active and dedicated member of many church groups and ministries, always ready to lend a helping hand. She currently leads the Monday Ladies Craft Group, where creativity and fellowship come together. In addition to guiding the group, she helps organize craft sales, with all proceeds supporting important needs within the church.

Each year, she also takes the reins in organizing the Annual Senior Christmas Party, ensuring our seniors enjoy a festive and joyful celebration. In addition, she faithfully attends Wednesday Bible Study, participates in Ruth Circle, and is a regular at the monthly Lunch Bunch, always bringing joy and laughter wherever she goes.

No matter the occasion, Shirley greets everyone with kindness and a cheerful heart. Whether she's crafting, organizing an event, or simply sharing a conversation, her uplifting presence makes a difference in the lives of those around her. Even through good times and challenging times, she continues to place her trust in the Lord, demonstrating a faith that is both inspiring and unwavering.

We are truly grateful for Shirley and the countless ways she gives of her time and talents. Her dedication, faith, and joyful spirit enrich our church family, and we are blessed to know her. Thank you, Shirley, for your years of service, kindness, and unwavering faith!



CELEBRATIONS AND GRATITUDE

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

Wade Lewis	02/03
Susan Bunte	02/04
Alex Robinson	02/04
Arvilla Brinkmeyer	02/07
Lauren Leyrer	02/08
Ann Brabbs	02/11
Julie Dichtl	02/11
Doug Ewald	02/11
Jean Stivers	02/11
Cindy Booker	02/20
Kyle Robinson	02/21
Alice Becker	02/22
Shane Becker	02/22
Shirley Grant	02/25
Belinda Peters	02/28

MARCH BIRTHDAYS

Kristina Stanifer	03/01
Mike Aiken	03/02
Diana Gregory	03/04
Lee Brinkmeyer	03/05
Abby Randall	03/07
Helen Bowman	03/10
Denny Mullen	03/11
Kathy Fitzpatrick	03/14
Mark Luken	03/16
Hayden Meyer	03/16
Pastor Mark Gregory	03/19
Paul Huelsman	03/19
Chris Beiser	03/20
Colin George	03/21
Tyler George	03/21
Pat Fassnacht	03/22
Kaden Theiss	03/22
Bill Dichtl	03/23
Jim Jones	03/23
Cameron Smoot	03/24
Doreen Robinson	03/27

FEBRUARY ANNIVERSARY

John & Linda Prohaska	02/01
Dick & Darlene Kuertz	02/11
Donal & Sue McDaniel	02/12
Don & Cheryl Kemen	02/20
Jeff & Carol Gering	02/28

MARCH ANNIVERSARY

Don & Marilyn Stewart	03/06
Wayne & Tari Randall	03/07

If your birthday or anniversary is not listed or is incorrect, please contact the church office at 513.844.1818

GRATITUDE NOTES

From Eleanor McCollum & Family:

Thank you all, for helping Mom celebrate her 100th birthday. It was so special to get all of the cards and well wishes from everyone! We hope everyone had a wonderful and safe Christmas and bless new year!

From The Davis Family:

A note of thanks for the prayers, food ,cards and calls after the passing of our father and husband, Dick Davis. From the planning of the service to those who prepared food and meal afterwards, we felt the love and support of our St. Mark's Family. A special thank you to Pastor Mark for the wonderful service, to Lyn for the bulletin that she designed, to Sue for her musical choices that were perfect for our family. We feel so blessed to be part of this wonderful community at St. Mark's.

From Freida Hawkins:

(We apologize for the delay on this note of thanks)

Thank you, St. Mark's for hosting such a fabulous birthday celebration for my 100th birthday. Thank you to Chris Beiser and Kathy Fitzpatrick for singing my favorite songs and for all who had a hand in the preparation of this occasion. I had a marvelous weekend and am recuperating. Love my St. Mark's Family and miss being unable to attend services. With Love.

I would like to take a moment to express my heartfelt gratitude for your patience and understanding during the transition of our January/February 2025 newsletter. Your support has been invaluable, and I am deeply appreciative of your kindness during this time. A special thank you for the many cards, notes, text messages, and phone calls I received to wish me a happy birthday and to offer comfort during my illness over the holidays. Your caring words have meant more to me than I can fully express.

As I reflect on the past year, I am filled with gratitude for the many cherished memories I have made with so many of you. The images and snapshots that were captured throughout the year bring back both smiles and moments of sorrow, as we remember loved ones who have passed. I am so thankful to be part of this extended family, and I am deeply moved by the support you have shown me, whether during small, everyday moments or during our larger, joyous celebrations. Thank you for making me feel truly at home here. With love, Lyn



4601 Fairfield Avenue
Fairfield, OH 45014

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JANUARY/FEBRUARY NEWSLETTER 2025



St. Mark's Staff :

Pastor Mark Gregory
Admin. Assistant, Lyn Bucalo
Director of Music, Chris Beiser
Pianist & Bells, Sue Combs
Director of Children & Family Ministries, Peggy Smith
Pastor Emeritus, Bob Klingel
Access the church calendar on our website at
<https://www.fairfieldstmarks.com/calendar/>

Church Office Hours :

9:30am– 3:00pm on Tuesday,
Wednesday, Thursday and Friday
Monday - (Office Closed)
Phone: 513.844.1818
www.fairfieldstmarks.com

Worship Service:

Sundays 9:30 am
(In-person & Livestream)