

# JUBILEE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

February 2025



ST. MARK'S  
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

4780 E. 126th St., Carmel, IN 46033  
317.846.4912 stmarkscarmel.org



## Something for Everyone



### There's something for everyone coming soon at St. Mark's

Stay warm with St. Mark's friends this winter. There's something for everyone to participate in including Chili Cookoff, Talent Show, Dessert Extravaganza, Winter Jam, and the Food Pack. Don't miss out!

SEE [STMARKSCARMEL.ORG/EVENTS](https://stmarkscarmel.org/events) FOR DETAILS

# Upcoming Events

Take a look ahead at St. Mark's upcoming events. Please visit [stmarkscarmel.org/events](http://stmarkscarmel.org/events) for all event details.

## SUMMER CAMP REGISTRATION

Registration begins Friday, February 14 at 8 AM

- Club 56 Mission Camp: June 9-12
- Sacred Puppet & Drama Camps: June 16-20
- Vacation Bible Camp (VBS): July 7-11
- Middle School Camp Rivervale: June 22-27
- High School Camp Epworth Forest: June 22-27



[REGISTER](#)

## COMING SOON



- Chili Cook-Off - Feb. 2
- Sr. High Winter Jam Concert - Feb. 7
- UMM Breakfast - Feb. 8
- Infant Recognition - Feb. 9
- UWF Dessert Extravaganza - Feb 9
- UWF Gathering - Feb. 11
- Summer Camp Registrations Begin - Feb. 14
- St. Mark's Talent Show - Feb. 16
- Dine to Donate - Feb. 20



- Ash Wednesday - March 5
- Hoosier Brass Band - March 16
- Children's Lenten Musical - March 23
- All Church Food Pack Mission - March 23

# Pastor's Place

Dear Co-workers in Christ,

As I am writing this pastor's note we are looking forward to inauguration day in the United States. It is an occasion for us to pray for a peaceful transition in our nation's government. We are also in the midst of an anticipated leadership change here at St. Mark's as I near retirement and Bishop Malone appoints a new lead pastor.

In recent years there have been those who have postulated that just praying is not enough to get us to where God is trying to lead us. My personal belief in prayer is that it is often the way that God leads us to further action. The biblical writer James puts it this way: "What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but do not have works? Can faith save you?"

If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill," and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that? So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead." (James 2:14-17, NRSV)

A few years ago, I taught a class at St. Mark's using Walter Wink's book, *The Powers That Be: Theology for a New Millennium*. One of the chapters in that book is called "Prayer and the Powers." In that chapter Wink says that "Prayer is the field hospital in which the spiritual diseases that we have contracted from the Powers can be diagnosed and treated."

"Unprotected by prayer, our social activism runs the danger of becoming self-justifying good works." "Intercessory prayer is spiritual defiance of what is in the name of what God has promised. Intercession visualizes an alternative future to the one apparently fated by the momentum of current forces. Prayer infuses the air of a time yet to be into the suffocating atmosphere of the present."

Prayer is not the end but the beginning of our efforts to make things "on earth as it is in heaven" which many of us pray every Sunday. Finally, Wink says, "No doubt our intercessions sometimes change us as we open ourselves to new possibilities we had not guessed. No doubt our prayers to God reflect back upon us as a divine command to become the answer to our prayer."

I will be praying for our congregation, our community, our nation, and our world. I will also be praying that God reveal to me ways that I can work to make positive things happen in all of those areas of concern. Prayer means making ourselves available to be instruments of God's Spirit in our world. Prayer means being open to confession as we realize our own mistakes and sins as well as calling others to accountability and contrition. Prayer means acting to change those injustices that are in our own power to change. Prayer is not passively talking to God but also listening for God's instructions to be agents of God's power and grace.

So, I do invite you to pray. And I invite you to search your hearts to be the answers to prayer in every way possible. Let us embody Jesus' greatest prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane: "Yet not my will, but yours be done." (Luke 22:42, NIV) Instead of telling God what to do, what would happen if we let our prayers invite God to instruct us on how to be world changers for God?

In Christ's service,  
Brian



**Rev. Dr. Brian K. White**  
**Lead Pastor**

# Pastor's Place

Dear St. Mark's Family,

February often stirs thoughts of love and relationships, but it's also a time when many of us long for deeper connection. As we navigate the winter months, this theme feels especially relevant: we all need to know we're not alone, that we're seen and valued. That's why our "Created for Connection" series in The Current is such a meaningful journey - it reminds us of the divine design at the heart of who we are.

God created us for connection, not only with God but also with one another and even within ourselves. Whether we're navigating the joys and challenges of relationships, seeking to rebuild trust, or discovering the courage to embrace community, the invitation to connect is always open. It's an invitation to live as part of God's beautifully interconnected creation.

Here at St. Mark's, we've worked hard to create spaces where relationships can flourish, whether through worship, service, or shared study. One of our newest opportunities is "The Living Room" during the 10 AM education and small groups hour. This casual, welcoming space is for everyone - whether you want to grab a cup of coffee, enjoy meaningful conversation, or simply relax while your children are in class. For now, The Living Room meets in Cornerstone Commons while we explore a permanent home, but it already reflects the heart of the church: a place where belonging takes root.

I encourage you this month to take a step toward connection. Maybe that's joining a group, reaching out to someone new, or simply pausing to reconnect with God in prayer. However you feel led, know this: you are loved, you belong, and you have a vital place in this community. Let's walk together in this season of connection, remembering that we were created for this—to love, to belong, and to thrive in community.

Grace & Peace,  
Pastor Karla



**Rev. Karla Elliott**  
**Executive Pastor**



**MIDWEST MISSION**  
DISTRIBUTION CENTER  
[midwestmission.org](http://midwestmission.org)



## Feb. Mission Focus

### Did You Know?

- Midwest Mission Distribution Center, a ministry of the United Methodist Church, provides basic resources around the world and around the corner to create hope and empowerment for those in need.
- MMDC focuses on four main areas: health, education, microbusiness, and disaster relief.
- Since opening for ministry in 2000, they have been showing God's Love in practical ways. Midwest Mission transforms the resources of God's people into humanitarian relief, powered by your prayers and contributions, and connecting with local aid organizations. They are one of eight cooperating depots with UMCOR, distributing UMCOR supplies to US disasters.
- Shipments over the past year have sent urgently needed relief supplies such as Rice meals, birthing and student kits, personal hygiene essentials, furniture, water tanks and more.
- St. Mark's will partner again with Midwest Mission Distribution Center for a Rice Meal Food Pack. All meals go to non-profits internationally. In connecting with "Food for the Poor", response is given where the need is greatest. Last year St. Mark's provided and packed 2,400 rice meal bags, totaling 14,400 meals!

### How Can I Help?

- Financial donations to MMDC may be given online at [stmarkscarmel.org/give](http://stmarkscarmel.org/give).
- SAVE THE DATE-All Church Rice Meal Food Pack on Sunday, March 23, 2:00 PM- 4:00 PM in Wesley Hall! Sign up to help with set up and/or packing food at [stmarkscarmel.org/signups](http://stmarkscarmel.org/signups).

Read more about the rice meal pack on page 6.

## Feb. In-Kind Donations

During the month of February, we will be collecting items for Helping Veterans and Families (HVAF) of Indiana. HVAF is a nonprofit in Indianapolis that helps homeless veterans return to self-sufficiency and engages at-risk veterans and their families to prevent them from becoming homeless by providing supportive housing, case management, employment support, therapy, and basic needs including food, hygiene and clothing.

Your donation items may be dropped off at our donation bins inside door #2, Monday-Friday, 9-4. Children of the church are encouraged to shop with their parents and to drop off their donations at check in for Kidz Church.

Shop from our Amazon wish list. Send to your home or directly to St. Mark's!

### Non-Perishable Foods

- canned meat
- canned fruits
- canned soups
- pasta and pasta sauce
- peanut butter
- jelly

### Personal items

- thermal underwear (men & women)
- lip balm
- shaving cream
- deodorant
- shampoo & conditioner
- feminine products
- lotion

### Other

- AA & AAA batteries
- Ziplock baggies (gallon & sandwich sizes)
- can openers





## All Church Food Pack on March 23

St. Mark's will partner again with Midwest Mission Distribution Center for a Rice Meal Food Pack. Mark your calendar for Sunday, March 23 from 2:00-4:00 PM in Wesley Hall!

Safety guidelines will be followed as we share a fun and family-friendly opportunity for anyone age 5 and older. Childcare is available with 72-hour advance notice.

Sign up NOW at [stmarkscarmel.org/signups](http://stmarkscarmel.org/signups).

Please bring a goodwill donation for Midwest Mission Cleaning Kits with you to the food pack! Needed items are laundry detergent (32-64 oz), liquid dish soap (16-34 oz), work gloves with leather palms, rubber gloves (for cleaning), and heavy duty trash or contractor bags (2+ mil thickness). All NEW items, please.

## Brightwood Community Center Food Pantry

"I was hungry and you gave me something to eat." Big thanks to the many St. Mark's volunteers who have been helping with the monthly food pantry for Brightwood Community families! BCC Food Pantry is currently offering a "Client Choice" food pantry TWICE per month, on the 2nd & 4th weeks of each month. Volunteers help with shelving food on racks and assisting clients with shopping. Clients select foods that best meet their needs.

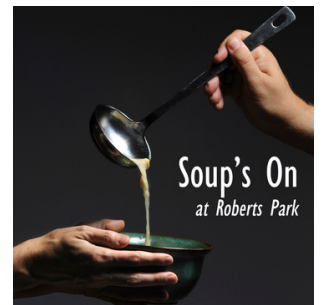
- 2nd & 4th Tuesdays: 12:00 - 2:30 PM - receiving food and shelving
- 2nd & 4th Wednesdays: 1:30 - 4:00 PM - help patrons shop/restock shelves

If you are ready to be the difference in a community's life, contact Diane Newton for more information and to sign up: [joediane244@att.net](mailto:joediane244@att.net).

## Soup's On at Roberts Park UMC

**February 23**

Can you help us provide a hot meal for homeless in Indy? Each Sunday, volunteers help prepare and serve lunch for Roberts Park UMC's Soup's On ministry. Meals are cooked and served onsite. This Soup's On ministry provides a wonderful opportunity for us to carry out Jesus' command to "feed the hungry." Sign up to help provide food and/or join volunteers that morning, at [stmarkscarmel.org/signups](http://stmarkscarmel.org/signups). Volunteers can sign up to help cook and serve food or to help with clean-up (& arrive later that morning).



## Mission Guatemala Trip 2025 - Cancelled

We did not have enough people who could commit, so unfortunately, the trip to Mission



Guatemala in July 2025 has been cancelled. We will be planning a trip for summer 2026 - details will be available soon!

## Kidz Church Sunday Programming



The check-in station and Kidz Church classes are located in the Children's Wing. Check-in for each hour begins 10 minutes prior to the start of class or service time. For 9 and 11 AM worship hours, children will proceed to the sanctuary with their families after check-in and be released to Kidz Church after the Kidz Chat. For the 10 AM education hour, children will proceed directly to class after check-in. A list of available classes and times can be found in the bulletin each Sunday or online at [stmarkscarmel.org/kidzprogramming](http://stmarkscarmel.org/kidzprogramming).

## Kidz Monthly Mission



Each month, Children's Ministries invites kids to get involved in giving to the church's In-Kind Donations. During February, we will be collecting items for Helping Veterans and Families (HVAF) of Indiana. For more information about this program or how to give, see page 5 or visit [stmarkscarmel.org/missions](http://stmarkscarmel.org/missions).

## Dine to Donate for St. Mark's Preschool

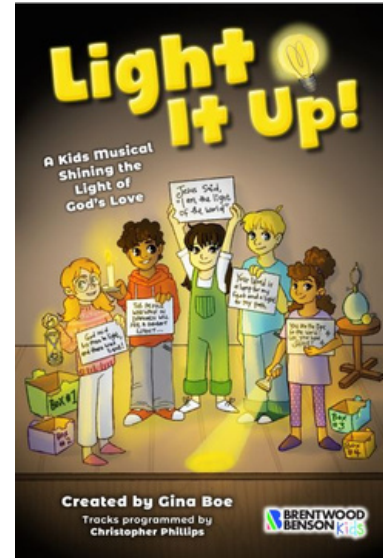


**Chick-Fil-A, 14647 Thatcher Lane, Carmel**  
**Thursday, February 20, 4-8 PM**

St. Mark's Preschool can earn 20% back for all orders placed through the Chick-fil-A App using the event code, STMARKS. Thank you for your support!

# PARENT CONNECTION BRUNCH FOLLOW UP

Because of your Parent Brunch feedback, we now have space available 10 AM weekly in Cornerstone Commons for informal connection and chatting around the tables. This will be our test of “The Living Room” concept discussed at the Brunch while we work to get a permanent place prepared. For the coming weeks, we will be putting a cart of parenting articles and resources in this area for you to browse and discuss as desired. More information about “The Living Room” can be found on page 11 and a brunch recap on page 20.



## CHILDREN SING IN THE CURRENT

**Sunday, February 9 | 11 AM**

All children of the church are invited to sing in worship at the beginning of The Current service on this special date. Rehearsals take place on Sunday mornings at 11AM in the Kidz Music & Praise class.

## CHILDREN'S LENTEN MUSICAL

**Sunday, March 23 | 1:30 PM**

Rehearsals have begun but there is still plenty of time to join the cast of the Kidz Music & Praise Lenten Musical, Light It Up! In this show, a bright group of students has just arrived for Bible class, but a couple of things are missing...their teacher and LIGHT! With a note and a few wrapped boxes in a dark room, the students begin a unique lesson to discover just how significant light is and has always been, with each box representing a new object and a new Bible verse about light—starting from the very beginning of creation and continuing into Christ passing on the task of spreading His light to the world. Rehearsals take place each week during 11 AM Kidz Church.





# Save the Date for 2025 Summer Camps!

Registrations begin on Friday, February 14 at [stmarkscarmel.org/summercamps](http://stmarkscarmel.org/summercamps).

It's already time to begin planning for summer camps! Don't forget to mark your calendar now to include Vacation Bible Camp, Sacred Drama & Puppet Camps, & Club 56 Mission Camp! These are the most exciting and enriching weeks of the summer...your kids will not want to miss out!

## Camp Info

### Club 56 Mission Camp:

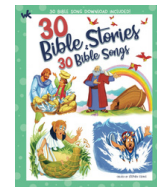
June 9-12,  
9 AM-1 PM  
Incoming/Outgoing 5th & 6th Grade



@ St. Mark's

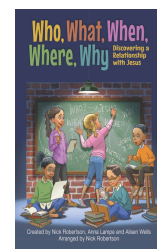
### Sacred Puppet Camp:

June 16-20  
9:30-11:30 AM  
Age 4 through 3rd Grade



### Sacred Drama Camp:

June 16-20  
12-2:30 PM  
1st through 4th Grade



### Vacation Bible Camp (VBS):

July 7-11  
9 AM-12 PM  
Age 4 through 5th Grade



## Sunday Mornings

**10 AM:** 7th - 12th grade, join Scott Melvin and Jenny Miller in **Room M** for a quick get-together.

**10:15 AM:** Junior and Senior high students break out for Bible study time. 7th & 8th graders meet with Aaron Koenig and Pete Elliott in the Middle School room while the 9-12 graders meet with Jenny Miller in the Senior High room.

## Upcoming Events

### Parent Connection Brunch Follow Up

We were excited to see so many of you at the Parent Connection Brunch on January 12! See page 11 to learn more about "The Living Room" concept that was discussed, and page 20 for a recap of the event.



### Winter Jam 2025

Calling all 9th -12th graders! Love music, concerts and hanging out with your friends? Winter Jam 2025 is coming to Indianapolis Gainbridge Fieldhouse Friday February 7th. Christian music's biggest tour will provide a night of great music, dancing and inspirational speakers. We will meet at St. Mark's at 4:45 pm to drive down together.

Register Online at [stmarkscarmel.org/winter-jam](http://stmarkscarmel.org/winter-jam) by Sunday February 2nd Bring \$15 to get in at the door and extra cash if you want to buy food at the concession stands. Reach out to the youth department for scholarships.



### Spring Worship Fest @ Epworth Forest

April 26, 2025

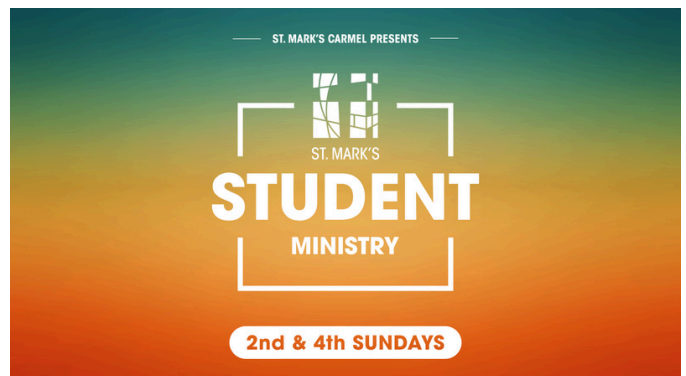
Need to get away for a weekend? All 7th - 12th Graders are invited to join us on our spring retreat! Starting at 3:00pm and ending at 11:00pm this event will be a day filled with worship bands from around Indiana, food trucks, a coffee trailer and more! We will be renting a lodge and staying overnight. Please register online by February 9th. Cost per child is \$40 (includes ticket for the event, and lodging cost). More details to follow as we get closer to the event. Sign up at <https://stmarkscarmel.org/spring-retreat/>



### 2nd & 4th Youth Group Schedule

Join us from 5:30-7 for dinner, worship, great discussions and games!

- NO Youth group Feb 9th
- February 23rd
- March 9th
- March 23rd



# Adult Discipleship

Dr. Jennifer Cloud-Buckner  
Adult Discipleship Coordinator  
[grow@stmarkscarmel.org](mailto:grow@stmarkscarmel.org)

## The Living Room



**New!** After feedback from the Parent Connection Brunch and others who want different options during 10 AM on Sundays, we have begun testing a new concept called “The Living Room.” This informal, drop-in gathering is currently happening in Cornerstone Commons while we work to get a permanent place prepared.

If you don’t already have a Sunday class, you are welcome to head to Cornerstone Commons on Sundays at 10 AM. We hope this can be a space for informal connection and chatting around the tables, or where you can just BE, rest, refresh, read, listen to a podcast or have space to sit before or after your preferred worship service.

Our Family Ministry team has also staged a cart with parenting books and articles for use during The Living Room time, in case any parents would like to have some self-led discussions with each other while your kids and youth are occupied in their own peer activities.

Cafe’ Conversations cards (conversation starters that have been on the cafe tables since August) will be moving down to Cornerstone Commons throughout February to become part of The Living Room resources.

As we grow into our 10AM Education & Small Groups hour, we hope this can become a time for everyone that feeds your soul with a sense of community and connection, spiritual insights, social interaction, or quiet reflection time.

If you have feedback or questions about The Living Room or other 10AM options, please contact Jennifer at [grow@stmarkscarmel.org](mailto:grow@stmarkscarmel.org).

## Website Directory for Adult Discipleship groups, signups, and resources

**Sunday Classes & “The Living Room”** See <https://stmarkscarmel.org/studygroups/#sundayam> for full descriptions of Sunday classes and a new informal drop-in gathering, “The Living Room.” The Foundations & Friendships class will be reading the Lenten study *Entering the Passion of Jesus*; learn more on the next page.

**Study Groups and Short-Term Events:** All descriptions and signups are at [stmarkscarmel.org/studygroups](https://stmarkscarmel.org/studygroups).

**Grow Groups, Encouragement Groups, and Support Groups:** Visit [stmarkscarmel.org/grow-groups](https://stmarkscarmel.org/grow-groups) to find ways to connect with others in our groups that support one another through shared seasons and challenges in life.

**Discipleship Pathway and Personal Growth resources:** Find resources for prayer, meditation, spiritual practices, rest, reflection, and growth at [stmarkscarmel.org/discipleship](https://stmarkscarmel.org/discipleship).

**Breakthrough Prayer:** We share our breakthrough prayer in worship and in many of our small groups and meetings, but this is also a valuable personal and family prayer practice in your busy schedule. Set a timer for 8:00pm to pray the prayer you can find at [stmarkscarmel.org/breakthrough](https://stmarkscarmel.org/breakthrough).

## How to Pay for Books

Pick up your study books from the church entrance (door #2) shelves or from the connection tables in the Gathering Area. The book cost is listed on [stmarkscarmel.org/studygroups](https://stmarkscarmel.org/studygroups) and on the paper syllabus included with each book. Make checks to St. Mark’s UMC with “study books” in the memo line. To pay online, go to [stmarkscarmel.org/give](https://stmarkscarmel.org/give) and on the top question asking “How would you like to allocate your donation,” select Study Books from the dropdown menu.

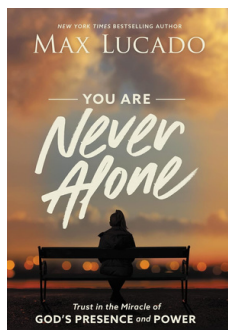
# New Studies & Personal Resources

Sign up at [stmarkscarmel.org/studygroups](http://stmarkscarmel.org/studygroups). Books and paper signups are on the connection tables in the Gathering Area.

## You Are Never Alone

**Thursdays, 2/13-3/20 | 10-11AM | Led by Judy Woempner | Room B/C & Zoom | Books \$9**

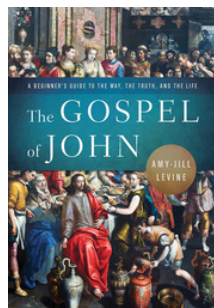
Exploring scriptural stories of Jesus's miracles, pastor and author Max Lucado addresses questions of God's presence in times of difficulty. In this book, Lucado reminds us that our miracle-working God sees us, cares about us, and will always offers grace, hope, and protection, no matter what we're up against. Take hope that God is never afraid to meet us in the middle of life's messes.



## The Gospel of John

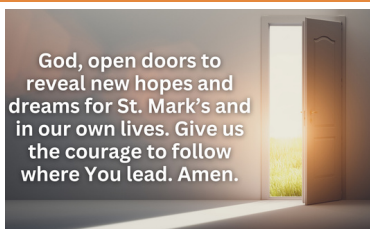
**Wednesdays, 2/26-4/2 | 9:30-11AM | Led by Lydia Fourman | Cornerstone Commons or Room J/K in various weeks | Books \$14**

John's Gospel offers readers a new language—of being born anew, of living water, of wind and spirit, of the “I am”—that enhances how we understand the divine, how we experience the world, and how we participate in the mystery of faith. With her characteristic wit and charm, scholar and author Amy-Jill Levine explores the entire John narrative with insights into the original context and contemporary interpretations—from the prologue and the wedding at Cana to encounters with outcasts, acts of healing, and more. You are invited to this study to discover the richness and enduring relevance of John's Gospel in your own faith journey.



## Breakthrough Prayer & Personal Resources

Our breakthrough prayer helps us develop the practice of an “up and out” prayer posture, with a sense of expectancy and noticing where God is moving in our lives in new ways. Set an alarm for 8 PM to join with others in this prayer practice, and learn more at [stmarkscarmel.org/breakthrough](http://stmarkscarmel.org/breakthrough).



For other personal prayer, meditation, and study resources, visit [stmarkscarmel.org/discipleship](http://stmarkscarmel.org/discipleship).

## Entering the Passion of Jesus

**Wednesdays, 3/5-4/9  
Early AM (Men), 6:30-7:30AM;  
Pastor's Study, 9:30-10:30AM  
Led by Pastor Brian White |  
Hybrid Room B-C and Zoom**

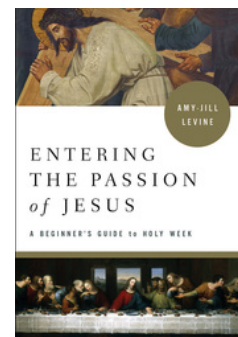
**Wednesday EVENINGS | 2/26,  
3/12-4/2, 4/9, 6:00-7:15PM | Led  
by Amy Pritchard | No mtg 3/5 &  
4/9 | Room B/C**

For Lent, dive into historical and social contexts—and the risks taken for great loss or great reward—of Jesus's final days. Jesus risked his reputation when entering Jerusalem in a victory parade and risked his life teaching in the Temple. His followers risked everything when they left behind their homes or anointed him with costly perfume. Author and scholar Amy-Jill Levine raises ethical and spiritual questions from the text and highlights how we all can face risk in our Christian experience.

**The Foundations & Friendships class will discuss 3/9-4/13 (Room J/K, Sundays 10-11AM).**

No sign up needed, just show up!

**Books will be available on Connection Tables & Door #2 entrance shelves for \$11.**

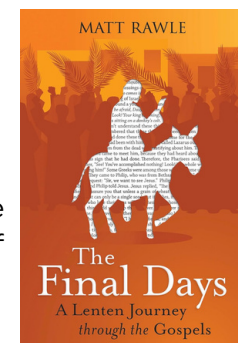


## The Final Days

**Fridays, 2/14-3/21 | 9:30-11AM |  
Led by Jennifer Cloud-Buckner  
and Annessa Miller | Room B/C  
and Zoom | Books \$13**

This Lent, ponder the themes of justice, poverty, freedom, and love through different lenses of each of the four Gospels. While Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John present distinct details of Jesus'

last week in Jerusalem, they offer the same Resurrection hope. Author Matt Rawle explains that these different perspectives aren't a reason to dismiss the Gospels; rather they reveal an abundant, diverse, and complementary picture of God's work in the suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus.



# Group Spotlights

## Connection is a vital aspect of our faith and well-being.

Not only are we “created for connection,” as we’ve been discussing in *The Current*, we are not meant to go it alone. Research consistently shows that strong social connections contribute to longer, healthier lives. To foster these connections, consider participating in a new group or activity for the new year, such as our new 10 AM “The Living Room” informal gatherings in Cornerstone Commons (see page 11).



Whether it’s a Bible study, a community service project, or simply gathering for coffee, these opportunities allow us to build meaningful relationships with one another and extend our reach beyond the church walls. Let’s break down the barriers of isolation and embrace the power of community. Email [grow@stmarkscarmel.org](mailto:grow@stmarkscarmel.org) to get help connecting to a group and see page 14 for Dream Day insights on connection and community.

### Need a Group?

If you’re not already connected, check your emails for contact from Jennifer Cloud-Buckner to help you connect with others in a spot that works in your life right now. If you’re not available for a Sunday or weekday Bible study, our Grow Groups and Encouragement Groups connect people in shared life stages to encourage one another and grow in their faith as they do life together. We are especially looking at forming a new group for parents of young children to meet once a month on Sunday evenings at the church. To express your interest in any of our groups—including for folks dealing with the care of aging relatives, for those who have been widowed, for empty nesters, for spiritual walk alumni share groups, or for just general connection with others, sign up at [stmarkscarmel.org/grow-groups](http://stmarkscarmel.org/grow-groups) or email [grow@stmarkscarmel.org](mailto:grow@stmarkscarmel.org).

### Encouragement Groups for Caregiving

No matter how you are dealing with the care of your aging loved one—whether your loved one is near or far; if they are your parent, sibling, or spouse; whether you care for them in your home or you are navigating care facilities for their needs—you have a spot in one of our Encouragement Groups. Chances are that whatever challenges and decisions you’re facing, you will find others who have faced the same. Our Sunday AM and weekday evening Encouragement Groups generally meet at least monthly. To connect, email [grow@stmarkscarmel.org](mailto:grow@stmarkscarmel.org) or fill out the form at [stmarkscarmel.org/grow-groups](http://stmarkscarmel.org/grow-groups).

### LIFT Widows Encouragement Group

Living  
Intentionally  
Forward  
Together

a Widows Encouragement Group

more at [stmarkscarmel.org/growgroups](http://stmarkscarmel.org/growgroups)



Those who have been widowed know that it can be a confusing time of new responsibilities, adjustments to life, and loneliness, all while finding hope and purpose in new activities and connections. Our LIFT - Living Intentionally Forward Together - group combines a social connection with encouragement and experience for those who have been widowed. To connect with LIFT, contact [grow@stmarkscarmel.org](mailto:grow@stmarkscarmel.org) or see Mary Etta Yoho. LIFT Members are taking turns selecting, hosting, and/or planning upcoming events:

**Thurs., Feb. 27, 9:15am** Carpool from church for 10:00am Tour of President Benjamin Harrison Home, 1230 N. Delaware St., Indianapolis, followed by lunch at Aristocrat Pub, 5212 N. College Ave.

**March:** Brunch out, date TBD.

**Sun. April 6, 1:00pm**, Westfield Playhouse followed by dinner at Grindstone on the Monon, Westfield.

### New Potential Encouragement Group for Widowers

All the original members of LIFT in 2022 were women, so it became a Widows Encouragement Group. Men who have lost your spouses, would you like to form a similar kind of encouragement group for men who are going through some of the same struggles and adjustments to life? If you feel called to take part in this kind of group, email [grow@stmarkscarmel.org](mailto:grow@stmarkscarmel.org) or watch for invitations from Jennifer Cloud-Buckner.

# Dream Day: Community & Connection Insights

If you are planning events with a ministry team this year, consider making your activities multigenerational, including our neighbors, using technology in new ways, or exploring fun ways to connect from the ideas below.

Some of our Dream Day questions focused on building community and connection:

**Q: “What innovative approaches can St. Mark’s explore for helping introduce St. Mark’s to new people, including people who are disconnected from church?”**

**Q: If you (or someone you know) don’t feel connected to St. Mark’s efforts to welcome, grow, and/or serve, what factors would help you feel more connected to the church’s overall life?**

Common themes and example responses are below.

**Community Engagement:** Respondents emphasized the importance of reaching beyond the church walls and actively engaging with the surrounding community, including:

- **Community Events:** Participating in local events (festivals, fairs, parades, charity runs) with booths, offering refreshments, or hosting events like cornhole tournaments or outdoor worship at a park with visibility to the community.
- **Neighborhood Outreach:** Engaging with immediate neighbors, local schools, providing a community garden, hosting block parties, weeknight meals, or offering assistance to those in need.
- **Partnering with Local Organizations:** Collaborating with schools, police, firefighters, and other community groups for presentations and joint events.

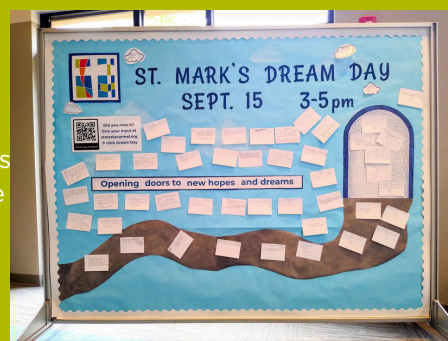
**Visibility and Marketing:** Respondents highlighted the need for effective communication and creative marketing strategies to reach disconnected people. This includes using various channels like social media, digital ministry, videos about relevant topics, targeted advertising beyond the church, signage, and word-of-mouth to spread awareness about St. Mark’s and its ministries.

**Welcoming and Inclusive Atmosphere:** Respondents stressed the importance of creating a warm and welcoming environment:

- **Warm Hospitality:** Includes creating spaces for people to connect and feel included. Also, creating a welcoming environment for newcomers through friendly greetings and personalized invitations to participate in shared events.
- **Inclusive Events:** Hosting events that cater to diverse interests and demographics, such as family-friendly activities, young adult gatherings, and single adult events.
- **Breaking Down Barriers:** Creating opportunities for informal interactions, personal invitations to groups and experiences, and building relationships beyond formal church services.

## What Was Dream Day?

Dream Day was a congregation-wide event in September 2024 with guided brainstorming sessions to gather ideas for the future of St. Mark’s, a continuation of our openness for God to reveal new hopes and



dreams in our breakthrough prayer initiative. See the full brainstorming topics at [stmarkscarmel.org/dream](http://stmarkscarmel.org/dream). All 1300+ data points from the event have been analyzed, aided by AI machine learning tools, for common themes, behavioral insights, example responses, and potential strategies. Results are going to the Leadership Board, staff, and applicable ministry teams and will continue to be highlighted in coming issues of the Jubilee.

**Meaningful Experiences:** Respondents expressed a desire for opportunities to connect with others through meaningful experiences, fun, and a sense of purpose.

- **Community Service and Spiritual Growth:** Making a positive impact with others while engaging in service projects, spiritual growth, small groups, and hearing guest speakers.
- **Social Gatherings:** Organizing social events to foster fellowship and connection, including potlucks, game nights, movie nights, space for mingling on Sundays, group dinners in people’s homes, activities right after church, outings wearing St. Mark’s t-shirts, and shared meals.
- **Shared Activity:** Ideas included visual arts ministry, cornhole, spikeball, handball, volleyball, gaming, playground gatherings, God-centered exercise, and fitness activities

**Addressing Concerns and Overcoming Barriers:** Focus on needs of specific groups, such as young adults, working parents, single parents, and those who are disconnected from organized religion. Create a welcoming environment for those with doubts or questions. Address barriers to attendance and concerns related to time constraints (e.g., provide childcare or make activities kid-friendly; go to where people are beyond the church walls instead of waiting for them to walk through the door).

If there is an activity idea here that speaks to you, feel free to email [grow@stmarkscarmel.org](mailto:grow@stmarkscarmel.org) with your thoughts—or connect with a related ministry team or committee.

# Open Groups

## UNITED METHODIST MEN

**Next Meeting is February 8 | 7:30 AM**



UMM provides a supportive fellowship of men who seek to know Jesus Christ, to grow spiritually, and to seek daily God's will. UMM has donated to many Missions. Some of the groups we donate to are: Family Promise, East 10th Methodist Youth Center, Fletcher Place, Habitat for Humanity, Wheeler Mission, Second Helpings and SAW.

Our speaker is Dr. Peter Canning, Pet Partners Team Evaluator for Central Indiana. Dr. Canning has worked for 30+ years in pharmaceutical development for pets with Elanco/Lilly. Now retired, he is focused on developing teams (owner & pet), to better the lives of those in need. There's something special about people and their pets. Dr. Canning and his wife are dedicated to bringing comfort and joy through developing pet partner teams. Therapy animal teams, sometimes referred to as pet therapy teams to provide comfort to people in need throughout Central Indiana. He works with: Riley—IU Health & Others. Come and learn more about this mission at our next UMM Breakfast.

All United Methodist Men are invited to attend the breakfast on February 8 at 7:30 am. Find out more at <https://stmarkscarmel.org/umm/>.

## UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH

**Next Meeting is February 11 | 9:30 AM & 7:00 PM**



United  
Women  
in Faith

The next monthly United Women in Faith meeting in 2025 will be February 11 at 9:30 am and 7 pm. Interest groups will meet.

If you encounter a deaf or hearing impaired person, the following tips help show that you care! These tips and hints to use each time, when talking everyday, will help them better understand what you say!

### TIPS AND HINTS WHEN TALKING TO A DEAF OR HEARING IMPAIRED PERSON

- Get their attention before you speak
- Face the listener at all times
- Pronounce words clearly but don't over exaggerate
- Do not eat chew gum or cover your mouth while talking
- Use facial expressions and gestures or writing to help clarify your message
- Make sure the listener is not looking into a glare, but have enough light in the area

Come to hear Jonene McDermid on Tuesday, February 11, 2025 at both the AM and PM UWF meetings! She will tell you about her own experience with her mother's deafness and Jonene's decision to make teaching the deaf her career. Who knows. You may learn some sign language!

Childcare is available for AM meetings. Please register by the Thursday prior to the meeting to allow time to obtain staffing. Register for childcare at [stmarkscarmel.org/signups](https://stmarkscarmel.org/signups). Visit [stmarkscarmel.org/uwf](https://stmarkscarmel.org/uwf) for more information.

### United Women in Faith's Dessert Extravaganza - February 9.



Calling all bakers and Candy Makers- UWF sweetest fundraiser- the Dessert Extravaganza- takes place on Sunday, Feb. 9 throughout the morning. Please package your treats in small amounts ( 4-6 squares) and 6 cookies. If they are gluten free, nut free or sugar free , please note that on the package.

Set up and drop off of treats will be on Saturday Feb 8 from 10:00 to noon. Go to [stmarkscarmel.org/signups](https://stmarkscarmel.org/signups) to sign up. All proceeds go to missions . Any questions, contact Jackie Mock or Peggy Hoy.

# Fellowship Groups

Learn more at:  
<https://stmarkscarmel.org/groups>

## MARKSMEN

### Select Thursdays at Starbucks at 116th and Keystone

The MarksMen is a community of career and family focused men seeking to develop authentic and intentional relationships while we unplug from the daily stress and craziness that life can bring. Email [marksmen@stmarkscarmel.org](mailto:marksmen@stmarkscarmel.org) for more info.

## ROMEOS

### Retired Old Men Eating Out Wednesdays | 11:00 AM

#### Le Peep | 86th & Keystone

All men are invited to meet weekly at LePeep's. Contact Don Mehl for more information at [djmehl2004@aol.com](mailto:djmehl2004@aol.com).

## PAGE TURNERS

### Book Club

#### Third Tuesdays at 7 PM

#### Not Meeting in February

Join us on the third Tuesday of each month to discuss our current book selection. Join us on March 18 for *Remarkably Bright Creatures* by Shelby Van Pelt. Hope to see you there! Meets in Room G/H.



## CRAFT GROUP

### Select Thursdays February 27 | 6:30-8:30 PM

RSVP to Kathy Bartel by 5 pm February 26 at 317-294-4908 or [krbartel@gmail.com](mailto:krbartel@gmail.com). Contact Kathy for more information.

## JULIETS

### Just Us Ladies Interested In Eating Together

**February 20** - We will be meeting at Bru Burger at 12901 Old Meridian in Carmel. Lunch will begin at 11:30. Please make your reservations by the Monday before to Linda Schenk, [juliets@stmarkscarmel.org](mailto:juliets@stmarkscarmel.org) or 812-454-0661.

## MEN'S BASKETBALL

### Tuesdays | 7:00 PM

Join us every Tuesday for Open Gym at 7 PM Basketball for ages 16 and above. Contact Mark Moore, [mvm2920@aol.com](mailto:mvm2920@aol.com) for more information.



## COFFEE 'N CAMERAS

### Select Mondays February 3 | 9 AM

Coffee - yes,  
Cameras - whatever you have. Our members use both types of cameras (traditional and phone). We would love to have you join us on November 4 & 18. We encourage each other's creativity, demonstrate techniques, share our photos and help each other grow in our knowledge and skill of photography. Bring your camera, questions, and be ready to tackle a monthly assignment presented by rotating group leaders.



## PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY

### Select Fridays

Join us as we prayerfully knit and crochet prayer shawls that will be used to provide comfort and solace to people in need. Supplies are available. Men are welcome too! Contact Judy Bonnet, [bonnetjm@icloud.com](mailto:bonnetjm@icloud.com) for more information.



## PICKLEBALL

### Thursdays | 7-9 PM

Looking for a fun weekday evening activity this fall and winter? Join us in Wesley Hall on Thursday evenings from 7-9 PM for some fun and fellowship as we play pickleball! Participants of all skill levels are invited and should be 16 years or older. Contact Janet Brown ([jgrandeyb@gmail.com](mailto:jgrandeyb@gmail.com)) or Doug Brown ([dthbrown@gmail.com](mailto:dthbrown@gmail.com)) for more information.





# Committee News

## Exciting Changes to Our Church Leadership Structure

In case you missed the news in the January issue of the Jubilee, we announced an important update to our church's leadership structure to help us be more effective in our ways to serve God and our community. For 2025 we have transitioned to a Simplified Accountable Structure, which is becoming increasingly common in churches. This change is designed to streamline our administrative processes, allowing us to focus more fully on our mission and ministry.

What does this mean? Our administrative leadership is consolidated under a new Leadership Board, which will take on the responsibilities previously handled by the Church Council, Trustees, Finance, and Staff-Parish Relations Committees (SPRC). By combining these functions, we aim to reduce duplication of effort and create a more efficient structure that frees us to devote even more energy to our shared ministry goals.

While this represents a shift in governance, there are still many ways for everyone to participate in the life of the church. Our Ministry Teams - including Missions, Fellowship, Worship, Stewardship, and Education & Discipleship - remain essential to our work as a congregation. We encourage you to prayerfully consider how you might use your gifts and talents to serve on one of these teams.

We are deeply grateful for those who have faithfully served on our various committees over the years. Your leadership and dedication have been a blessing, and this transition builds on the strong foundation you've helped create.

### We are grateful for the service of our 2025 Leadership Board:

- Holly Moore (Class of 2027, Leadership Board Chair, SPRC Lead)
- David Adams (Class of 2027, Finance Lead)
- Scott Richards (Class of 2027)
- John Fama (Class of 2026, Youth Representative)
- Ky Ragsdale (Class of 2026, Trustee Lead)
- Lori Roberts (Class of 2026)
- Katie Kelly (Class of 2025)
- Kim Moe (Class of 2025)
- Phil Wehman (Class of 2025)

### Also serving on the Leadership Board by virtue of the roles they represent for St. Mark's are:

- Mike Bultemeier, Lay Leader
- Jack Benson, Lay Member to Annual Conference
- Donna Schwartz, Lay Member to Annual Conference

Please keep these leaders and our entire church in your prayers as we step into this new season of ministry together. Let's continue to welcome all with open hearts, grow together in knowledge and grace, and serve our neighbors with joy!

## ARE YOU ON A MINISTRY TEAM, OR LEAD A SMALL GROUP OR FELLOWSHIP GROUP?

This information is for you! Download [your toolkit](#) for getting things done - It's Committee Member 101. Check out [this document](#) for an overview of How To:

- Schedule a room at St. Mark's
- Request A/V support for an event
- Request publicity in any church publication or communication method
- Use the connection tables, kitchen, or office equipment
- Request office supplies, announcements, event childcare
- ...and more!

Do you have a question not covered in this document or need more details? Contact the church office at 317-846-4912.

Check out <https://stmarkscarmel.org/committeefinfo/> for more information on Committees at St. Mark's.

# Community Outreach & Upcoming Events

## Chili Cookoff | February 2 | 5 PM

On Sunday, February 2 at 5:00, dinner is served! Are you famous for your secret chili recipe? Bring it to share and be judged OR just bring the family and invite your friends to enjoy the best chili in the land at this family-friendly event!



Either way - COME to this popular annual event! Sign up at [stmarkscarmel.org/chili](http://stmarkscarmel.org/chili) - or just show up!

This delicious shindig will include prizes, child-friendly fare, and fun activities for kids of all ages! See you there for food, fun and fellowship!

## St. Mark's Talent Show February 16 | 2 PM

The 2025 St. Mark's Talent Show will be held in the sanctuary on Sunday, February 16, 2025 at 2:00pm. Come and see members of your own St. Mark's family showcase their talents in this favorite of events. Everyone is welcome to take part—individuals, families, and groups of all ages! No talent is too big or too small. If you have something to share, we want to see it! Just email Eric DeForest at [edeforest@stmarkscarmel.org](mailto:edeforest@stmarkscarmel.org) to sign up!



## Help Honor First Responders

Bakers Needed: Each month a St. Mark's volunteer delivers baked goods to the police officers at their headquarters and to fire fighters at Station #44. The volunteer can choose the month that works best for them and can deliver them any time during that month. If you are interested, please contact Jan Walsh at [jow3441@sbcglobal.net](mailto:jow3441@sbcglobal.net) or at 317-908-9935.

## St. Mark's Presents - The Hoosier Brass Band March 16 | 4 PM

St. Mark's will host The Hoosier Brass Band on March 16 at 4:00 PM in a free concert open to the public. The Hoosier Brass Band uses the same instrumentation as the British bands. This would include Soprano Cornet, Bb Cornets, Flugelhorn, Tenor Horns, Baritones, Euphoniums, Tenor Trombones, Bass Trombone, Eb Tubas, Bb Tubas and Percussion. The music will be a mixture of styles and will introduce the audience to some of the unique sounds you get with this type of group.

# Congregational Care & Connections

## Photo Directory

The new St. Mark's photo directory is available online with the most up-to-date information. To access the online directory you can visit [stmarkscarmel.org/directory](http://stmarkscarmel.org/directory). You will need the password, which can be obtained by calling the church office or picking up a business card on a connection table on Sunday morning. If you need a printed copy, it can be requested via a clipboard on the connection table in the gathering area. If you have questions, email the church office at [staff@stmarkscarmel.org](mailto:staff@stmarkscarmel.org).

## Prayer Squares

Could you or someone you know use a tangible symbol of support? Prayer Squares are available at the Welcome Center in the Narthex. A Prayer Square uses traditional quilt patterns with a cross sewn inside to serve as a reminder of God's constancy, love, and grace. When placed in a pocket, backpack, or purse, the Prayer Square serves as a reminder to pause and pray and as a reminder that others are praying for you. We are grateful for the volunteers who create these symbols of connection and encouragement. If you are interested in helping with Prayer Squares, please contact the church office at 317-846-4912.



## Sympathies

We extend our heartfelt sympathies to the Bartel family, including husband Lowell, son Dave, and daughter-in-law Kathy, for the loss of Beverly Bartel on December 31.

Our thoughts are with them during this time of sorrow.

## Circle of Care

The Circle of Care list includes St. Mark's members and friends who are homebound or in a care facility. Your prayers for these loved ones mean so much to them and to their families.

Carole Anderson, Myrneath Anderson, Steve Baylor, John and Carole Browning, Trish Boger, Doris Carlow, Phyllis Delp, Carol Hollinger, Dorothy Mecca, Melvin & Marlene Myers, Jane Roberts, Jerry & Brenda Weikel, Bob Wiens

If you would like to be added to the Circle of Care or know of someone, please contact the church office.

## Meal Train Ministry

St. Mark's UMC has long helped members in times of need with Meal Train meals. Meal Train is a blessing for those who need it and those who provide it. If you are in need of Meal Train, call or email Carol Smith, 406-546-7727, [ctsmith106@gmail.com](mailto:ctsmith106@gmail.com). If you are unable to reach Carol, call the Church Office, 317-846-4912.

# Celebrations & Thank You

## NEW A/V SETUP



Thanks to a generous donation for a new audiovisual setup in Cornerstone Commons, we have replaced the aging projector and speakers with a TV, soundbar, microphone, and lectern. This upgrade is deeply appreciated and is already being used by several groups and classes. Picture: Tom Fagan of the Indiana UM Children's Home uses the new A/V setup to give a presentation at the United Methodist Men (UMM) January meeting.

## PARENT CONNECTION BRUNCH

Our Family Ministry staff team was thrilled to welcome 37 people, with 21 families represented, at the Parent Connection Brunch on January 12. This event was aimed for parents of infants through high school seniors to share their ideas and preferences for growing in connection and community in the 10AM Sunday hour.



Between all the families who attended the brunch and those who regularly attend either worship service, we could have at least 35 families participating in the 10AM hour!

A significant number of attendees expressed joy about just getting to chat around the tables and interest in having space for informal connection. With that in mind, we have begun testing "The Living Room" concept at 10AM in Cornerstone Commons each Sunday. Learn more on page 11.

Parents also wanted to have parenting-focused discussions with specific short-term content (articles, books, TED talks, presentations) without pre-reading or preparation required. It was important to many of you to have this be on a flexible, drop-in basis without an ongoing commitment. For the coming weeks, a cart of parenting articles and resources is available in Cornerstone Commons for anyone to browse and discuss as desired. The Family Ministry staff team is looking at additional options and will publicize any upcoming special events in The Jubilee, weekly emails, and at <https://stmarkscarmel.org/studygroups/#special>.

If you were unable to attend the brunch, we'd still love to receive your feedback as to how you would like to engage in the 10:00AM Education Hour. Check out the feedback form at <https://stmarkscarmel.org/studygroups/#special> and email your thoughts to Jennifer at [grow@stmarkscarmel.org](mailto:grow@stmarkscarmel.org).

# 2024 Mission Giving

See below for the 2024 totals of financial giving to missions. Thank you for your generosity and faithfulness!

## 2024 St. Mark's Mission Giving

<b>Mission</b>	<b>YTD</b>
Ascent 121	\$ 6,340.00
Bishop's Christmas Offering for Children	\$ 3,272.00
Brightwood Community Center	\$ 5,544.00
Carmel UMC Food Pantry	\$ 1,000.00
Changing Footprints	\$ 250.00
East Tenth UM Children & Youth Center	\$ 8,209.00
Family Promise of Greater Indianapolis	\$ 6,293.00
Fishers Youth Assistance Program	\$ 1,000.00
Fletcher Place Community Center	\$ 6,818.56
Good Samaritan Network	\$ 1,000.00
Habitat For Humanity Greater Indianapolis	\$ 6,635.00
Hamilton County Kids Coats	\$ 500.00
IN United Methodist Children's Home - Lebanon	\$ 1,000.00
Lucille Raines Residence	\$ 5,712.00
Meals to various ministries	\$ 2,193.72
Midwest Mission Distribution Center	\$ 8,616.36
Mission Guatemala	\$ 10,257.97
Mission in Action Day giving	\$ 2,078.58
Operation Classroom	\$ 205.00
Outreach Indiana	\$ 7,165.18
Preschool Playground	\$ 6,125.47
Red Bird Mission	\$ 7,036.30
Roberts Park UMC / Soup's On	\$ 628.38
SAWs (Servants at Work, Inc.)	\$ 3,500.00
Mission Scholarships & Trips	\$ 1,103.30
Second Helpings	\$ 500.00
Shepherd Community Center	\$ 1,000.00
Society of St. Andrew	\$ 5,710.00
Trinity Haven	\$ 2,120.00
UM Special Sundays	\$ 3,209.00
UMCOR (general fund & all others)	\$ 11,113.00
UMM (given by)	\$ 4,000.00
UWF (given by)	\$ 23,109.86
Use What You've Got Prison Ministry	\$ 1,713.82
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 154,959.50</b>

# Because You Give

**Ascent 121:** \$340.00

**Bishop's Christmas Offering:** \$3272.00

**Carmel UMC Food Pantry:** \$1000.00; 14 bags of food

**Changing Footprints:** \$250.00

**East 10th Street Children & Youth Ctr.:** \$2260.00

**Fletcher Place Community Center:** 135 packets of oatmeal

**Good Samaritan Network of Hamilton Co.:** \$1000.00

**Hamilton Co. Kids Coats:** \$500.00

**IN UM Children's Home:** \$1000.00

**Mission Guatemala:** \$9757.97

**Roberts Park Soup's On:** \$500.00

**Second Helpings:** \$500.00

**Travel-sized toiletries:** 2 bags

**UMCOR:** \$2500.00

## CONNECT WITH US ON SOCIAL MEDIA



[facebook.com/stmarkscarmel](https://facebook.com/stmarkscarmel)



[instagram.com/stmarkscarmel](https://instagram.com/stmarkscarmel)



[youtube.com/stmarkscarmel](https://youtube.com/stmarkscarmel)

## JUBILEE PUBLICATION NOTE

The Jubilee newsletter is published monthly, and all articles are due by the 15th of the previous month. To submit information for the Jubilee, complete the form at [stmarkscarmel.org/publicity](https://stmarkscarmel.org/publicity). If you have questions regarding the form, please contact [techsupport@stmarkscarmel.org](mailto:techsupport@stmarkscarmel.org).

## SUBMIT CELEBRATIONS

If you have celebrations from your St. Mark's activities to put in the newsletter, submit them to [stmarkscarmel.org/publicity](https://stmarkscarmel.org/publicity).

## CONTACT

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