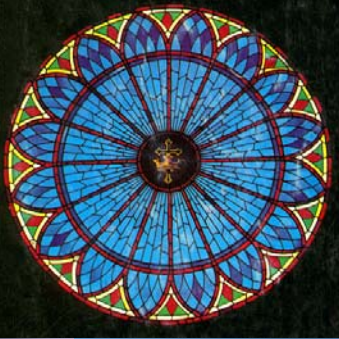


January 16, 2009

Window Into St. Mark's



ST. MARK'S UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

# Window Into St. Mark's

## Hogg Middle School to Kick Off Partnership *by Kevin Dubose*

### HOGG MIDDLE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL TO SPEAK, KICK OFF PARTNERSHIP

Hogg Middle School Principal, Imelda Medrano, will share the pulpit with Rev. Marilyn Meeker-Williams this Sunday, January 18, 2009, at the 10:50 service. Principal Medrano will share her Christian witness with us, talk about a proposal for making St. Mark's UMC a mission partner with Hogg Middle School, and discuss specific suggestions for how St. Mark's and its members can give a helping hand to the students at Hogg.

Last year a church consultant who did an extensive analysis of St. Mark's issued a report that stressed the need for us to reach out to our immediate surrounding neighborhood. Just as we were scratching our heads and wondering what vehicle we could use for doing that, our Treasurer and Church Council member, Rick Kiley, met Principal Medrano. When he mentioned that he attended St. Mark's (just 3 blocks down Pecore from Hogg) she began exploring ideas about forming a partnership with St. Mark's to obtain needed assistance for Hogg and provide mission opportunities for St. Mark's. At a preliminary meeting with church leaders, she suggested several ways we can help:

- A volunteer to sit as a community representative on the Shared Decision Making Committee at Hogg (1-hr. meeting once/month);
- Mentors (meet with mentees 1-on-1 during lunch twice/month);
- People to prepare small reward bags for Honor Roll students (once/6 wks.);
- Adult advisors to Hogg's award-winning Robotics team;
- Financial sponsors for Hogg's award-winning Robotics team to attend competitions;
- Someone to provide graphic design assistance and consultation for brochures;
- Contributors to winter clothing drive.

At the Church Council retreat last weekend the church leaders expressed enthusiasm about the possibilities presented by a partnership with Hogg. I'm sure we will all be even more excited after hearing Principal Medrano speak this Sunday. Come hear this dynamic, lovely, and committed Christian woman, and think about how you can play a small part in a program that will make a big difference to neighborhood children.

## Youth News and Updates *by Scarlett Fowler*

Parent's Night Out was a big Success. With the help of the CDC families we raised \$550.00!!

The youth had a fun and exciting Christmas party. We didn't just pass gifts around, go out to eat, or play games, they took time out of their fun and helped others who needed some Christmas spirit! With the help from the members at St. Mark's we passed out shoeboxes wrapped and filled with all kinds of things to the homeless at Crossroads.

At Christmas time, we also presented the gifts and bicycles the youth and the parents collected to our "adopt a family."

If you have any mission ideas that you think the youth could do please let me know. Thanks.

Scarlett Fowler, Youth Director





## From the Pastor

### Church Council Retreat and Three Simple Rules

From the curving driveway I looked across the water and saw the moon, full and lighting up the evening last Friday. The night seemed full of peace as I smelled the kindled bonfire where Joellen would cook our Dutch oven fruit cobbler under the hot coals. We were halfway through our church council retreat which began that afternoon with candles and prayers, holy listening and holy speaking, and singing: "Shepherd me, O God, beyond my wants, beyond my fears, from death into life."

Earlier in the day, church council leader Kevin Dubose led us in exploring the need for compassion, commitment and communication in our leadership roles. Prayer partners were assigned and we spent time together in conversation and prayer. Dinner was a holy feast with time for laughter and fellowship around the table. That night we gathered around the fire, awed by the moon and the silence and the wonder, and talked about where we experienced the presence of God. Then we began to sing while we waited for the cobbler to be done. Mine was covered with melting vanilla ice cream and delicious.

Throughout the retreat we explored the Wesleyan way of living, a way patterned after the life and ministry of Jesus, and shared by John Wesley with the early Methodists. From Rueben Job's little book, "Three Simple Rules," the first rule is "Do no harm." It means I will be on guard so that all my actions and even my silence will not add injury to another of God's children or to any part of God's creation. I will invest each day in bringing healing instead of hurt; wholeness instead of division; and harmony with the ways of Jesus rather than the ways of the world. This means I must see each person as a child of God – a recipient of love unearned, unlimited, and undeserved – just like myself.

The second rule is "Do Good." It is a serious challenge from John Wesley and a direct command from Jesus to do good to everyone, not only those like me or those who like me. Doing good requires an even more bold and radical step than not doing harm to those who may disagree with me and even seek to harm me. It means I commit myself to seeking good for everyone in my world and everyone in God's world.

"Stay in Love With God" is the third rule for living the way of Jesus. To stay in love with God requires some action on my part. Staying in love with God keeps us on the path of faithfulness as we move toward God; it gives us the gifts of God that redeem, guide, sustain, companion, and keep us always in God's loving embrace. While the first two rules are about our relationship and interaction with neighbor, this last one is about our interaction and relationship with God. John Wesley spoke of keeping the ordinances of God, meaning the practices that keep the relationship between God and humans vital, alive, and growing: public worship of God, The Lord's Supper, private and family prayer, searching the scriptures, Bible study, and fasting. Today we name our spiritual disciplines differently, but we too must find our way of living and practicing those disciplines that will keep us in love with God. It is in these practices that we learn to hear and respond to God's direction; it is in these practices that we learn to trust God as revealed in Jesus Christ, and that we learn of God's love for us. It is where our love for God is nurtured and sustained.

Do no Harm. Do Good. Stay in Love With God. Coming soon: a class studying these 3 rules.

In Peace and Joy,

Marilyn

## Beyond Our Walls... by Marilyn Meeker-Williams

### CHRISTMAS EVE OFFERING

St. Mark's Christmas Eve offering is already supporting churches and families devastated by Hurricane Ike; the good work of the Methodist Children's Home; and From the Ground Up which raises funds for new church starts and revitalization of existing churches. Your gifts have been distributed to these vital ministries:

Methodist Children's Home	\$250
From the Ground Up (formerly Room to Grow)	\$200
Hurricane Ike relief	\$209
Reedy Chapel, AME (historic African/American church nearly destroyed in Galveston)	\$350

## Upcoming Events

### Sunday, January 18

8:30 am Worship Service  
9:40 am Sunday School  
10:50 am Worship Service  
4:00 pm Community Garden Meeting  
4:30 pm Children's Choir Rehearsal  
5:00 pm UMYF

### Monday, January 19—Office Closed

Martin L. King, Jr. Day  
7:30 pm Boy Scouts

### Tuesday, January 20

9:30 am Weaving Class  
4:15 pm CDC Board Meeting  
6:00 pm Heights Interfaith Coalition  
6:30 pm Trustees

### Wednesday, January 21

10:15 am CDC Chapel  
5:30 pm Wednesday Night Live  
6:15 pm Church Council  
6:15 pm Handbell Rehearsal  
7:00 pm AA Meeting  
7:00 pm Yoga Class  
7:30 pm Chancel Choir

### Saturday, January 24

12:00 pm Women's AA Meeting

### Sunday, January 25

8:30 am Worship Service  
9:40 am Sunday School  
10:50 am Worship Service  
3:00 pm Leadership Training—District  
4:00 pm Scouts Pack 30 Committee  
4:30 pm Children's Choir Rehearsal  
5:00 pm UMYF

### Monday, January 26—Newsletter Deadline

7:30 pm Boy Scouts

### Tuesday, January 27

9:30 am Weaving Class  
1:30 pm Staff Meeting  
6:30 pm Care Team  
6:30 pm Missions Team

### Wednesday, January 28

10:15 am CDC Chapel  
5:30 pm Wednesday Night Live  
6:15 pm Handbell Rehearsal  
7:00 pm Hospitality Team Meeting  
7:00 pm AA Meeting  
7:00 pm Yoga Class  
7:30 pm Chancel Choir Rehearsal

### Friday, January 30

4:00 pm Youth Leave for Midwinter

### Saturday, January 31

12:00 pm Women's AA Meeting

### Sunday, February 1

8:30 am Worship Service  
9:40 am Sunday School  
10:50 am Worship Service  
4:00 pm Youth Council  
4:30 pm Children's Choir Rehearsal  
5:00 pm UMYF

### Monday, February 2

7:30 pm Boy Scouts

### Tuesday, February 3

9:30 am Weaving Class  
1:30 pm Staff Meeting  
6:30 pm Trustees

### Wednesday, February 4

10:15 am CDC Chapel  
5:30 pm Wednesday Night Live  
6:15 pm Worship Team  
6:30 pm Outreach Team  
6:15 pm Handbell Rehearsal  
7:00 pm AA Meeting  
7:00 pm Yoga Class  
7:30 pm Chancel Choir

St. Mark's Calendar  
Online at [smumc.org](http://smumc.org)

Upper Room Daily Devotional  
Online at [upperroom.org](http://upperroom.org)



# Church News

**New Member Classes:** If you are interested in joining the church, we invite you to attend the New Member Classes which are designed to nurture your commitment to Christ and the church. The six-class series will be held at 9:40 am on Sundays, February 15 – March 29 in the parlor. We will welcome new members Easter Sunday, at the Sunrise Service during worship. Please call the church office at 713-861-3104 to register or for info.



**Community Garden at St. Mark's:** How does your garden grow? If you are interested in starting a community garden at St. Mark's, please contact Cindy Freeman at 832.689.4437, or [Lucinda.f@earthlink.net](mailto:Lucinda.f@earthlink.net). We hope to build the first phase of the garden in time for Spring planting. We have received an indication of interest in building it, from an aspiring Eagle Scout who's eager to get started. In developing a master plan we will access the expertise of Urban Harvest ([www.urbanharvest.org](http://www.urbanharvest.org)). This invitation is open to all. Do you have a green thumb? Are you interested in beautifying our church grounds? Do you have connections to a local nursery or plant center? (You know who you are). Do you like to play in the dirt? Give Cindy a call.

**IRA Charitable Rollover:** Taxpayers age 70½ or older who are interested in contributing money held in an individual retirement account (IRA) to charity may find it worthwhile to take advantage of this provision, which has been extended through 2009. If accomplished via a direct trustee-to-trustee transfer of funds, the rollover is tax free. "Trustee-to-trustee" simply means the payment from the financial institution be made directly to the charity like St. Mark's United Methodist Church. While no deduction for the rollover contribution would be available, the rollover option may still be preferable to taking a taxable IRA distribution and claiming a deduction, since deductions for charitable contributions are subject to percentage-of-AGI limitations. You should review this with your CPA or other tax advisor. *by Rick Kiley*

### Attendance Record:

<i>Attendance for Sunday, January 4</i>	
Sunday School Total.....	100
8:30 Worship.....	19
10:50 Worship.....	98
Total Worship.....	117
<i>Attendance for Sunday, January 11</i>	
Sunday School Total.....	92
8:30 Worship.....	28
10:00 Worship.....	125
Total Worship.....	153

### Join Yahoo E-Mail group:

To add your e-mail address go to:  
[groups.yahoo.com/group/stmarksumchouston/](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/stmarksumchouston/)

**Don't forget to bring food for the food pantry donation.**

## Prayer Needs

**Our president, leaders, and servicemen and women**  
 Betty Barr vision and retina problems  
 Vernon Baumann (Linda Pollard's brother-in-law) cancer  
 Leta Bush health and encouragement  
 Charlotte Campbell recovering from back surgery  
 Lydia Chavarria inoperable cancer  
 Ruby Chumchall health and encouragement  
 Eva Copeland health and encouragement  
 Carol Curlee (Charlotte Campbell's sister) heart surgery  
 Karen Davis (Malcolm Davis' sister) uterine cancer  
 Geraldine Dixon (Mimie Taylor's sister) health encouragement  
 Doug Dreher recovering from heart problem  
 Neva Dupuis health and encouragement  
 Carolyn Fulbright (Pam Scheyer's mother) heart  
 Dorothea Furstenfeld health and encouragement  
 Kimberly Gallion (Quincy Allen's friend) health  
 Cathy Harris (Glenda Owen's friend) breast cancer  
 Eddie & Vivian Hubbell now in Belmont Village  
 Maye Humphrey now in Village on the Park  
 Clinton Iden cancer  
 Ferne Lake health and encouragement  
 Martin Larsen health and encouragement  
 Sharma Lewis-Castillo staff infection in sinuses, sinus surgery  
 Dan Louis recovering from quadruple bypass surgery  
 Emma Maltbie (Jennifer McClure's friend's 3 yr old daughter) brain cancer  
 Mac McClure health and encouragement  
 Irma McGee in West Janisch Health Care Center  
 Claudette Milner's father health and encouragement  
 Estella Schmidt health and encouragement  
 Peter Seefeldt (Carol Munn's nephew) Marine bombed-Iraq  
 Ruth Shuman lung cancer  
 Mike and Jan Terry health and encouragement  
 Thelma Vincent health and encouragement  
 W. G. Weatherly health and encouragement  
 Kathryn Weeks health and encouragement

## January Birthdays

- 1/1 Charles Batterson
- 1/2 Patricia Dupuy
- 1/3 Will Allen
- 1/3 Cooper Cody
- 1/3 Betty Green
- 1/3 Clark Martinson
- 1/4 Ryan Dubose
- 1/4 Diana VanDuzer
- 1/5 Judy Graves Fitzsimmons
- 1/5 Kris Thomas
- 1/7 Ken Wales
- 1/10 Linda Laws
- 1/12 Joe Dupuis
- 1/12 Felice Vittoria
- 1/13 Alsey Newton
- 1/15 Nelda Kimbro (91st)
- 1/16 Tad Alt
- 1/18 Rachel Thomas
- 1/19 Jessica Nalley
- 1/20 Ciarra Rodriguez
- 1/20 Mandy Thomas
- 1/21 Matthew Anglin
- 1/21 Haedyn Standridge
- 1/23 Cindy Freeman
- 1/25 Mason Burks
- 1/25 Carla Gwinn
- 1/28 Rebecca Gilbert
- 1/28 Ryan Tamez
- 1/29 Martha Bettell
- 1/29 Raina Fraley
- 1/29 Camille Sanders
- 1/31 Elizabeth Houser

(We want to make sure we include everyone's birthday... if for some reason your birthday is not here, please call the church office.)

## Anniversaries:

- January 4 — Clark & Lisa Martinson
- January 8 — Rick & Patti Kiley
- January 11 — Quincy & Janet Allen
- January 11 — Mark & Rachel Donnelly
- January 15 — Mike & Kathy Holdridge
- January 21 — Neil & Kris Thomas
- January 26 — Marti & Nelson Turner

### WNL Wednesday Night Live:

The next Wednesday Night Live supper will be from 5:30 - 7:30pm Wed., January 21 hosted by the Room 109 Sunday School (formerly Tuxis) Class and Wed., January 28 hosted by the Bell Choir.



### Disciple Bible Study at St. Mark's:

The Adult Ministry team is exploring bringing the Disciple series to St. Mark's and are seeking those who are trained to lead and those who would like to experience this in-depth study of the Bible. If you have taken the leadership training please let us know. If you have taken the Disciple classes and are interested in leading a class please let us know. If you would to study the Bible in depth, please call Diana Van Duzer at (713)426-3320 or e-mail [dvanduzer@sbcglobal.net](mailto:dvanduzer@sbcglobal.net).

### COMPANIONS in Christ Calling all Radicals! by Jamie Block

Do you want to be a radical follower of Christ? Then I invite you to participate in the next Companions in Christ class. It is a spiritual formation class which has changed my life—twice. The first time I took the class in 2002, I became a member of the United Methodist Church. And in 2006 when I took the class again here at St. Mark's, it helped me integrate into a new congregation, deepened my prayer life, and taught me to think about loving God in a radical way. Because the class is experiential, my spiritual life is richer, my commitment to serve God is deeper, and my Companions in Christ are a source of both personal and spiritual support. Your companions in Christ are calling! Will you answer? To register, email [jamietao@comcast.net](mailto:jamietao@comcast.net) or call the church office.

## Senior Moments

**XYZ Game Day:** Senior game day is Tuesday, January 27 at 10:00 am.

**XYZ Club:** The XYZ meeting is at 10:30 on Tuesday, February 10.

# St. Mark's United Methodist Church

600 Pecore  
Houston, Texas 77009  
Office Hours: Monday–Friday 8:00 am–4:00 pm

Phone: 713-861-3104  
Fax: 713-861-2948  
Children's Dev. Ctr. 713-861-4443  
www.smumc.org

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Reverend Marilyn Meeker-Williams  
pastor@smumc.org

**Organist**  
William C. West

**Administrative Assistant**  
K. Melody Olivares  
office@smumc.org

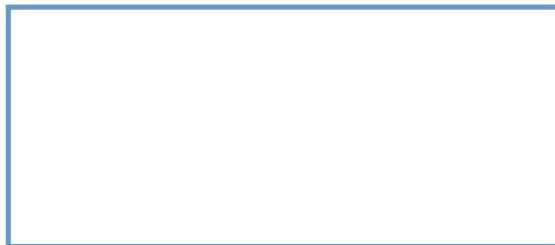
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**Child Care Supervisor**  
Dolores Cruz

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## Sunday Worship Times:

8:30 am — Worship Service  
9:30 am — Sunday School  
10:50 am — Traditional Worship Service



## Choir Faces the Music on Valentine's Banquet *by Kevin Dubose*

The St. Mark's Sanctuary Choir traditionally has presented a Valentine's Banquet/Auction/Musical Comedy Review. The busy Advent and Christmas season has always made it impossible to start working on this project until January, and putting together the banquet, the auction items, and a full-blown show in less than 6 weeks has always been a challenge.

This year that challenge was significantly increased by the resignation of music director, choir director and show coordinator Jon Miller, effective December 26. We do not yet have a replacement for Jon, and, in all likelihood, will not have a new director by February 14. Even if we did, dropping a responsibility like this on someone trying to learn a new job while producing quality music leadership in worship every Sunday would just be too much to ask. Accordingly, because we could not present a show of the quality to which the congregation has become accustomed, we regretfully have decided not to present the Valentine's Banquet in February 2009.

The Choir will miss the fun of putting on the show, and we have been told that some of the congregation will miss it as well. But there is another side to this extravaganza that is more important than the fun of putting on a show. This is the only fund-raiser of the year to raise money to replenish the Leifeste Scholarship Fund. That fund enables us to pay a small stipend to local music students who provide a backbone for our choir of otherwise amateur musicians. Their singing makes it possible for our choir to have a much higher quality of sound, and also provides a church home for students during their college years. The fund also provides small scholarships to members of the St. Mark's family who are studying music in college.

So even though we are not presenting a show this year, we still need to raise money to allow the Leifeste Scholarship Fund to continue to function. Although the congregation always has been good about paying to hear us sing around Valentine's Day, this year we are asking you to pay us *not* to sing. You will be

hearing more over the next month about how to do that, but we wanted to let you know as soon as possible that this fund-raising effort will be a little different this year. We anticipate coming back with an even bigger and better show in February 2010. Thank you for your ongoing encouragement and support.

## Altar Flowers for 2009:

Make reservations now for Sundays in 2009 to give altar flowers in honor or in memory of loved ones, birthdays, or anniversaries.

Call the church office to reserve the dates you want. Prices are \$70 for both sides and \$35 for one side.

