

October 23, 2009

Window Into St. Mark's



ST. MARK'S UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Window Into St. Mark's

Church Conference



This year, our Church Conference* is scheduled for Sunday, November 15 at 3:00 pm. All are invited to attend. The Pastor from St. Stephens United Methodist Church, Rev. Cramer Johnson, will preside over our conference.

Church Conference is a time to share signs of how God is working to make disciples of Jesus Christ through the ministries of St. Mark's. We will give thanks for all God has already done in 2009 and look toward 2010 with its new ministry opportunities for reaching out with Christ-like love and compassion. The election of leaders and setting pastoral salary for 2010 are the two items requiring a decision by Church Conference every year. All members are invited to attend and participate as we give God thanks for all that has been, all that is now, and prayerfully consider our future faithfulness and fruitfulness as the Body of Christ.

*A Church Conference is a Charge Conference that invites participation from all members of the congregation. All members are voting members, unlike a Charge Conference in which voting is restricted to ministry leaders elected at the previous Charge Conference.

HIM Food Pantry News



Trick or Treat so Others

Can Eat: Youth groups from St. Mark's and Zion Lutheran, and several Boy and Girl Scouts groups are heading up a Halloween food drive for the Heights Interfaith Ministries Food Pantry. They will be distributing grocery sacks with our "Trick or Treat so Others Can Eat" logo on them throughout their neighborhoods and returning filled sacks to the pantry. There are additional grocery sacks in the narthex for those that wish to fill a bag and bring it to the church between now and Nov. 15th.

Food Pantry Open House: The Heights Interfaith Ministries Food Pantry Open House will be November 10, 2009 4 pm to 7 pm. We are having an open house to showcase the capabilities we offer to our Greater Heights community. We are inviting church, fraternal, and civic organizations to become members by asking them to see the facility, to meet the volunteers, to hear our vision, and check out how they can join us. If you would like to help at the open house, please call Diana Van Duzer or Dave Humphreys at 832.443.3341.

Adopt An Angel



Adopt An Angel: Have you ever given a present to a child and seen their eyes light up as they opened it? Most of us have been blessed to see that over and over, if not with our own children, but with nieces and nephews or friends. What if you could not provide anything for your own children for Christmas? How would you feel? We have an opportunity again to provide a special Christmas for kids (identified for us by Wesley Community Center) who would have a very sparse Christmas otherwise. Due to the ever-increasing response and generosity from you all, we have upped the amount of children we are helping to 100 this year!

Please consider "adopting" an "angel", that is, getting a name and clear bag from the table. You will then buy gifts for the child (no more than \$35 worth) and place them in the bag, and return them to St Mark's by Dec 6th. Wesley will pick them up that week. You can sign up on Sunday, October 25, November 1 and 8 in the Narthex or courtyard, weather permitting. - Rose Brewer



Service of Remembrance and Hope

**Sunday, November 1
12:00—1:00 pm**

As November begins, our thoughts and hearts turn toward preparing for Thanksgiving and Christmas, a time of joy and hope when families and friends gather to celebrate God's gifts of love. We look forward to the holiday meals and parties, exchanging gifts, attending worship services together and other beloved traditions.

When we are grieving, Christmas and other holidays are potent reminders of loved ones who are not present because of death, distance, illness or disability. After the 10:50 am worship service we invite you to stay for prayer, meditation, music and to light memory candles.

This special time is for you or anyone you know who has suffered loss and is grieving. We will have on hand a page of suggestions for getting through the holidays and allowing God and others to comfort us and walk with us through our grief.

In life, in death, God is with us. We are not alone. Thanks be to God! (UMH #883)

State of the Church by Kevin Dubose, Church Council Chair

I am authoring this column for the second consecutive issue because Pastor Marilyn's spiritual renewal leave continues. Although we miss Pastor Marilyn, the church has continued to function through the efforts of the staff, lay leaders, and Rev. Charles Ruehl. Thanks to all those people for their efforts, and we all hope Pastor Marilyn's time away has been relaxing, reinvigorating, and spiritually renewing.

Elsewhere in this newsletter you will find an article by Vance Neathery about the current budgetary shortfall at St. Mark's, which I urge you to read. Talking about money and the church is always a delicate matter. I have learned to approach stewardship from the standpoint of it being a necessary part of your relationship with God, and responding to generosity with generosity, rather than focusing on the church needing your money to operate. But the fact is that giving has fallen well below projected levels in recent months, we are spending more than we are receiving, and if that trend continues we made need to start cutting budgeted expenses. In light of that, let me encourage you to do the following:

- If you made an estimate of giving for this year, check to see if you are current, and if you are not, and you can, try to catch up.
- If you made an estimate of giving for this year and you are current on that estimate, consider giving a little more than projected to help

the church get through this difficult time.

- If you did not make an estimate of giving for this year, now would be a really good time to find it in your heart to be generous to St. Mark's. A few unexpected contributions could make a big difference in the church operational capacity.

Fortunately, the news is not all bad. For the first three Sundays in October the offerings have each been slightly above budget. If we had started October with a balanced budget, we would be in good shape. But between June and September we fell \$40,000 below projected giving, so we have significant ground to make up between now and the end of the year. Being slightly above budget every Sunday will not get us there. Anything you can do to help will be greatly appreciated.

God bless you all, and give you peace, hope, grace, and love.

Kevin Dubose
Church Council Leader

Who Is Our Neighbor by Penny Chappell

Who is Our Neighbor?

Jesus instructed us to love our neighbor, but who is our neighbor? The Mission Team believes that the world is our neighbor, whether it is the 800 plus families being served by our food pantry, a small Methodist church in St. Petersburg, Russia, or a lady in Texas City still struggling to clean up damage from Hurricane Ike.

On Oct. 17, 12 people from St. Mark's spent a few hours clearing a literal jungle of 4 ft. high weeds in order to get to several downed trees. The previous week had been hot humid and full of mosquitoes. I had personally been hoping for an inside painting job to do. However, we were assigned yard work. God in his infinite mercy provided us with a gloriously sunny, cool, dry day and sent a man we had never met with a John Deere tractor to help us on our way. Everyone pitched in sharing mosquito repellent,

sun block, and yes even poison ivy block. The latter was truly a God-send as the whole area was undergrown with poison ivy and several of us are very allergic to this vegetation. I want to personally thank all those who participated: Glenda Owen; Kevin DuBose; Dave, Barbara, and Marc Humphreys; Charles Vasquez; Sharon Sawallisch; Crystal Young and her friend Eric; and Steve and Vicki Schutter.

In the near future we will launch the annual Adopt an Angel program. Due to the economy we have voted to increase the number of Angels from 75 to 100. This is a joint project of Missions and the UMW. We hope you give this project your usual generous support.

The Missions Team meets on the 4th Tuesday at 6:30pm. All are welcome.
Who Is Your Neighbor?

Upcoming Events

Sunday, October 25
8:30 am Worship Service
9:40 am Sunday School
10:50 am Worship Service
5:00 pm UMYF

Monday, October 26
7:30 pm Boy Scouts

Tuesday, October 27
9:30 am Weaving
10:00 am XYZ Senior Games Day
6:30 pm Care Team
6:30 pm Missions Team

Wednesday, October 28
10:15 am CDC Chapel
5:30 pm Wednesday Night Live
6:15 pm Handbell Rehearsal
6:30 pm Communications Team
7:00 pm AA Meeting
7:00 pm Yoga Class
7:30 pm Choir Rehearsal

Thursday, October 29
9:00 am Bridge Group

Saturday, October 31
12:00 pm Women's AA Meeting

Sunday, November 1—All Saints Day
8:30 am Worship Service
9:40 am Sunday School
10:50 am Worship Service
12:00 pm Service of Remembrance and Hope
4:00 pm Youth Council
5:00 pm UMYF

Monday, November 2—Newsletter Deadline
6:30 pm Adult Ministry Team
7:30 pm Boy Scouts

Tuesday, November 3
9:30 am Weaving Class
2:00 pm Staff Meeting
3:30 pm Daisies
6:00 pm Brownies
6:30 pm Trustees

Wednesday, November 4
10:15 am CDC Chapel
5:30 pm Wednesday Night Live
6:15 pm Handbell Rehearsal
6:30 pm Outreach Team
7:00 pm Yoga Class
7:00 pm AA Meeting
7:30 pm Choir Rehearsal

Thursday, November 5
9:00 am Bridge Group

Saturday, November 7
9:30 am Heights Women's Celebration
12:00 pm Women's AA Meeting

Sunday, November 8
8:30 am Worship Service
9:40 am Sunday School
10:50 am Worship Service
12:00 pm UMW Brown Bag business meeting
5:00 pm UMYF

Monday, November 9
4:15 pm CDC Board Meeting
6:30 pm Worship Team
7:30 pm Boy Scouts

Tuesday, November 10
9:30 am Weaving
10:30 am XYZ Club
2:00 pm Staff Meeting
4:00 pm Food Pantry Open House
6:15 pm SPR Team Meeting
6:30 pm Missions Team

Wednesday, November 11
10:15 am CDC Chapel
5:30 pm Wednesday Night Live
6:15 pm Handbell Rehearsal
6:15 pm Children's Council Meeting
6:30 pm Finance Team Meeting
7:00 pm Hospitality Team Meeting
7:00 pm Yoga Class
7:30 pm Choir Rehearsal

St. Mark's Calendar
Online at smumc.org

Upper Room Daily Devotional
Online at upperroom.org



Church News

Community Thanksgiving Service:

This year it will be held Monday, November 23 at Christ the King Catholic Church. A light supper will be served at 6:00 pm, followed by a short service at 7:00 pm.

“Movie Night on the Lawn” Reaches Out to Community:

Movie Night on the Lawn returns on Friday, November 13th at 6:30 pm at Proctor Plaza Park. We have partnered with the park, located on the corner of Watson and West Temple. The park’s community center will be inviting families from the area to participate. We are showing the movie UP and we will be serving cotton candy and handing out Balloons of course! This is a great outreach opportunity for St. Mark’s and we hope you will be a part of it.



Wednesday Night Live:

All are invited to Wednesday Night Live supper which will be served in the Fellowship Hall from 5:30 - 7:30pm:

- 10/28 - Host: New Pilgrims Class
- 11/4 - Host: Men’s Sunday School Class
- 11/11 - Host: open
- 11/18 - Host: Handbell Choir



New Custodian: We have a new custodian, Iyesha Cotton, in a temporary position through the end of the year, as Morris and Rosie are no longer employed with us. Iyesha is a teacher at the

Children's Development Center for the last 4 and 1/2 years, and is also a Sunday morning nursery worker. She will be here in the evenings and on Sundays.



UMW News: The United Methodist Women will have a brown bag lunch meeting on Sunday, November 8th immediately following the 10:50 service. They will have a business meeting and elect officers for the coming year.

Senior Moments

(for anyone over 50 to enjoy)

XYZ Game Day: Senior games are Tuesday, October 27 –10:00am.

XYZ Club: Tuesday, November 10 at 10:30 am. We will address Christmas cards. Everyone bring their favorite Thanksgiving side dish or \$5. Roast turkey with gravy and desserts will be provided.



Heights Women’s Celebration:

Calling all women to Heights Celebration, (A woman-to-woman ministry of sharing, encouraging, discipling and mentoring in the faith) on Saturday, November 7, 2009 from 9:00 am to 12:00 noon in Fellowship Hall. Cathy Busa will share a message called "Teapots, Peppermints & Hugs" based on Proverbs 31:30 - *Charm is deceptive and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised.* Bring a friend and enjoy breakfast with us. Child care will be provided.

Thanks from Jan Terry: I would like to express my gratitude to the St. Mark's family for your prayers, cards, and acts of kindness during my recent loss. Your thoughtfulness and compassion have exemplified God's love to me. Mike loved this church and the people who made it his family.—Jan Terry

Recent Memorials:

In memory of Ferne Lake

Given by:
Phyllis Waters
Thane & Nicole Wyman

Pam Massey
Eloise Massey
Louise Decker

In memory of Mike Terry

Given by:
Roger & Diana Van Duzer
Triple M Class
Phyllis Waters
Pam Massey
Eloise Massey

In memory of Laurie Jene Bufler for Replating the Cross

Given by: Charli Merchant

In Memory of Ruby Nichols birthday

Given by: William Machemehl

Attendance Record:

Attendance for Sunday, October 11

Sunday School Total.....	72
8:30 Worship.....	17
10:50 Worship.....	96
Total Worship.....	113

Attendance for Sunday, October 18

Sunday School Total.....	90
8:30 Worship.....	26
10:50 Worship.....	100
Total Worship.....	126

Prayer Needs

- Our president, leaders, and servicemen and women**
Dawn Avery health and encouragement
Betty Barr vision and retina problems
Gayle Birdwell (Natalie Birdwell’s mother) heart surgery
Johnny Brown (Anglin’s grandmother) cancer
Leta Bush recovering from broken hip and surgery
Lydia Chavarria home hospice care
Opal Chesser (Margie Higgins mother) brain tumor
Ruby Chumchall health and encouragement
Ken Cockrell (Kelley Slack’s friend) cancer treatment
Cooper Cody (Julie Cody’s son) bone cancer treatment
Carol Curlee (Charlotte Campbell’s sister) heart
Ruth Easterly (Mark Easterly’s grandmother) health
Marion Freeman (Cindy Freeman’s mother) health
Carolyn Fulbright (Pam Scheyer’s mother) heart
Dorothea Furstenfeld health and encouragement
Irene Geenshor (Linda Pollard’s mother) health
Cathy Harris (Glenda Owen’s friend) cancer treatment
Eddie & Vivian Hubbell in Belmont Village
Maye Humphrey now in Treemont
Raymond & Martha McCallister (Heather Easterly’s parents) health and encouragement
Irma McGee in West Janisch Health Care Center
Wendy Melchor (Kelly Melchor’s sister-in-law) uterine cancer
Linda Pollard injured ribs
Estella Schmidt health and encouragement
Ruth Shuman lung cancer
Joe Slack (Kelly Slack’s father) recovering from infection
Leanne Smith (Patti Newby’s mother) kidney surgery
Dawn Thompson (friend of Glenda Owen) lung cancer
Dixie Waters (friend of Glenda Owen) breast cancer
Mary Weatherly health and encouragement
Kathryn Weeks health and encouragement

November Birthdays

- 11/1 Caelin Campbell
- 11/2 Clay Naiser
- 11/2 Lillian Walsh
- 11/3 Kelly Biagioli
- 11/3 Caleb McClure
- 11/3 Mitchell Stringfellow
- 11/4 Quin Copeland
- 11/4 Rhonda Crawford
- 11/5 Kevin Nalley
- 11/7 Stephen Schutter
- 11/8 Margaret Blackstone
- 11/8 Emma Graves-Fitzsimmons
- 11/10 Donnette Durst
- 11/11 Vicki Schutter
- 11/12 Monica McHenry
- 11/14 Samuel Irvin
- 11/14 Elizabeth Pudwill
- 11/15 Rebecca Traylor
- 11/16 Kay Rowe
- 11/17 Sue Thompson
- 11/18 John Burks
- 11/18 Sammy Rodriguez
- 11/19 Becky Blaylock
- 11/20 Rick Cannon, Jr.
- 11/24 Margot Perez
- 11/26 Mary Gonzales
- 11/27 Shayne Paggeot
- 11/27 Elliott Scheyer
- 11/27 Laura Wilson-Cardona
- 11/28 Ann Colleps
- 11/28 Susan Murchison
- 11/30 Nicole Hobson
- 11/30 Margie Higgins
- 11/30 Dan Patterson

(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:

- November 7** — Chris & Dianne Lux
- November 10** — Jude & Kathryn Richard
- November 22** — Danny & Jacque Corman
- November 22** — Ian & Mandy Thomas
- November 30** — Chuck & June Davis

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

Pastor

Reverend Marilyn Meeker-Williams
pastor@smumc.org

Interim Choir Director
Eric Esparza

Organist
William C. West

Administrative Assistant
K. Melody Olivares
office@smumc.org

Financial Secretary
Betty Green
financial@smumc.org

Director of Children's and Youth Ministries
Scarlett Fowler
youth@smumc.org

Director of Children's Development Center
Kelly Melchor
stmarksdc@smumc.org

Child Care Supervisor
Dolores Cruz

Non-Profit

U.S. Postage

PAID

Permit No. 91

Houston, TX



Sunday Worship Times:

8:30 am — Worship Service

9:30 am — Sunday School

10:50 am — Traditional Worship Service



Un-fun Facts of Finance *by Vance Neathery*

Un-fun facts of finance

Let me start with three disturbing facts about the state of the church's finances as of the end of September: (1) So far this year, our expenses have exceeded our income by over \$29,000; (2) Our offerings for the year are \$40,000 less than anticipated; (3) As a result of (1) and (2), we only had \$16,000 cash in the bank, considerably less than what we usually try to keep on hand, and dangerously low for an institution of our size.

These facts have created challenges for the finance ministry team. We can't solve these challenges by printing more money -- we can only try to be good stewards of what we have received. We are not at the end of our rope, but we can see it approaching, and need to start taking measures to avoid getting closer to the brink. Unfortunately, a large part of our budget is comprised of fixed expenses (like utilities, insurance, and staff salaries which total about \$21,000 per month) that we can't or won't do anything about in the short run. But all discretionary expenses

have become negotiable, if not prohibited. After 12 years in a row of paying our apportionments in full we have not paid apportionments since June. (Apportionments are monies we send to the Methodist Church to fund ministries beyond our walls. Paying them in full 12 years in a row puts us in a pretty elite group.) We probably will not be able to hire contract musicians for the Christmas eve service. Skipping the Christmas Pageant was proposed, but that idea was rejected. Salary cuts and staff reductions could become necessary if the current trend is not reversed.

This last week while I was struggling with this article I turned on the TV and came upon a preacher whose sermon theme was that the devil doesn't beat you up when you are successful. Instead, he works on you when he knows that God has a plan for you to become successful. The devil wants to distract you from God's plan. The preacher pointed out that life isn't fair, just ask Job. There are going to be bad times. But God has a plan for you, and not even the devil can stop that plan if you

are open to God's plan and don't let the devil distract you from it.

So is the devil going to keep St. Mark's from the greatness that God has planned, or are we going to refuse to allow that to happen? I don't claim to know what God has in mind for St. Mark's. I just know that my family and some of our friends are going to do everything we can do to keep this church alive. You are welcome to join in that effort with whatever you can afford to bring.

Yours in a financially concerned fog,

Vance



Altar Flowers

Remember, you can give altar flowers in honor or in memory of your loved ones. Or celebrate an occasion like a birthday or anniversary! Call Melody in the church office to reserve your dates. We have openings for October, and November. Flower arrangements are \$35 for each side.