



SAINT MARK UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
 1109 WEST HENDERSON STREET
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April 29, 2021



St. Mark Messenger

By Grace Transformed...

Our Wednesday morning prayer group resumed several weeks ago. While we call it a prayer group, and we do discuss concerns and pray, it is mostly a Bible study. Right now, we are reading 1 John. 1 John is a challenging book that has much to say. One of the primary themes is agape love. It is 1 John that declares that God is agape which means unconditional love. But that love is not just the love God has for us. In the same sentence that makes claims God is love, we are also commanded to love one another. Again, the word is agape. We are all familiar with John 3:16 – “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.” But are you as familiar with 1 John 3:16? That verse says: “We know love by this, that he laid down his life for us—and we ought to lay down our lives for one another.” E. Stanley Jones said that we should never talk about John 3:16 without talking about 1 John 3:16. The verse we are so familiar with is all about God’s unconditional love for us. 1 John 3:16 is about our response to that love, to lay down our lives for another, which Jesus said is the greatest kind of love: “No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends” (John 15:13).

This of course fits in with a major theme of the New Testament: giving of oneself for others. It is an essential part of the character of God. God is a self-giving God. Jesus gave his life for us. If we are truly followers of Jesus, we must give ourselves as well.

Most of the time we read these words, we think of the things we already do, like our breadbasket, snack sack, and other ministries that make a difference in peoples’ lives. St. Mark is a very generous church. But I was reminded this week that there is something else we must do. The Central Texas Conference has been having a series of webinars and the one this week was about evangelism. That word often paralyzes us. We get scared about sharing our faith for some reason. But it isn’t just about sharing our faith, it is about befriending people. And once we befriend them, something in our conversation brings up church or faith. Then the door is open and we can invite them to church or we can share how our faith helped us in a difficult time. Our job is not to convert, that is God’s job, but it is our job to give of ourselves in a way that brings opportunities to share. I know it is easier said than done and as an introvert, I find the first conversation to be excruciating. But I also know that with practice it becomes easier. And now that we are opening up more and more for small groups and worship, we have more opportunities to invite people to visit St. Mark.

It might seem odd that I began this article with those words about laying our lives down for our friends and segued into evangelism. But for most of us, our faith is one of the most important parts of our lives; it defines who we are. So, when we share that part of ourselves, we share the best of ourselves and the best of ourselves is born out of the unconditional love of God. And because we often find this so frightening, it is like dying. But when we share that love, we find that we get love in return. The greatest sacrifice we can give, ends up being a gift to ourselves.

This past year has been a difficult one. There are still difficult days to come. But God is still at work in us and in our world and we can be sure that there are good days ahead of us. May we all trust God enough to let God lead us into the lives of new people who are hungry to know the saving grace of Jesus Christ. When God calls us to follow, may we have the courage to go.

In Christ’s Love,

Andy

.....reaching upward to God and outward to God’s people



Follow us on Facebook at
 Saint Mark United Methodist
 Church

Our Staff

Rev. Andy Tyler, Senior Pastor
 pastor@stmarkcleburne.com

Becky King, Children’s Ministry Coordinator

stmarkchildren@sbcglobal.net

Loren Milam, Youth Coordinator

Kathryn Stallings, Choir Director

Worship in person

Sundays at 10:30

Or

Via Facebook or
 YouTube

Web Site

www.stmarkcleburne.com

Church Office Email address:

stmarkcleburne@sbcglobal.net



W.O.W. May Schedule

- May 5—6 p.m. via Zoom
- May 12—6 p.m. via Zoom
- May 19—6 p.m. in person in the Fellowship Hall for the last meeting of the school year.



NEW MEMBER

We welcome Sheryl Gray to our church family. Sheryl joined on April 11 by transfer from another denomination.



**Knights of North Castle
Vacation Bible School**

June 6—9
6:30 pm—8:30 pm
Ages 4 through 5th grade

We will not be serving dinner.
Snacks will be provided.

Volunteers still needed!
Contact Becky or the church office

ST. MARK MINISTRIES

*In memory of **Sue Childress** given by*
Raychelle Geggatt
Kelly Dillard
David Bon
Dan and Jan Taylor
Martha Harris
Sue Mahoney
Brian and Karen Ellen Anderson
Johnson County Aggie Moms
Longview Office of Stifel Financial
Kirsten and Kirk Hinkson
Ruth Ann Hill

BREADBASKET

*In memory of **Toni McCommas** given by*
Dale and Larry Sanders

*In memory of **Sue Childress** given by*
Jimmie and Dorothy Venturi
Rick and Bernadine Mariott
Bill and Martha Cole
Dale and Larry Sander
Jonathon Lee
Mark and Cheri White
Richard and Betty Lee
Gayle Anderson
Paul and Roanna Timmons
Charles and Connie Bush
Lou Fitzgerald
Scott and Brenda Harrison
Dr. and Mrs. Fred Palmer
Mary Ann and Jerry Wheatley
Lorna Smith
Jerry and Iris Rives
Sue Rebstock
Denise Jones

*In honor of **Breadbasket Volunteers** given by*
Pam Johnson

*In honor of **Ben and Carla Oefinger** given by*
Jimmie and Dorothy Venturi



2021 Financial Information		
March :	Income	\$20,088.71
	Expenses	\$19,635.32
Year to date:	Income	\$66,355.52
	Expenses	\$66,241.23