

JUBILEE

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER



ST. MARK'S
United Methodist Church

DECEMBER 2020 - JANUARY 2021

Advent

at St. Mark's

**Worship with us
online this year.**

facebook.com/stmarkscarmel
stmarkscarmel.org/connected

Blue Christmas

Monday, December 21 – 7:00PM

Christmas Eve Contemporary

Thursday, December 24 – 7:00PM

Christmas Eve Traditional

Thursday, December 24 – 9:00PM

All Church Study

The Incarnation, by Adam Hamilton

stmarkscarmel.org/studygroups

COVID-19 Reopening Plan Guidelines

ALL PHASES MUST FOLLOW CDC GUIDELINES: PHYSICAL DISTANCING, FACE MASKS, AND HAND SANITIZER AT ENTRY POINTS. Continue to shelter in place if you are high risk (65 and older, underlying health condition). Stay at home if you are sick, until at least 10 days past initial symptoms, AND 3 days fever-free (without medicine), AND no respiratory symptoms. Recommendations for cleaning and sanitizing will be followed in all phases. For updates check out the St. Mark's website, stmarkscarmel.org/reopening. **We are currently in Phase C.**

	Phase A Starting May 31	Phase B Started July 12	Phase C Revised 11/17	Phase D TBD
Church Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open with limited hours. (M and W, 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM) Sanctuary open for prayer time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited hours continue (as of October 2, the office will be open 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM on Mon, Wed, Fri). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Office hours M-W-F, 9 AM–12 PM 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schedule & Protocol TBD
Worship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online worship service continues to be offered Worship team may gather and record in the sanctuary (Adults only) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online worship service continues to be offered Live family-oriented worship services with restrictions. (9:00 Current & 11:00 Traditional Service) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online worship services continue Live family-oriented worship services suspended as of 11/15/20 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schedule & Protocol TBD
Adult Ministries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online presence continues for small groups, Parking lot gatherings allowed. Leader must schedule with office. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online presence continues for small groups, Bible studies, Sunday classes. Limited live gatherings allowed (except Sunday morning) Meeting must be scheduled with office. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online presence continues for small groups, studies and Sunday classes Limited live gatherings must be scheduled with a facility request. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schedule & Protocol TBD
Student Ministries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online presence continues to be offered. Parking lot gatherings allowed, with Adult Supervision . 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online presence continues to be offered. Limited live gatherings in the building allowed with Adult supervision. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Third Street Rehearsals may resume in the building. Phase B guidelines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schedule & Protocol TBD
Children's Ministries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online presence continues to be offered Playground is closed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online presence continues Parking lot family events offered. Playground is closed. (Except for Preschool) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online presence continues. In-person Children's programming suspended. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schedule & Protocol TBD
Non-Church Meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On-site meetings postponed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On-site meetings postponed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited in-person meetings begin. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schedule & Protocol TBD



Grab-and-Go Visit Guidelines

As COVID rates continue to rise in our area, the church staff thanks you for keeping your office visits as brief as possible. We still have contact-free missions drop-offs in the church entrance (Door #2), 9:00am-4:00pm, Mon-Fri.

For your convenience, we have new Grab-and-Go shelves in the entryway where you can:

- Return 2021 Commitment Cards (pledges)
- Pick up and pay for study books. Pay here, online, or in the office if it is open.
- Pick up Advent devotionals, Advent gifts, Upper Rooms, newsletters, directories
- Pick up Communion Supplies before the first Sunday of the month and candles right before Christmas Eve
- Find info for online worship, United Methodist Women, and Alcoholics Anonymous

- Return and pick up requested library books
- Make UMW missions donations
- Other short-term drop-offs and pickups as arranged with the office.

Office Schedule & Closure

We are still opening the office and library on M-W-F, 9:00am-Noon. Feel free to call ahead (317-846-4912) to confirm that the person you need is in the office that day.

Staff have spread out their working hours to reduce the number of people in the office at any given time. In case of any last-minute opening delays or closures, there is a new sign on the inside entrance door indicating if the office is open or closed.

Holiday Closure: The office will close on December 24 and reopen on January 2.

The Pastor's Place

Dr. Brian White, Lead Pastor

bwhite@stmarkscarmel.org



Dear Co-workers in Christ,

As I am writing this newsletter article we are once again making the decision to go to virtual worship in response to a significant upsurge in the COVID-19 pandemic. This is not an easy decision to make as we enter into one of the holiest times of the year. It has given me pause to think about that first Christmas and some of the obstacles faced by the people of God.

When the angel came to Mary, her immediate response was incredulity and denial.

When the angel came to Joseph, he prepared to remove himself from the situation.

When the Wise Men arrived, Herod plotted to use them to kill the baby Jesus. When they needed to, Mary and Joseph packed up and moved to Egypt.

I hear many people expressing their grief about family gatherings that won't happen this year, about plans that will need to be changed, and about the limitations of gathering during this pandemic. I am, however, reminded that worshipping the Christ child has always happened even in the midst of significant obstacles. I am reminded of the children's story, "How the Grinch Stole Christmas" by Dr. Seuss. After the Grinch fails to stop Christmas from coming to Whoville he comes to this realization:

He hadn't stopped Christmas from coming. It came!

Somehow or other it came just the same.

And the Grinch with his Grinch feet ice cold in the snow,
Stood puzzling and puzzling, "How could it be so?"

It came without ribbons. It came without tags.

It came without packages, boxes, or bags!"

And he puzzled three hours 'till his puzzler was sore.

Then the Grinch thought of something he hadn't before.

"Maybe Christmas," he thought, "Doesn't come from a store.

Maybe Christmas, perhaps, means a little bit more."

This will be a year in which we are missing some of our favorite traditions. I predict, however, that Christmas will come just the same. And even though it might not happen just the way it has in the past or exactly the way we hoped, if we are open to the leading of God's Spirit we might just find a powerful reminder that God cannot be contained by our expectations! Come, Lord Jesus, Come!

In Christ's service,

Brian

The Pastor's Place

Julia Gonzales, Associate Pastor
jgonzales@stmarkscarmel.org

Hello St. Mark's family,

This winter, I decided to change things up a bit. As soon as Halloween passed and November began, I started dusting off the Christmas decorations and playing *The Nutcracker* on repeat. Under normal circumstances, I like to be firm about not celebrating Advent or Christmas until after Thanksgiving, but as it has been said many times already: this year is different. So the decorations were set up and Kyle and I even bought a few new ones. But for all of the beauty of the pine and mistletoe, the shining lights or extra glitter (okay, not so crazy about that one, but still), there's just something about the music during the season of Advent that always makes me smile.



It's hard to think of Advent and Christmas without thinking of the special hymns or carols (both nostalgic and profound). A lot of the old songs have been remade over the years, and for the most part I'm okay with that. That said, while Michael Bublé's version of "Have Yourself A Merry Little Christmas" is delightful, this year I'm drawn more to the original lyrics sung by Judy Garland. Specifically, it is the final verse that speaks to me. "Someday soon, we all will be together/If the fates allow/Until then, we'll have to muddle through somehow/So have yourself a merry little Christmas now."

We are continuing to muddle through this year, and I expect we'll continue to muddle through parts of next year as well. And it may still be a while until we are able to be all together safely. But with my final letter for 2020, I just want to say that I'm so proud of all of you. I'm proud of you for surviving this year, for still being kind and loving, for keeping your faith alive even when moments were dire. I'm so proud of you and I am so thankful for the gift of being in ministry with you. Thank you for being a partner in ministry with me and everyone else at St. Mark's. You have made a difference this year. Have a *Merry* Christmas and a *Happy* New Year.

Take care,

Julia

The Pastor's Place

Mary Ann Moman, Associate Pastor

mmoman@stmarkscarmel.org

As I get to the end of the year and begin a new year, I like to look at pictures I have taken in the last year. It's fun to see all of the places I have been and the people I have been with over the year. This year has been very different. And still, I am amazed at the places I have been and the people that have been part of my life.



When we locked down in March I resolved to take a walk every day. I have usually walked in the meadow of Holcomb Estate where I live. Because I have walked every day, I have seen the wild flowers peek out of the ground and bloom: Trillium, Dutchman's breeches, Trout Lilly's, Bloodroot, Violets, Spring Beauties. I paid attention in a new way.

I have walked all over the city of Indianapolis in these last months. I've been to Holliday Park, Southeastway Park, Hundred Acres at Newfields and the Canal paths, Eagle Creek Park. I've averaged about 30 -35 miles a week. I could have walked to Chicago and back home! I have learned more about the place where I live.

I've thought about Jesus and the disciples. They walked everywhere. It's a slow way to get to your destination. Jesus used these walks to teach and to meet people. It's a good way to learn about each other and the world. No wonder Jesus used the birds of the air, the plants and animals to teach us lessons about God's love. We see the ordinary in new ways when we move slower.

As a child I often "walked the fence" with my dad. We did this to find the weak places in the fences that the cattle might use to escape the pasture! On these walks I learned about dad's childhood, the names of the flowers, weeds that grew in the fences, and how stubborn cows can be. I also learned that dad and I could strengthen our relationship as we walked together. These slow walks with my dad are treasures I hold in my memory. As we move into a new year my prayer is that we can learn to move slower and see the beauty around us each day.

I am reminded of the Wendell Berry poem "The Peace of Wild Things":

When despair for the world grows in me
and I wake in the night at the least sound
in fear of what my life and my children's lives may be,
I go and lie down where the wood drake
Rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds.
I come into the peace of wild things
Who do not tax their lives with forethought
of grief. I come into the presence of still water.
And I feel above me the day-blind stars
waiting with their light. For a time
I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.
So may it be for all of us.

Mary Ann

December Mission Focus

Stephanie Cohen, Mission Coordinator
scohen@stmarkscarmel.org

Tree of Lights



Did you know?

Red Bird Mission, guided by Jesus Christ, empowers individuals and advocates justice by providing spiritual, educational, health, and community outreach ministries in southeastern Kentucky. The need is great in this isolated, rural area where chronic poverty, lack of jobs, poor housing and rugged terrain create obstacles to a fuller life. Red Bird Mission strives to meet the needs of their neighbors through ministry in five areas: Education, Health & Wellness, Community Outreach, Economic Opportunity, and Community Housing Improvement.

The students, staff and families of Red Bird Christian School are meeting the challenges presented by the pandemic, laboring through hardships to complete academic requirements. Grants and gifts have been helping provide the technology to deliver online instruction and get equipment and access to each home. Delays in delivery of computer hardware have been a challenge but the students are progressing. They uncover new needs every day and financial support is needed now more than ever.

How can I help?

- Give online at stmarkscarmel.org/give
- Honor someone special with a gift to Red Bird Mission, in St. Marks' Tree of Lights campaign! Honorees will receive a card acknowledging your gift and all donations will be given to Red Bird Mission. Visit stmarkscarmel.org/lights to complete the form online, with a minimum donation of \$5 per card. All money collected is given directly to Red Bird Mission.

For more information, contact Stephanie Cohen, scohen@stmarkscarmel.org or visit stmarkscarmel.org/red-bird.

January Mission Focus



Did You Know?

Mission Guatemala is a United Methodist-related organization with a mission to help meet the basic needs and improve the quality of life of under-served Guatemalan people through health, education, and nutrition initiatives and meaningful missionary service. Guatemala has one of the highest rates in the world for chronic childhood malnutrition. In rural areas, the often underserved and under-resourced indigenous Mayan communities can experience chronic childhood malnutrition reaching as high as 70%. During the past decade, Mission Guatemala's nutritional initiatives have included full-time school nutrition programs in the communities of Nueva Esperanza, Pacamán, Xepec, Choquec and the Kikoten School in San Andrés, as well as weekly and bi-weekly lunches served in a number of community public elementary schools as part of our "Como Saludable" (I Eat Healthy) program.

Because of the generous support from many partners, Mission Guatemala was able to purchase their clinic property in 2020, in San Andrés Semetabaj. This year, even through the pandemic, the 10th Anniversary of Mission Guatemala is celebrated! Projects continue: medical clinic and pharmacy, dental clinic, eye clinic, feeding centers for chronically malnourished children, community development projects, vocational training programs, water filters for schools and families, fuel efficient wood burning stoves. Mission Guatemala's philosophy is based on John Wesley's teaching to "Do all the good you can."

How Can I Help?

- Financial donations may be given online at stmarkscarmel.org/give.
- Mail or drop off a check at St. Mark's (note: Mission Guatemala).

Every dollar donated will be used to help fund Mission Guatemala's ongoing health, education and nutrition programs for the underserved indigenous Mayan communities we serve. For more information visit missionguatemala.com or contact Stephanie Cohen, scohen@stmarkscarmel.org.

Donation & Service Opportunities

Because You Give, St. Mark's Gives!

Thank you for your generous support of the missions of St. Mark's. Since the November newsletter we have given to:

- Carmel United Methodist Food Pantry: 22 bags of food
- Changing Footprints: total of 19 large bags of shoes
- Fletcher Place Community Center: 20 Oatmeal containers, 4 bags household items
- Group Mission: \$1000 donation
- Habitat for Humanity: \$306 towards washer & dryer set for new homeowner
- Hamilton County Kids Coats: total of 81 coats
- Open Doors Food Pantry: 24 bags of food
- Operation Classroom: \$5655
- Versiti: 31 units of Blood
- Wheeler Mission: 5 bags household items, 2 bags of clothing
- World Communion Sunday: \$100

Brightwood Community Center

COMING BACK STRONG!

There are exciting changes happening with Brightwood Community Center, including the relocation of their programming Annex behind Scotts UMC at 2140 N Arsenal Ave. A start date for resuming the afterschool programming is hopeful for January 2021.



NEW VOLUNTEERS: Any new volunteer please contact LeRae Troutman at

brightwoodcc@gmail.com or 317-546-8200.

The changes made will require an increase in volunteers needed. Our youth and families are counting on each one of us to make this year and years to come **IMPACTFUL** for them.

If tutoring is not your interest please contact Diane Newton at joediane244@att.net for other ways to be involved. Thank you for your interest, your prayers, and all that you do to make St. Mark's UMC-Where Mission is a Way of Life!

Human Relations Day Sunday, January 17

The United Methodist Human Relations Day is our next Special Sunday offering. This fund strengthens United Methodist outreach to communities in the United States and Puerto Rico, encouraging social justice and work with at-risk youth. Donations may be given online at stmarkscarmel.org/give

Salvation Army Bell Ringing

The holiday season brings back the family friendly mission project of bell ringing for the Salvation Army Red Kettle campaign. Each year, the Salvation Army will serve more than 25 million people across America - including many here in our community. That means 55+ million meals for the hungry, 10+ million nights of shelter for the homeless, and countless Christmas gifts for children who may otherwise go without.

This year signups will be available directly through Salvation Army. Sign up at www.registertoring.com/shifts-select.aspx.



Good Samaritan Network of Hamilton County

Good Samaritan Network is pleased to provide holiday assistance once again to families of Hamilton County. Volunteers are needed to help with sorting and distribution in December. Sign up at www.gsnlive.org/ivolunteer. Visit gsnlive.org to apply online for receiving Thanksgiving and Christmas Holiday Sponsorship or for more info.



Fletcher Place Christmas Program

Help is needed at the Fletcher Place Community Center to prepare for their annual Christmas Program. This has been a shopping service for parents living in poverty who have been qualified as needing assistance with Christmas food and gifts. IT WILL LOOK DIFFERENT, like many things in 2020.

Info on volunteers to help at the event coming soon. For more info contact Stephanie Cohen: scohen@stmarkscarmel.org.



Angel Tree

St. Mark's will once again provide gifts for the E. 10th United Methodist Children & Youth Center Christmas party. This year, selecting an angel will be via online sign ups, although you can still see our Christmas tree in the narthex, symbolizing the love through our annual Angel Tree gift giving. Please visit stmarkscarmel.org/signups to find a child you can support. Select a child and purchase a suitable toy in the \$20 range for the child listed. Wrap it for Christmas, **write the child's name and age** on the gift and deliver to St. Mark's by **Sunday, December 13**.

The children will open their gifts at their E. 10th Christmas party, although St. Mark's will not be attending this year. Contact Stephanie Cohen at 317-846-4912 or scohen@stmarkscarmel.org for more information.





Soup's On

Sunday, January 31

St. Mark's will be providing the meals "to go" for January 31. The Roberts Park United Methodist Church Soup's On ministry provides a wonderful opportunity for us to carry out Jesus' command to "feed the hungry." Each Sunday, volunteers at Roberts Park serve lunch to homeless persons and others in need, in downtown Indianapolis. During the pandemic, sack meals are being handed out as a safe alternative. Please help us offer lunch for those less fortunate by purchasing select food items, making PB&J sandwiches. Visit stmarkscarmel.org/signups to sign up and choose from food items needed. Contact Stephanie Cohen at scohen@stmarkscarmel.org for questions or more info.



Wheeler Mission

Winter Wear Needed

Wheeler Mission is a non-denominational, Christian, social services organization, which provides critically needed goods and services to the homeless, poor, and needy of central Indiana without regard to race, color, sexual orientation, creed, national origin, or religion. As winter approaches and temperatures drop, many who struggle with poverty, hunger, and homelessness don't have the clothing to keep them warm. Through January St. Mark's is collecting new or gently used winter wear to help keep **men, women, and children** warm during the harsh winter months. **Needed items: coats, sweatshirts, sweatpants, pajamas, scarves, hats, and gloves.** Donations may be dropped off at our donation bins inside door #2, between Monday-Friday, 9:00AM-4:00PM.

Programming During COVID

We miss seeing the children and their parents but encourage everyone to be safe and stay healthy.

- Check out the Connect with Kidz website, stmarkscarmel.org/kidzconnect to find weekly Kidz Church and Kidz Music & Praise resources.
- Join our St. Mark's Kidz Facebook page to watch a weekly Bible Story and object lesson and share what you are up to each week.
- Children ages 4-4th grades are invited to attend Kidz Music & Praise Rocking 11 AM each Sunday on Zoom. Contact Joyce Click, jclick@stmarkscarmel.org for an invitation.

Club 56 Social

In addition to Bible study sessions to explore faith development (9AM Sundays, Club 56 Den), Club 56 prepares 5th and 6th graders for

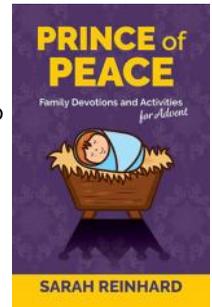


Cornerstone Youth by including regular team-building fellowship activities. Each month 5th through 6th graders are invited to gather for fellowship and fun and to invite their friends and neighbors. For more info or questions, contact Don Broad or Ramie Cooney at kidzchurch@stmarkscarmel.org.

Advent Events

DEVOTIONALS

Families are invited to pick up Advent Devotionals before the beginning of Advent (November 29) to help prepare for Christmas.



KIDS MUSIC & PRAISE MUSICAL

Sunday, December 13

All are invited to enjoy the Advent musical. Children can still join the production by attending Zoom rehearsals each Sunday during KMP Rocking 11 AM. Please email Joyce Click, jclick@stmarkscarmel.org for more information.

WEEKLY ACTIVITIES

Each week to help prepare for Christmas, St. Mark's will be sending families an Advent newsletter with a family-oriented devotional, activity, craft and weekly challenge. Supplies will be available and families will be able to share photos of their journeys on our Facebook Kidz Page. We're excited to see family fun in action.



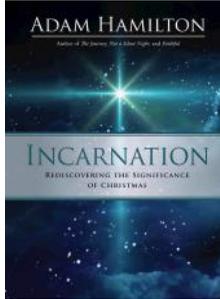
Weekly Gatherings

WEDNESDAY EVENINGS

Wednesday Night Bible Study | 5:00 PM
12/2- 12/30

Incarnation Advent Study

In this study, examine the meanings of the names of Christ—Emmanuel, Jesus, Lord, Messiah, Savior, Light of the World, Word Made Flesh—and the difference He makes in our lives this Christmas.



THURSDAY EVENINGS

DKB @ Starbucks Join Don on Zoom until restaurants reopen. Parents and students are all welcome! Email DKB for login.

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Join us for face-to-face Sunday School over Instagram Live.

AM Middle School (Instagram Live) - 10:00 AM
AM High School (Instagram Live) - 10:30 AM

Contact Don Broad,
dbroad@stmarkscarmel.org for more information.

Upcoming Events

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 13 | 5:00 PM

Family Virtual Escape Room (Zoom)

This event is for Cornerstone Youth, Kidz Ministry and Club 56.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 20 | 5:00 PM

Cornerstone Christmas Party

Look for details.



SUNDAY, DECEMBER 27 | 2:00 PM

Cornerstone Mystery Adventure Koteewi Run Snow Tube Slope

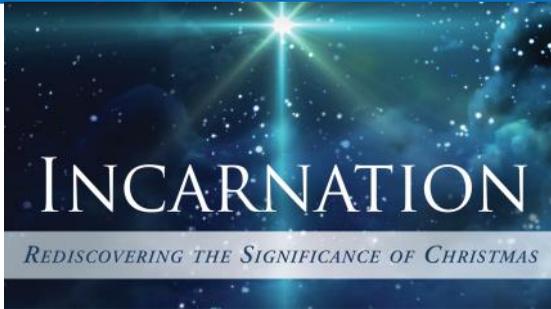
This is a family event, including Cornerstone Youth, Club 56 and Kidz Ministry. We are giving this event advance so families can plan. Visit koteewi-adventures.com to register.



Families will need to provide your own transportation. Make sure you fill out the release form when you register.

Adult Discipleship

Dr. Jennifer Cloud-Buckner, Adult Discipleship Coordinator
grow@stmarkscarmel.org



Churchwide Advent Study: Adam Hamilton's *Incarnation*

In this 4-week study, examine the meanings of the names of Christ—Emmanuel, Jesus, Lord, Messiah, Savior, Light of the World, Word Made Flesh—and the difference He makes in our lives this Christmas. In the face of uncertainty, the Christ child brings us together this Advent season, heals our hearts, and calls us to bring light into darkness. Books are \$12, available in the church entrance Mon-Fri, 9:00am-4:00pm and Sunday mornings.

SUNDAY MORNINGS

11/29-12/20, 9:30-10:40AM

Foundations & Friendships class, led by John Flora and Doug Brown, will discuss online. Email dthbrown@gmail.com to connect.

SUNDAY EVENINGS

11/29-12/20, 6:00 PM - 7:00PM

Led by Pastor Brian White online. Sign up at stmarkscarmel.org/studygroups.

OTHER SESSIONS

See the website for Thursday & Friday groups that began *Incarnation* before Thanksgiving. If your small group wants to join in the study, please email Jennifer at grow@stmarkscarmel.org for the materials by Nov 30.

New Winter 2021 Studies

New studies begin in January! By mid-December, signups for all new studies will be on stmarkscarmel.org/studygroups, and books will be available in the main church entrance for pickup (9am-4pm, Mon-Fri).

FRIDAYS

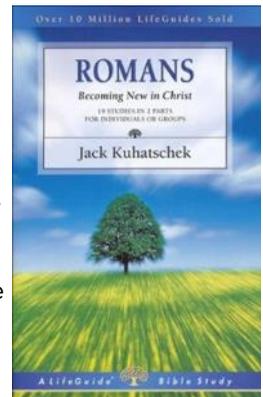
FRIDAY AM STUDY, 9:30 AM-11:30 AM

Romans: Becoming New in Christ

by Jack Kuhatschek, 1/8-2/26

Led by Stephanie Cohen | Hybrid online + room B/C | Books \$8

Sometimes our worship loses its passion, our prayer life becomes stagnant, and we forget why we are serving God. This *LifeGuide Bible Study* on the book of Romans addresses these problems, showing us how to break out of old patterns and become new in Christ. Offered on Zoom and in Room B/C (limit 10 attendees on-site), so sign up online or by emailing Stephanie (scohen@stmarkscarmel.org).



SUNDAYS

SUNDAY EVENING STUDY, 6:00-7:00PM

Led by Pastor Brian White

This study is on break for January.

Sign up at stmarkscarmel.org/studygroups.
 Questions? Email Jennifer Cloud-Buckner
 (grow@stmarkscarmel.org) or call (317) 846-4912 x. 214.
 Books available in church entrance Mon-Fri, 9:00am-4:00pm.

Winter 2021 Studies, cont'd

By mid-December, online signups and books for all of the January studies will be available.

WEDNESDAYS

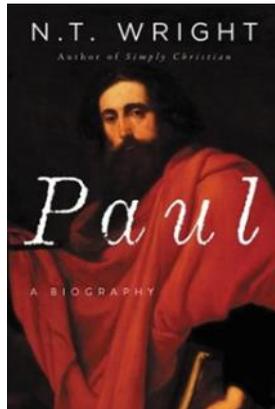
WED EARLY AM MEN'S STUDY (6:30-7:15AM)

PASTOR'S BIBLE STUDY (9:00AM-10:00AM)

Paul: A Biography by N.T. Wright, 1/13–5/12

Led by Pastor Brian White | Hybrid online + B/C | Books \$15

For centuries Paul—the apostle who “saw the light on the Road to Damascus” and made a miraculous conversation from zealous Pharisee persecutor to devoted Christ follower—has been one of the church’s most widely cited saints. In this modern biography, N.T. Wright looks beyond Paul’s influence on forming Christian theology to instead focus on the essence of Paul’s humanity, specifically illuminating the unlikelihood of Paul’s accomplishments and the human and intellectual drama that shaped him. With this context from Paul’s life, readers will understand Paul’s theology, thoughts, and writings in a fresh new light.



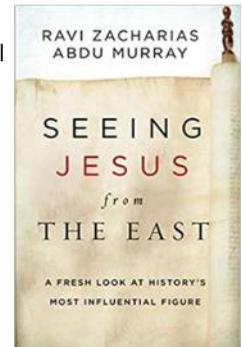
WED AM BIBLE STUDY, 10:30AM-11:45AM

Seeing Jesus from the East

by Ravi Zacharias and Abdu Murray,
 Jan-Feb 2021

Led by Lydia Fourman | Hybrid online + Room B/C | Books \$17

This “fresh look at history’s most influential figure” invites readers to rediscover the living and boundless Jesus in a new way. Authors Zacharias and Murray illuminate the cultural insights and uniquely Eastern ways of thinking and communicating that we miss when we ignore the Bible’s Eastern context. Incorporating story and vivid imagery to spark our imaginations, *Seeing Jesus from the East* will revitalize and refresh your understanding of Jesus. Offered on Zoom and in Room B/C (limit 10 attendees on-site), so sign up online or by emailing Lydia at (4manternlyd@gmail.com).



THURSDAYS

AM STUDY GROUP, 9:30 AM-11:00 AM

Led by Judy Woempner and Karen Whitaker

Study is TBD—Watch for updates in the church weekly email and on the website.

Open Groups

UMW Meeting

Tuesday, December 9 | 7:00 PM

Tuesday, January 12 | 9:00 AM & 7:00 PM



Our December and January meeting will be by Zoom. There will be no interest groups meeting in December. If you are new to UMW, Welcome!

For information on how to connect on Zoom, please contact Mary Etta Yoho, Maryetta.yoho@gmail.com. Below are the groups available. For more information on Interest Groups, go to stmarkscarmel.org/umw.

Morning Interest Groups

Bookworms—The group will be reading in January *The Japanese Lover* by Isabel Allende.. Gail Lee facilitates.

Spiritual Growth-The group is using *Finding Peace in an Anxious World* by Erin James-Brown. Pastor Mary Ann Moman facilitates.

Make it and Take It-Simple crafts, fun, and fellowship! For the January meeting each person should purchase an unfinished birdhouse. Using new or used paint we will creatively decorate them. They will be ready for the birds in the spring. Facilitators Kathy Dycus, and Marilyn Roberts.

Color and Chat- Coloring isn't just for kids! Come enjoy fellowship while coloring with UMW friends. This group will color and discuss pages with inspirational quotes and scriptures.

Evening Interest Groups

Bookmarkers-Group will be reading *The Notorious RBG* by Irin Carmon and Shana Kcizhnik. in January. Debbie Skinner facilitates.

Spiritual Reflections-Spiritual Reflections is studying *Cultivating the Fruit of the Spirit: Growing in Christlikeness* by Christopher J.H. Wright. Books are available in the church entrance for \$10. For info, contact Holly Moore, holly.e.moore693@gmail.com.

Ways to Support Our Missions

During this time of social distancing and Zoom meetings, there are still ways for UMW members to continue to individually support our missions. As the end of 2020 draws near, these agencies are still looking for support to provide the much needed services for the individuals they serve. The following mission opportunities are available to you. Information is also available at the UMW website.

- Ascent 121- ascent121.org
- Hope Center Indy-hopecenterindy.org
- Indiana UM Children's Home-iumch.org

December Meeting

Tuesday, December 9 | 7:00 PM

Join us via Zoom for our annual celebration of the joys of Christmas! We will not be able to share hugs or food this year but we can plan to wear something festive, decorate the background area of our computer screen-view and connect via Zoom with all of our wonderful UMW friends. We will be entertained with music, games, and inspiring message from Pastor Mary Ann. We look forward to sharing this very special evening together.



UMM Breakfast Meetings



The United Methodist Men Breakfasts are held the 2nd Saturday of every month.

Saturday, December 12 & January 9

December and January will be Zoom Meetings. United Methodist Men provides a creative, supportive fellowship of men who seek to know Jesus Christ, to grow spiritually, and to seek daily his will. For more information about UMM or to be added to the email list, contact Tom Roberts, email umm@stmarkscarmel.org or call a UMM Board Member. You can also see what's going on at stmarkscarmel.org/umm. Come and join us!

Marksmen

12/3, 12/17, 12/31, 1/14, 1/28 | 6:30 AM

Meeting at St. Mark's

A community of career-and family-focused men seeking to develop relationships while we unplug from the daily stress that life can bring. Meet every other Thursday at St. Mark's.

Please bring your own Coffee. If you have any questions, email marksmen@stmarkscarmel.org.

What to Expect When Meeting in the Building

- 6 ft social distancing
- Masks at all times
- **No food or drink allowed for indoor events, other than personal water bottles. Water can be refilled.**
- Water fountains will only be available for bottle refilling.
- Food and drink may be distributed or purchased when the event is outdoors if it is pre-packaged or from an authorized vendor (i.e., food vendor following health guidelines)
- If attending a meeting, go directly to your assigned meeting room. No meeting rooms will be available unless scheduled in advance.
- No Childcare is available until further notice.
- Parking Lot meetings may be scheduled. Areas will be assigned.
- Any non-church related meeting requests will be reviewed and considered by St. Mark's task group on a case-by-case basis.
- No athletic events allowed in Wesley Hall at this time (volleyball, basketball, pickleball and dodgeball).
- Connection tables will not reopen before Phase D
- Limited office hours Monday, Wednesday and Friday, 9 AM- 12 PM
- Restrooms are open for emergency use.
- Sign outside the door should be turned over to indicate the room has been used and needs to be cleaned.
- **Number of people in rooms is limited. Please make sure you register or notify your leader if you are attending in person.**

Open Group Schedule

Mondays

COFFEE 'N CAMERAS

Will resume when we return to building

This self-help camera group meets for conversation about photographic art & technique. Bring your camera & your questions. Contact Bob Wiens, wiens@iquest.net for more information.

CAREER CURVE

10:00 AM (Available on Zoom)

A support and resource group for those who have suffered a job loss, are unemployed or under-employed and seeking a change. The mission of Career Curve is to provide individual job search strategies, and informal counsel associated with the challenges of a job search. For more information contact Jim & Chuck, coordinators at careercurve@stmarkscarmel.org.

Tuesdays

PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY

January 26 | 11:30 AM

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! Will not meet again until January 2021. Contact Judy Bonnet for more information at bonnetjim@icloud.com.

PAGE TURNER BOOK CLUB

Tuesday, December 15 | 7:00 PM-8:00 PM

Heard the Owl Call My Name by Margret Craven

Tuesday, January 19 | 7:00 PM-8:00 PM

Join us the 3rd Tuesday of each month if you enjoy good books, discussions, and a shared evening with new/old friends. In January we will be picking the books for the upcoming year. Please send Marcia Flora your

suggestions and note if they are fiction or non-fiction and also the author's name. If you have any questions, contact Marcia Flora, mflora1950@yahoo.com.

Wednesdays

ROMEOS (RETIRED OLD MEN EATING OUT)

Currently meeting at St Mark's, Room J/K

All men are invited to meet weekly in the Parking Lot. asks will be required.

Thursdays

JULIETS

Due to COVID-19 Juliets (Just Us Ladies Into Eating Out Together) will not be eating out until 2021. Look for our schedule. Contact Barbara Johnson, (317) 863-2689, timberblj@gmail.com.

BRIDGE

Currently not meeting

For more information contact the church office.

CRAFT & HOBBY GROUP

Join us on Facebook at "St. Mark's UMC Craft & Hobby Group". Share what you've been working on or get ideas for new projects! Contact Kathy Bartel, krbartel@gmail.com, with questions.

Committee News

Finance Committee

I am always privileged to come to you with our financial updates – we are in a year we all will want to quickly forget, but never will. Another “9/11” tattooed in our brains. But HE is always here, HE will always be here, and we continue to be blessed. That does not mean we are not stressed; we all have our concerns. We, as the congregation, need to continue to do our part.

Donations for October were 14.8% down from our running six-year average and \$14,200 below budget; we lost \$3,100 against our normal trends... we ended up with a net deficit of \$13,000 for the month, the sixth consecutive month of double-digit deficits and an accumulation of \$83,900 of deficits over that same period.

Year to date, against budget, we are still FAV against budget by \$38,162; yes, the first four months were \$122,102 FAV to budget. Is it that we had that many more donors give their one-time donations in the first two or three months of the year and we are just now breaking even? Or are headed to a situation where we can not meet our contractual obligations going forward? We just look for HIS guidance. I am now thinking about 2021.

Let me also remind everyone that we did not budget conference tithes nor have we paid any so far this year; had we done so, our net YTD operating deficit position would exceed \$60,021 – this is alarming. On a proforma basis, our conference tithes would total \$98,200 or 11% of contributions.

We continue to live in uncertain times. Brian and I continue to believe “it will work itself

out.” Expenses are FAV to budget YTD by over \$48,700: the staff continues to be very diligent with anything they spend. Also recall that YTD results do not consider any one-time PPP funds we received in May. We continue to meet ALL our obligations: we continue to serve the community. We continue to maintain all staff positions. We continue to be blessed.

We have entered the period where we will begin to budget for 2021. **As of this moment**, the finance committee’s intent is to essentially maintain the 2020 budget, with minor adjustments (after all, we don’t have any credible actuals on which to base a different budget). The Stewardship committee continues with their campaign and your pledges will determine the final budgeted numbers. I thank you for your continued faithfulness.

Currently, our focus is the balance of 2020; I continue to pray for our church, our staff, our missions, our congregation, our... anyone we influence. The year end is upon us; I ask that you each reflect and remember St. Mark’s. Feel free to contact me should you need further information.

Faithfully yours,

Bill Nicolai

Stewardship

**FAITHFUL, HOPEFUL,
LOVING**



We want to begin by simply saying thank you to the St. Mark's congregation. You have responded with generosity to the invitation to bring your best before God. Your leadership in generosity contributes to the long-standing success of our community of faith. Because of your commitment to the ministry of this congregation, we are an ever-increasing effective witness to Jesus Christ. This congregation is grateful for you, and for the example you set for each of us about what it means to respond to God's prompting to be a faithful steward.

Our God is a generous God: a God who has been revealed in Jesus as the one who deeply and passionately loves us. Our God is a God of invitation: who invites us on a faithful path of transformation that changes us, and through us changes the world. We have been invited to consider how we are Faithful, Hopeful, and Loving, a season of thoughtful study and discernment about how we can bring our best before God.

If you have already returned your commitment card for 2021, THANK YOU! If not, we want to invite you to respond to this important invitation to support the mission and ministry of St. Mark's United Methodist Church. It is a time of great possibility for our congregation and the future of its mission.

Again, we thank you for your support. We join you in the hope of creating a culture of generosity that touches every person in our church. Giving is where we find the true meaning and purpose for our lives as we join with God's purposes for our church and our world! You can return your card to the church office in person, by mail, or fill out a commitment card at our website stmarkscarmel.org/pledge.

Trustees

The Kitchen and Storage project is well underway. As of 11/12/2020 most of the walls are up, the floor in the kitchen has been cut for the new drains and has been filled back in. Heating and ventilation changes are underway. Some of the drywall is in place and rough electrical installation is underway. The kitchen contractor has met with us to finalize dimensions for his equipment and it is being built offsite for early January delivery. We are pleased with the progress and the quality of the work being done and we are still forecasting a January completion.

We have new Juniper plants in the stone islands in the parking lot. Thanks to Don Taylor for his leadership and work on this.

Library

The holidays are here and St. Mark's library has many books and DVD's to help you prepare for Advent and Christmas. A complete listing of these is available through your online catalog at stmarkscarmel.org/library by using the search term "Christmas". A printed list is also available on the checkout counter just inside the library door. Stop by soon to explore our outstanding Christmas collection and choose titles to help you and your family enrich the holiday season. Many Christmas and Advent books are displayed on the shelves under the courtyard window and on the top shelf in the children's section.



Note: In the interest of safety, all returned library materials are quarantined before being returned to the library shelves for circulation.

Worship & Community News

Directory Updates

John & Charone Leshner
20457 Capello Drive, Venice, FL 32492

Joe & Lynn Thurston
12331 Medalist Parkway, Carmel, IN 46033

Michele & Nick White
3578 Foster Ridge Lane, Carmel, IN 46033

Ways to Worship Online

- Facebook Live at 9:00am and 11:00am on Sundays. Find us on Facebook at facebook.com/stmarkscarmel.org (You do not need a Facebook account to watch)
- Watch from the website at anytime. Go to www.stmarkscarmel.org/connected. Scroll down to Worship from Home with Us and click Play on either service.

Need Help Viewing Online?

You can watch the service live or later.

- Pick up step-by-step instructions at St. Mark's. (Available in main entrance, Door #2, Monday-Friday, 9:00AM- 4:00PM)

Communion

Communion is served the first Sunday of every month. Elements for home use with online worship are available for pickup in the church entrance the week before Communion is served.



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 brothers and sisters in Christ mean so much to them and to their families. Please remember:

Annette Dunlap	Clara Breisch
Jane Roberts	Mary Hart
Betty Lachman	Ola Morrow
Jerry & Phyllis Delp	Mary Pielemeier
Don Ranck	Hilda Meyers
Judy & Tom Hebenstreit	

Sympathies

To Susan Jacques at the death of her mother, Marion Jacques.

To Pat Weeks at the death of her sister-in-law, Reta Slaughter.

Registering Attendance

We are grateful for your presence in online worship. Please register your attendance every week by visiting stmarkscarmel.org/attend. Please include the names of all attending worship. Thank you for being a part of St. Mark's wherever you are!

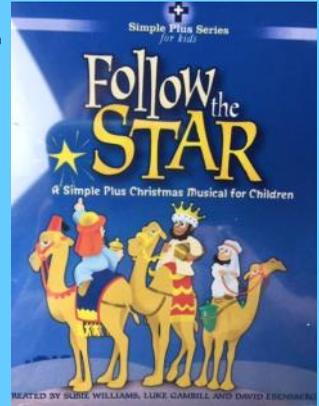
Congregational Survey

Thank you to all who completed the recent Congregational Survey to collect more information about our experiences and needs during this pandemic. We are analyzing the information collected so it can help improve program offerings, and we will summarize any relevant findings to share in the future.

Children's Christmas Musical

Sunday, December 13 | 2:00 PM

Follow the Star is planned for the Holiday Season and will be available to watch on December 13, 2:00 PM. Look for details on how to watch the performance.



UMW Fundraiser

UMW Pecan Sale

The UMW Pecan Sale is in full swing! We still have many varieties available but order quickly before they are gone! Order online [at stmarkscarmel.org/pecans](http://stmarkscarmel.org/pecans). All orders received after November 18 can be picked up Tuesday, December 8, 10-11 am or Sunday, Dec 13, between services. **You must wear a mask during pickup. There is no where to drop your payment at the church when the office is closed. Please mail your check to the church or drop off during office hours.**



Pecans are available :

Pecan Halves (12 oz)

Milk Chocolate (12 oz)*

Pecan Pieces (12 oz)

Dark Chocolate (12 oz)*

Caramel Pecan Clusters (10 oz)*

Cinnamon Glaze (10 oz)*

*in foil bags

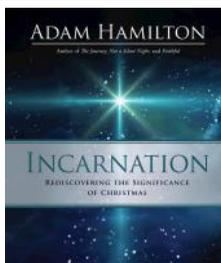
Questions? Call Peggy Nicolai, 513-374-1371.

Advent

A Season of Waiting and Preparation | November 29-December 24, 2020

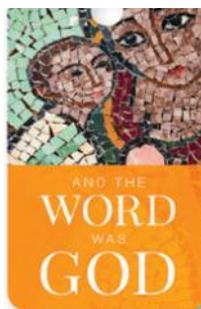
***Incarnation* by Adam Hamilton**

Join this 4-week, churchwide Advent study. See page 15 or stmarkscarmel.org/studygroups.



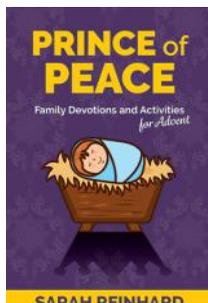
Advent Gifts and Devotionals

Free keytags, bookmarks, and seasonal devotionals for adults and kids are available in the church entrance and on a table in the cafe space. Enjoy a couple of minutes each day with a short scripture reading and reflection to find hope in the promise of Christmas.



Children's Ministries

Pick up *Prince of Peace* Advent devotionals and see page 12 for Advent activities in December.



Sunday, December 20

FAMILY CHRISTMAS EVENT (ZOOM)

Join your Children's Ministry friends to celebrate the Christmas season with songs, stories and games for the entire family. All are welcome! Zoom info will be provided closer to the party in the Weekly Email and on the website. For questions, email the Children's Ministry team at kidzchurch@stmarkscarmel.org.

Monday, December 21

BLUE CHRISTMAS SERVICE | 7:00 PM ONLINE

In the Advent and Christmas seasons we are often told to turn our hearts to peace, joy, love, and hope. However, for many, the holidays can instead be a source of stress and grief—reminding us of departed loved ones, broken expectations, and sense of despair—and making us wonder if joy will ever return. Our Blue Christmas worship service is a time and space to come together as a community and acknowledge each others' pain. Join us online this year for a special time of prayer and reflection as we offer our fears and pain to God.

Christmas Eve Online Worship

CONTEMPORARY SERVICE | 7:00 PM

Online worship with The Current Worship team.

TRADITIONAL SERVICE | 9:00 PM

Online worship in traditional format.

Look for more details in weekly emails. Candles for the services will be available for pick up in the church entrance.





Poinsettia Orders

Help decorate St. Mark's for the holidays with your purchase of a poinsettia:

- In Honor Of
- In Celebration Of
- In Memory Of special persons or groups in your life.

A donation of \$8.00 per recognition is requested to cover the cost of the poinsettia and other greenery that make the Advent season so special at St. Mark's. Please note all Poinsettias this year will be White.

Please fill out the form online at stmarkscarmel.org/poinsettias or email your order to staff@stmarkscarmel.org. Orders must be placed no later than December 13. Names will be listed in the December 20 Bulletin.



ST. MARK'S
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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



Label goes here