

Pastor's Message

Crossroads Update

Let me begin again with some history. You might remember that several years ago St. Mark's engaged in a process called New Beginnings as we began to think about the future of our beloved church. We met with a consultant and with each other to learn more about our community and the strengths and challenges of our congregation. A report was generated after several months which was quite extensive. Hope and enthusiasm began to rise.

The next step of the process was to work with other churches and a facilitator to continue the process of discerning "what's next?" As you might also remember - that didn't happen. The organization that was to help us continue the conversation didn't work out. No money was paid out but the enthusiasm and sense of hope significantly declined.

Two years later the MN Conference of the UCC began working with a new consulting group called Vibrant Faith. Last year in 2018 - seven churches entered into a year of discernment with a facilitator and the support of the MN Conference staff. Overall the feedback from several of the churches was positive. There is a new group forming for the 2019 year. We are now doing what we had hoped to

do 2 years ago. The MN conference is underwriting 50% of the cost and we are covering the rest of the cost with memorial monies.

There is a sense from some within the council (and within the church) that we've been down this road before and nothing ever comes from it. I hear this well. This process will require prayer - open hearts and minds - and energy as we together discern together our future.

CROSSROADS is a program and process designed to help a congregation answer the question "What is God calling us to do and be . . . TODAY?" CROSSROADS offers resources - including coaching - to help develop sustaining solutions and tools for church leaders and members.

Update: We now have our team assembled! Leah Santiago, Jackie Bernbrock, Mavis Gomez, Jeff Remer, and Cindy Russell have volunteered their time and energy to this process.. We have our first quarterly gathering with the consultant and the other churches participating in this program on Saturday Feb. 2nd.

You can expect to hear more as we continue this journey together. I invite you to keep us in your prayers.

What's Happening

Annual Congregational Meeting

St. Mark's Annual Congregational Meeting will be held February 3rd following worship. Your attendance is very important – plan on attending!

Thank you

Thank you very much to all who donated to the Advent Fund for the American Red Cross. Because of your generosity, St. Mark's was able to make a donation of \$1,320.00 to be directed to those affected by the California wildfires.

Scholarship Fund

We set up a scholarship fund 2 years ago for those members that wished to contribute fund to St. Mark's students with their college tuition. This is a reminder that this still is in place for anyone wishing to support present and future students.

Clayton Olson, Treasurer

Star Words

On Epiphany Sunday the members of the congregation were invited to randomly choose a "Star Word" A star word is simply a star with a word printed on it. You are invited to reflect on that word for the coming year. What does this word say to you? How does it play a role in your life? Does it challenge you? Comfort you? Surprise you? How might God be speaking to you through the simple message of a word? Like any other gift, star gifts can either be received with joy or discarded and forgotten. You might be tempted to stuff them in a pocket or jam it into the bottom of a purse - never to be considered again. Or possibly - you can consider your word an opportunity - .—a chance to reflect on how God speaks to you. What might we learn from one word? What new ideas might evolve, what treasured wisdom might resurface? You are encouraged to take your star word home and place it where you are sure to see it every day. It may be on a bathroom mirror, or next to your computer screen. You can put it in your pocket and carry it with you. It is hoped that throughout the year we might take time during worship to reflect on the Star Word you received. If you would like a Star Word and weren't there to receive one that day - please see Pastor Jennifer. It's never too late!

"Love is like a tennis match; you'll never win consistently until you learn to serve well."

—Dan P. Herod

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People to Keep in Our Prayers

Matt Brokl, a brain tumor was removed Jan 9th. Treatment is being determined.

The family of Steven Skarolid. Steven died December 31st. His service was held January 12th

The family of Jack Schorle, Jack died December 12, 2018. His memorial service was held December 19th at St. Mark's UCC.

Jacquie Clemens, in hospice care at home.

Joanne Olson and her family, as they care for Joanne living with dementia.

Marilyn Leaf, friend of Brokl's, dealing with cancer as well as other health issues.

Dick Pappin, uncle of Deb Barger, dealing with pain after back surgery. Prayers for healing of nerves so he can walk again. Also prayers for his wife, Bonnie, as she cares for him – separated due to hospitalizations and long term care.

Johnny, Laura Vande Waa's neighbor, as he receives chemotherapy for recurring cancer.

Steven Gamm, friend of Drew Brokl, receiving chemotherapy for bladder cancer.

Scott Mayforth, close friend of the Jaimez family living with the effects of a serious stroke.

Andy Krohn, nephew of Mary Ann and Russ Dunne, two-time kidney transplant patient now diagnosed with a malignant melanoma.

Doug Settle and family, Jim Settle's nephew, affected with a serious illness.

Tiger (Edwin) Wing, nephew of Helen Wing, suffering with many illnesses.

Linda Settle Mitchner, niece of Jim Settle, with serious health concerns.

All those suffering with chronic health issues.

A Cello Named Pablo

This is a nice story for children and is available to listen to at "classicalMPR.org".

January 15, 2019 Council Meeting Highlights

Reports of the Ministry Team Leaders

Spiritual Development Ministry: Nothing to report

Care and Nurture: Funeral update for Steven Skarolid. The funeral was catered (by Wade's) the food was good and reasonably priced. Although slightly understaffed everything worked out ok. A donation to St. Mark's was made for the use of the building.

Outreach to Local and World Community:

* Advent collection raised \$1320.00. Just short of our goal of \$1500.00.

* In February we will raise supplies for the pantries at the two Bloomington High Schools. A coordinator from Kennedy (Malisa Reible) will address the congregation some time during the month.

Building and Grounds:

* New lighting has been installed at the east entrance. The lighting is designed to be low intensity continually when dark and increase when motion is detected. They are very nice.

* A mockup of the rail with an opening in the middle around the altar has been completed. Council met in the sanctuary following the meeting to give approval and the go ahead to construct the permanent rail.

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* Two funeral's - Jack Schorle and Steven Skarolid - thank to Sandy for coordinating them.

* Christmas Eve - went well

* Lent - Thinking of just having an Ash Wednesday Service and then a Maundy Thursday/ Good Friday service - no Wednesday Lenten services

* Prayer Chain has been revised and we have four captains: Sandy, Lavonne, Claudia and Traci

* Washburn Elementary received many hats/ mittens and pants - they sent us a Thank you note.

* Sheridan Story continues to do well - Carrie (a community member), Jeff, Mavis and I distribute the bags of food. Anyone else is welcome to help us-

we begin at 7:30 am and it takes approximately hour

* I will be on vacation the last week of March (will look for pulpit supply).

* We got a new 30 cup coffee pot for the kitchen - and will be looking for a new home for the 100 cup coffee pot - it is too tall and too heavy when filled with water for many to lift it.

* I've been joining others on Friday lunch time at Dar Al Farooq in Bloomington. Their members have been getting harassed when they arrive for prayer time by some of their "neighbors". It is called "Neighbors in Solidarity" and we stand in front with a banner and greet folks. They in turn - treat us with warm tea and samosas. It seems to have helped as the "neighbors" harassing them have seem to taken a break-(so far). This harassment has been going on for a while. I plan to continue to do this - it is usually a small group of 10 or less. It was requested by Dar Al Farouq and they will continue to organize it as they think it is needed.

* My wrist continues to improve - still working on strength and flexibility.

Financial Reports

Financial Secretary's Report: We reviewed the information for the month.

Treasurer's Report: Clayton was absent but did supply his report and we reviewed the information for the month. Discussion of a couple of CDs that are coming due and the possibility that one or both needing to be cashed to cover the shortfall in the budget was again mentioned.

	December	YTD
Total Receipts:	9,221.59	88,474.41
Total Disbursements:	<u>9,496.79</u>	<u>110,916.69</u>
Difference:	(275.20)	(22,442.28)

Unfinished Business:

Affectionately Yours for the Men's Choir and Christmas Eve Service were successful.

Stewardship & Time and Talents Pledge

Forms: Rick will email documentation to the council regarding member who are willing to lend assistance to the Ministry leaders.

Nominating Committee: We are currently waiting for a response to the filling of the position of Vice President for 2019. Also, we will be contacting persons who may be interested in filling the Auditors position. It is our hope to have this information by the annual meeting

Crossroads: This program is a way of expanding our view for the future of the church. 5 members (Leah Santiago, Jackie B, Jeff Remer, Mavis Gomez and Cindy Russell) have volunteered to serve on the committee along with Pastor Jennifer. The first quarterly meeting will be held in the metro on February 2, 2019.

Annual Congregational Meeting: A reminder that the annual meeting is scheduled for February 3, 2019 following Sunday Service. Council members were also reminded that their reports are due by January 20, 2019.

Auditor's Report: Clayton Olson is coordinating a meeting with John Jaimez and Deb Barger to complete this report for the annual meeting.

New Business

No new business

Got love?

Love asks nothing in return but seeks those who need it. And who needs our love more than those who are consumed with hatred and are utterly devoid of love?

—Dietrich Bonhoeffer

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Christian Symbol

CHI RHO — “Chi” and “rho” are the first two letters in the Greek spelling for Christ (XPICTOC, pronounced “Christos”). The blending of these two letters into one symbol formed a “sacred monogram.” Early Christians created many such symbols as codes to indicate their discipleship while avoiding detection by Roman persecutors. Many variations of the Chi Rho symbol exist, incorporating a cross, a shepherd's crook, the Greek letters alpha and omega, an anchor and other images.



Affectionately Yours

St. Valentine, a Roman priest, was martyred in 270 A.D. for loving Jesus. Some sources say he performed weddings after the emperor banned them; others say he rescued Christians from Roman prisons. Two centuries later, the pope declared February 14 St. Valentine's Day.

According to legend, the priest signed his letters “Your Valentine.” Later, Christians followed suit to honor him. By the mid-1700s, friends and sweethearts exchanged heart-shaped trinkets or sent handwritten notes of affection on February 14.

Bible Quiz

In Luke's account of Jesus calling the first disciples from their work as fishermen to follow him and “fish for people” (NIV), which disciple is *not* named?

- A. James
- B. John
- C. Simon
- D. Andrew



Answer: D (See Luke 5:1-11.)

A MESSAGE OF
Love

Make this valentine for a family member or friend.

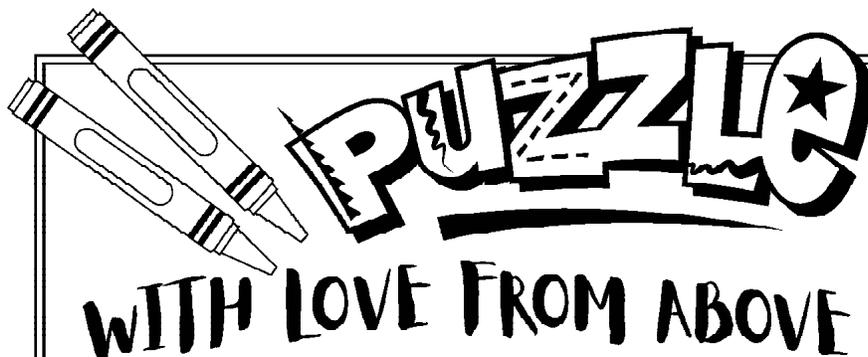


What you need:

- 10 wooden craft sticks
- Painter's tape
- Markers
- A photo and glue (optional)
- Craft knife (and adult help)
- Ribbon or a rubber band

What you do:

1. Set the sticks side by side. Secure with two tape strips.
2. Flip the sticks over. Draw (or glue on) a picture or write a message or Bible verse. If using glue, let dry.
3. Flip the sticks again and remove tape. If you glued on a photo, have an adult help cut the sticks (and photo) apart.
4. Secure the sticks with ribbon or a rubber band.
5. Deliver the gift and invite the recipient to assemble the puzzle.



WITH LOVE FROM ABOVE

The Bible is full of special words from our loving God.

Directions: Using the messages on the candy hearts, complete the Bible verses (all NIV) below.



God is our _____ and _____,
an ever-present help in trouble. Psalm 46:1

“Surely I am with you _____.” Matthew 28:20

And the _____ of God ... will guard
your hearts and your minds in
_____. Philippians 4:7

Whoever lives in _____ lives in God,
and God in them. 1 John 4:16

_____ love drives out fear. 1 John 4:18

Answer: refuge, strength, always, peace, Christ Jesus, love, Perfect

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First Class

A stylized, grey graphic of a church steeple with a cross on top, positioned behind the main title text.

*The Messenger
February 2019*

St. Mark's United Church of Christ Mission Statement

St. Mark's is a welcoming Christian community whose mission is to worship God, to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ, and to serve all humankind in the spirit of love.