



ST. MARK'S BETHANY NEWSLETTER

JOIN US FOR WORSHIP!

The Darkness Did Not Overcome It

As we move deeper into the season of Advent, we continue our sermon series, The Light Shines in the Darkness. This Sunday Pastor Randy will bring a message titled, "The Darkness Did Not Overcome It," Drawing from Isaiah 30:1-3 and 18-20, he will explore the reassuring promise that even when we walk through uncertainty or shadowed seasons, God's light remains steadfast, guiding, strengthening, and sustaining His people.

We invite you to join us for a meaningful morning of worship, Scripture, and reflection as we wait with hope for Christ, the Light of the world, who shines brightly in every circumstance, Come and be encouraged as we journey together toward the joy of Christmas.

Service times -

The Traditional service will begin at 9:30 am and the Modern service begins at 11:00 am. For individuals unable to attend in person, we are pleased to offer live streaming for both services.

To watch the live streams, please join us at:

9:30 am Sunday morning 11:00 am Sunday morning



Sunday School Classes

We have classes for all ages and interests

CHILDREN

Nursery (Ages 0-3 yrs)	9:30 - 12:00
KidMin (Age 3 - 5th grade)	9:30 - 10:35
Wee Worship (Age 3- Kdgtn)	10:45 - 12:00

ADULT

• 8:30 am	
New Life	Rm 18
Sonshine	Rm 17
• 9:30 am	
Books of the Bible	Rm 17
Disciple Class	Rm 18
Young Adults	Rm 5
• 10:45 am	
Faithbuilders	Rm 18
Good News Class	Choir Room
R.O.C.K.	Rm 19
Understanding God's Word	Rm 17

Christmas Mission Offering

Our Mission Committee has designated this year's Christmas Eve offering to support our mission partners in Kigoma, Tanzania. In 2021, St. Mark's came alongside our long-time partners in Morogoro to help expand their ministry into the city of Kigoma in western Tanzania. Through your incredible generosity, we were able to raise enough funds to build St. Mark's in Kigoma, which is now a thriving congregation worshipping in a beautiful new building.

In 2023, your giving made it possible to take the next step—raising an even larger amount to build a regional women's center. That facility is now largely complete, and a delegation from St. Mark's will be traveling for its dedication on June 7 of this year.

However, both the church and the women's center still need additional support to fully equip their interiors. With this year's Christmas Offering, our goal is to bring both projects to full completion so they can serve their communities as effectively as possible.

As Christmas draws closer, we will be sharing more details about how we can partner together in this meaningful work. For now, we invite you to begin praying about how God might lead you to participate in this year's offering.

DIAPER DRIVE for Growing Families

We have two sweet moms in our St. Mark's family preparing to welcome new babies very soon - one of them in December! As their church family, this is our chance to surround them with love in a very practical way.

We're collecting diapers of any size, and we'd love your help. Whether you bring a pack or a whole box, every donation matters. You can drop diapers off in the church office or give them directly to Sharon Hunt.

Let's bless these families as they get ready for their little one's arrival!

And a quick reminder--St. Mark's will continue to celebrate each new mom and baby with a church-wide baby shower, just as we always have. Your gifts for the Diaper Drive simply help us extend the same love and support to moms who are already busy raising little ones at home.

Thank you for helping us care for our newest growing families!

Our Local Missions

St. Mark's believes that mission work happens both across the globe and right here at home. ROC and Willow are two incredible ministries that are making a real difference in the lives of individuals and families in our own community.

Through your prayers, service and generosity, we are able to partner with these organizations as they share hope, meet practical needs, and reflect Christ's love in meaningful ways.



Willow Pregnancy Support is grateful for contributions of clothing for newborns to size 6, shoes up to size 13, and diapers in sizes 4, 5, and 6. They also welcome donations of bottles, bath wash, lotion, and Good Start Formula. Your support truly makes a difference—thank you for your generosity!



ROC always appreciates our donations of canned and boxed food. Although they accept other types of contributions, our church focuses on providing food. Right now they especially need canned meats such as tuna or chicken, but any type of canned goods is welcome and appreciated. Please place your food donations in the Grocery Basket located in the narthex! Thank you for helping support this important ministry.

Marriage Conference – January 2 & 3, 2026

Hosted by St. Andrew's Community Church
Open to St. Mark's Couples

Start the new year by investing in one of God's greatest gifts-- your marriage. St. Andrew's Community Church is hosting a two-day Marriage Conference, and they are graciously extending the invitation to all St. Mark's couples. Whether your marriage needs encouragement, a tune-up, or simply intentional time together, this conference will offer practical tools and Christ-centered wisdom to help your relationship grow and thrive.

Trey and Amy Dixon from Choosing Love Biblical Counseling will lead the sessions and share their experience and heartfelt guidance.

Ticket price is per couple and includes all conference materials, lunch on Saturday, snacks and childcare. Registration cost is \$145.

Please contact Rev. Josh Coats with any questions you may have by emailing jcoats@saokc.org.

Click this link for more information and to register:



Poinsettias for Advent

Help us beautify the sanctuary this Advent season with poinsettias given in memory of or in honor of someone special. After the Christmas Eve services, you're welcome to take your poinsettia home.

Please sign up for your poinsettias on the You may sign up at the church counter or by calling the church office. Poinsettias are \$20 each this year.



Kigoma Women's Center Dedication Mission Trip

Plans are moving forward for the June 7, 2026 dedication of the Women's Center in Kigoma, Tanzania, and Pastor Randy will be finalizing trip details and estimated costs this week. If you are considering being part of this mission team, now is the time to pray, think it over, and make your decision.

There will be a Mission Meeting after church this Sunday, November 23rd, for anyone interested in going. If you feel even a small tug toward this opportunity--or if you simply want more information--please plan to attend. Your presence at the meeting will help Pastor Randy know who is seriously considering the trip so preparations can continue.



Please keep this mission opportunity in your prayers, and ask God whether He might be calling you to be part of this meaningful journey.

Second Winder's to Meet December 11th

Looking forward to December 11th for the Second Winder's gathering. We will gather in the sanctuary starting at 11 o'clock to watch and enjoy the CDO Christmas program.

Our meal together of pizza and salad starts at 12 o'clock. If you would like to bring homemade Christmas cookies to serve as our desserts, please feel free to do so.

Following the meal, we will be playing Jesus Bingo.



You're Invited to a Baby Shower



A Magical Bundle

is on the way!

Please join us for a Baby Shower honoring

Brecken Cromwell Robertson

January 4th, 2:00 pm
St. Mark's Bethany
Narthex

Registered at Amazon



Tis' the season for

Christmas Carolings

**SUNDAY,
DECEMBER 21ST
6:00 PM**

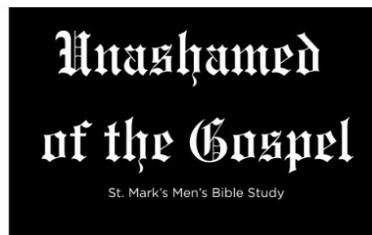
Meet in the Narthex

Everyone is Welcome!

**Sign up on the counter or
call Kelly Jo.**



Men's Bible Study Tuesdays, 7:00 PM



The St. Mark's men's Fall study is "Unashamed of the Gospel". The study meets at 7:00 pm in Room 17. This is Paul's longest letter, which includes some great themes.

For information, call Fred Dalton at 405-823-7264 or Rev. Allen Smith at 405-620-1861.

Bring your bible and join us.

Men's Breakfast Saturday - Dec. 13



Your Light Has Come

In the introduction to his book *For All God's Worth*, theologian N.T. Wright says, "Christmas is God lighting a candle, and you don't light a candle in a room that's already full of sunlight. You light a candle in a room that's so murky that the candle, when lit, reveals just how bad things really are. The light shines in the darkness, says St. John, and the darkness has not overcome it."



For that reason, Wright explains, Christmas isn't a dream or a momentary escape but reality. And the same is true for Christianity. "Either Jesus is the Lord of the world and all reality makes sense in his life, or he is dangerously irrelevant to the problems and possibilities of today's world," he adds. "There is no middle ground. Either Jesus was, and is, the Word of God, or he, and the stories Christians tell about him, are lies."



KidMin is enjoying their Advent journey called "Waiting for Jesus" exploring the nativity story and discovering how God kept His promise to send a King--Jesus--just as the prophets foretold.

We're excited to walk through this season with your families as we help our children understand the true wonder of Christmas: the long-awaited arrival of our Savior.

Cards of Thanks for Our Heroes



Our KidMin children are learning the importance of gratitude and service by creating handmade cards for the men and women serving in our military. These cards will be sent overseas through The Hugs Project, reminding our troops that they are loved, appreciated, and prayed for back home. Everyone can write a card!

Please turn in all letters and cards by **December 15** so they can be included in this special delivery of encouragement and love.



KidMin December Happenings!

Advent is here--a season of waiting, watching, and celebrating Jesus together! We have so many meaningful (and fun!) ways for families to grow in faith this month. Here's what's coming up:

Sunday Mornings in December

Our new Sunday series is called "Waiting" --learning from Isaiah and the New Testament how God's people waited with hope. Children will also help decorate and prepare our classrooms for Advent!

Wednesday Nights

Parents and grandparents are invited to join us on Wednesdays as we explore simple Advent activities that help prepare our hearts for Christmas.

December 10 - Christmas Lights Trip to Yukon

We're loading up the vans for a fun night of Christmas lightloping!

December 17 - Family S'mores Night

No regular programming this week - instead, we'll gather at the church or the lake (details coming soon!) for s'mores and fellowship. Come enjoy the warmth, fun and gooey goodness!

December 21 - Churchwide Caroling

Kelly Jo is organizing a festive night of Christmas caroling. All are welcome! Contact Kelly Jo to participate.

December 24 - Christmas Eve Services

4:00 pm - Family Service (no childcare)

7:00 pm - Traditional Service (Childcare for ages 5 and under)

11:00 pm - Midnight Communion Service

We can't wait to worship, wait, and celebrate the arrival of our Savior with you all month long!

Care Share Christmas Blessing



Because of the generous support of our St. Mark's family, we were able to bless 60 students and their families this Christmas season through the CareShare program! Your donations provided toys, clothing, and special gifts—each one a reminder that these families are seen, loved, and supported by their community.



Last week, all the gifts were delivered, filling the school with joy and gratitude. Thank you to everyone who shopped, donated, wrapped, and prayed. Your kindness is making a real difference in the lives of children right here in our neighborhood.

What a beautiful way to share the light of Christ this Christmas!



Youth Winter Retreat 2026 – Sign Up Now!

YOUTH WINTER RETREAT 26

WHO'S OUR GOD - EXODUS 32

February 13-15 at Sky Ranch Cave Springs

Sign Up through the QR code!



Deadline to Sign up is February 1st
For Questions get ahold of Bequer
bequer@stmarksbethany.com



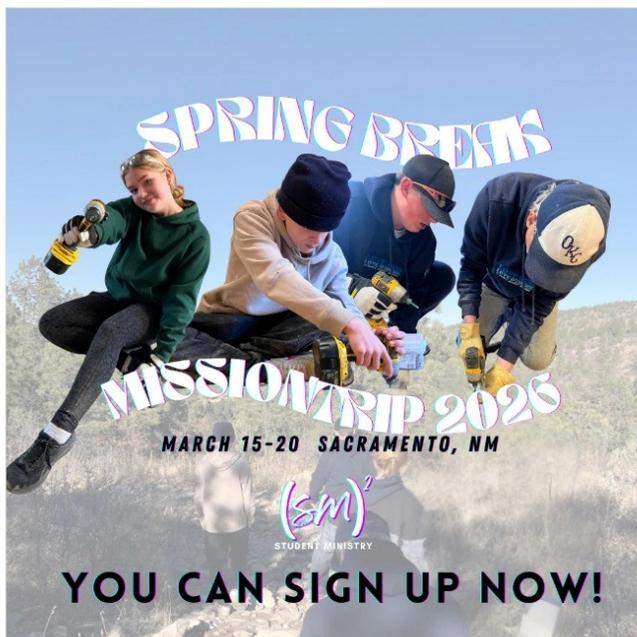
Our youth are heading to **Sky Ranch Cave Springs** for Winter Retreat 2026, and it's going to be an unforgettable weekend! This year's theme is "Who's Our God?" based on *Exodus 32* and students will spend February 13-15 growing in faith, building friendships, worshipping together and having plenty of winter fun.

Students can register using the QR code in the graphic, and the deadline to sign up is February 1st. If you have any questions, contact Bequer at bequer@stmarksbethany.com.

Let's encourage our youth as they prepare for an amazing retreat!

Spring Break Mission Trip 2026 -- Start Thinking Now!

It may feel a little early, but Spring Break 2026 will be here before we know it! Our St. Mark's Student Ministry is planning a Spring Break Mission Trip to Sacramento, New Mexico, on March 15-20, and we want students and families to start praying and thinking about going.



This week will be a great opportunity for our youth to serve others, learn new skills, grow in their faith, and have fun together as they work side by side. Whether this would be a first mission trip or a returning experience, all students are encouraged to consider taking part.

Sign-ups will open soon, but for now, please mark your calendars, start the conversation at home, and keep this trip in your prayers as we prepare for an amazing week of adventure!

Upcoming Events

TONIGHT - Wednesday Night Programs

5:30 Meal - Spaghetti
 5:15 Prayer
 6:15 KidMin - Christmas Lights
 6:15 Youth Ministry
 6:30 Choir Rehearsal

- December 11 - Second Winders
- December 11 - CDO Christmas Program
- December 12 - Kings & Queens
- December 13 - Men's Breakfast
- December 14 - Good News Christmas Party
- December 16 - Men's Bible Study
- December 21 - Christmas Caroling
- December 24 - Christmas Eve Services (4:00, 7:00. & 11:00 PM)
- December 28 - Combined Service
- February 22 - Chili Cook-Off

Come pray with us -- whether you want to pray quietly alone, be prayed for, or join in intercessory prayer for others. Explore simple prayer tools, linger or come and go as you need, and experience the presence of God in a peaceful space.



Wednesdays 5:15-6:00 pm
 Prayer Team meets 5:15 pm

FACTS & Figures

2025 Annual Budget	632,679
Rec'd toward Operating 12/06/2025	8,222
Year to Date 2025	
Rec'd toward offering (thru 12/06/25)	584,350
Expenses (12/06/25)	600,661

ATTENDANCE

Sunday, December 7	Total	326
Traditional Worship		181
Modern Worship		55
Online Worship		90



Prayer Board

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| Greg Tyler (friend of Loretta Wright) | Tony Pellegrini |
| Donna Shriver | Evelyn Moore |
| Donna Lautzenhiser | Jim Donnan (father of co-worker of Deb Wade) |
| Jerry & Bonnie Fisher (brother and SIL to Sandy Kelley & Mike Fisher) | Kason (grandson of Cheryl Pavelko) |
| Kevin (son of Becky & Steve Chessmore) | Kathi Wagner (Dot Lyon's daughter, Lory's best friend) |
| Isaac Roman | Bill Underwood |
| Cindy Wilkerson | Billy Joe Watson (friend of Wayne Barnes) |
| Beth (Bidne) Cook | Sandy Rutherford |
| Norma and Dan Boland | Barbara Hill |
| Jennifer and infant son, Jacob (friend of Christy Kiespert) | Lief Hill (son of a friend of Wayne Barnes) |
| Vickie Wines (grandmother of Chealsie Zink) | Dianna Davidson |
| Beverly Clark | Judy McMinn |
| | Tiffany Montesano |
| | Maggie Peterson |