

April 29, 2020

E-Messenger

Our Mission Statement To build a family of believers who glorify God and help each other become fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ

What Do We Do Now?

When the "shut down" began, we anticipated something that might last a few weeks or maybe a month. Now we are in a months-long, life-altering experience with no clearly defined resolution. Ambiguity is stress causing but also full of opportunity. Let me touch on a few things.

1. When are we re-opening?

We do not know. I grieve the loss of 'normal' every day. At the same time, we keep finding good ways to care for one another and love God. Over and over I am reminded that the church is the people and is not reliant on building access or large gatherings.

You are aware that city, state and federal authorities, the Oklahoma Conference of the United Methodist Church and other entities are issuing guidance, advisories and instructions. Within this framework, St. Mark's will make decisions of when and how to re-open. Church Council is attempting to stay up on developments and David Miller and I are putting together a small task force to recommend a re-opening plan and interim gathering alternatives.

Here are my impressions of the re-opening status so far. As David and I looked over the information available today, it could easily be June or July before St. Mark's is "open" in any sense that we would like to be. When we open, social distancing, group size, sequential room use will all be different than before.

In short, we will re-open. We do not know when, but it may be in June or July. And when we re-open, how we gather will be different than before.

2. What do we do now?

We plan to continue a mid-week devotion and Sunday worship service online. Many Sunday school classes, small groups, Life Groups, Bible studies, fellowship groups, Reunion groups and whatever groups are gathering via Zoom or similar means.

Stay in touch with others through all means available. Reach out to offer help and to ask for help.

3. Is this crazy, or what?

Yep, this is different that many of us have ever experienced before. Remember when Jesus was on the stormy lake with his disciples? They were terrified. It was different than they had experienced before. He calmed the storm. He was their shelter and peace in the turmoil. Luke 8:22-25.

He was also the peace for everyone else on the lake. The storm ended shore to shore. Everyone on the lake or shore benefitted. The peace of Christ spreads from where He is present.

Ask Jesus Christ to be present and help you experience his peace. As you do, you can be the peace sharers in this storm. If asked why you are peaceful, tell about Jesus. We are infected with Jesus and thus are the peaceful, hopeful and calming antidote in life today...whether we are meeting at the church building or not.

We will get through this storm and be more faithful for it.

God be glorified,
Pastor Keith

What is Going on at St Mark's?

That is a great question. The best answers may keep changing as we continue working to contain the spread of COVID 19 in our communities. You understand that the idea is to limit the spread from person to person by keeping people physically away from each other. We want to do our part to keep each other and our communities safer.

Here is a smattering of **responses to common questions**:

In person **Sunday worship** and nearly all other activity at the church is postponed until further notice. You may participate in Sunday worship through our Facebook page or RightNow Media. Special resources for children are being created and loaded to RightNow Media. Do we choose to gather through online worship? Yes! Our online measurement tools tell us that we set a non-Easter **attendance record last Sunday**. We are working on each Sunday's service throughout the week.

Staff has been asked to work from home but we are still here for you.

The **church phones** will be forwarded so that we can respond to phone calls.

The **usual ways** you have been using will continue to be the best and quickest means to reach each other and those who serve on staff. The nation has a strong communications infrastructure.

The **prayer chain** remains active and may be contacted in the usual ways.

If for some reason **you come into the church building, you are responsible** to use the available disinfectant clothes to wipe down everything you touch - doorknobs, light switches - everything. Wearing gloves protects you but not others, you still need to wipe down all surfaces.

Several **classes and study groups** are finding ZOOM and other means effective ways to gather online.

You can make **contributions** to St Mark's by clicking the link on the home page of our website. Click on it and it will take you to a secure donation page. Of course, the US Mail is still delivering, allowing us to also mail gifts to the church.

Communications: We are emailing information, prayer updates, or prayer guides as needed. A list of online resources can be found on the following page. This is a great way to stay connected.

I am looking forward to when we meet in person again. How about you? Until then...

Remember God is still God and he is not quarantined. Let's keep in contact with each other. Pray for each other. Encourage each other. God's Holy Spirit is stirring among us. We are in this together, you are not alone.

God does great things,

Pastor Keith



St. Mark's Social Media Links



Facebook.com

- search for "stmarksbethany"



Instagram.com

- search for "St. Mark's United Methodist Church"



Twitter.com

- search "@stmarksbethany"

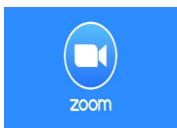


Youtube.com

- search St. Marks United Methodist Church, Bethany, OK



RightNow Media.com - "St. Mark's United Methodist Church"



Zoom.com - sign up and then watch for upcoming announcements on Bible Studies, Sunday School classes and other things you can join with other members of St. Mark's

You Can help us all stay In touch at St. Mark's

As we seek to keep everyone connected through, email, phone, videos, etc. we are aware that there we are missing some people. You can be an important piece in helping us keep that connection. As you visit with others you might ask if they are getting emails, texts and calls. If not please get their email addresses and phone numbers so we can update our records. With our inability to gather in person we want to keep in touch with needs, prayer requests, provide daily content and weekly services to everyone. If you have friends and neighbors that are hunting for some spiritual content and encouragement feel free to share their information with us and we will include them. We continue to be the church and will do what ever we are able to share God's love.

Grass is Growing Lawnmower needed

If you know anyone that would have a walk behind mower, (self propelled preferred) trimmer and blower (that didn't need repairs) that could be donated to the Church please let us know, the Church's was stolen out of the railroad storage container this spring? The grass continues to grow and need to be cut despite the lock



Staff Emails

If you have questions please feel free to contact the staff.

Keith Cressman pastorkeith@stmarksbethany.com

Becky Roman becky@stmarksbethany.com

Sharon Hunt sharon@stmarksbethany.com

Lydia Cressman Lydia@stmarksbethany.com

Alicia Schneider alicia@stmarksbethany.com

Kayla Gannon kayla@stmarksbethany.com

Bequer Gomez bequer@stmarksbethany.com

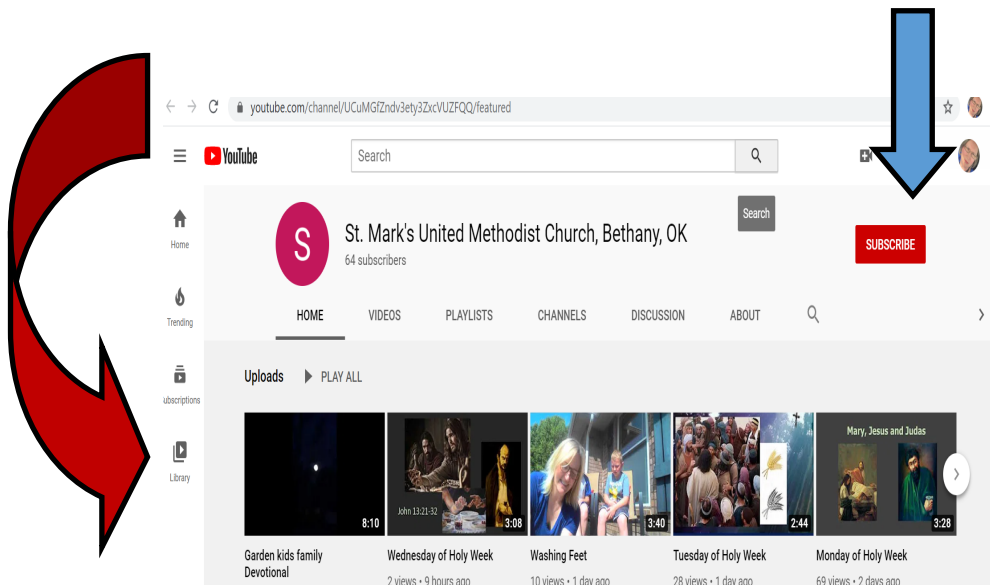
Jackie Swedlow finance@stmarksbethany.com

Gwen Sears finance@stmarksbethany.com

Pat Morford pat@stmarksbethany.com

If you are having trouble with any of the links to devotions, worship services here the easiest solution to get all videos is to go to the header above click on the link for YouTube (Red box arrow is pointing to and click on it.

It will take you to our YouTube page where you can hit subscribe (red box at top right) see blue arrow below. Once you hit the subscription it will turn gray. Then you can visit YouTube directly anytime and click on your subscriptions (red arrow in picture below) and it will take you to all the latest videos)





RIGHT NOW MEDIA

Resource during quarantine

Hopefully you have been taking advantage of the Right Now Media for personal, group and family opportunities offered by Right Now Media. But with the Corona virus having us all at home and isolated more than usual we hope you take advantage of the service to use the videos, studies and other resources to use this time to strengthen your faith. If you have not signed up go to <https://www.righnowmedia.org/Account/Invite/stmarksbethany> and do so now. Once on take time to look at all the opportunities. We are even adding a St. Mark's channel to see original content from the church (go to libraries and click on St. Mark's United Methodist Church). During this time we will be adding content to this regularly. If you have questions contact the church office.

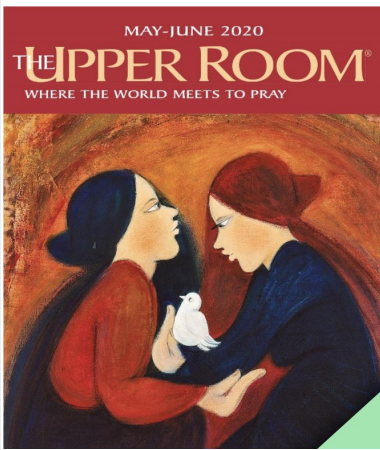
Children's Ministry

Be watching your email for links to children's programming during this time to provide opportunities to stay in contact with one another through lessons and other concepts that Miss Sharon and Miss Alicia are working on. Some will be interactive and others will just be lessons and updates. Hope you and your family take advantage of these.

EARLY CHILDHOOD MINISTRY DIRECTOR:
Sharon Hunt
Phone: 789-9033
Email: sharon@stmarksbethany.com

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY DIRECTOR:
Alicia Schneider
Phone: 789-9033
Email: alicia@stmarksbethany.com

Keep in touch with your Sunday School class members, Bible Study groups and friends from St. Mark's. Several groups are meeting for study and fellowship using apps such as zoom. If you would like help setting that up for your class contact the church office.



UPPER ROOM AVAILABLE

Due to the quarantine many of you have not been able to get your regular Upper Rooms. We want to help you get them. This Thursday, April 30th, we will have a drive-by pickup available for you to get your Upper Room. From 10 am to noon on Thursday just drive up to the front door of the church and someone, probably Phil and Cheryl Davis, will be there to hand deliver your Upper Room to you while you stay in the safety of your car. If that does

not work for you and you still would like to get an Upper Room contact Pat at pat@stmarksbethany.com or call the church office number and we will try to make arrangements. Thanks to the Phil and Cheryl for this gift.

**FALL 2020
ST. MARK'S TO HOST
Whiz
Kids
BE A VOLUNTEER!**

St Mark's will host another ministry opportunity this fall...Whiz Kids! So just what will we be doing? That is a great question!

We will be hosting several 2nd thru 5th grade students from Overholser Elementary immediately after school, one day a week throughout the 2020/2021 school year. Each of these students will have been identified by their respective teacher as reading below his or her grade level. We will provide one-on-one tutoring to each of them in order to improve their reading skills.

So what is the need? Separate conversations with individual teachers at Overholser indicate that as many as 30% of their 600-plus students may be "at-risk" relative to their reading level. Additionally, statistics show that students who still read below their

grade level by the time they enter 6th grade are 40% more likely to spend time in the Oklahoma penal system as an adult than are those who are reading at or above their grade. The gap is huge, the need is real and it is right in our back yard! The principal, Marj Iven, and all the teachers are excited that St Mark's has stepped forward to help close this gap. But Whiz Kids is much more than a tutoring program.

Whiz Kids also is a "faith-based" mentoring program. Each of the 34 Whiz Kids sites throughout the metro area is hosted by a church; thus the "faith-based" part of the program. And the fact that each student receives one-on-one attention from the same tutor throughout the year highlights the mentoring aspect of this vital ministry.

The tutoring day each week is still to be determined. We know that the time of day will be right after school dismisses: 3:45pm - 5:45pm.

Do not be concerned if you lack tutoring experience: training will be provided. The only tools you need are a deep faith founded on the grace and salvation of Jesus Christ and the resulting heart to touch lives in a meaningful, Christian manner.

So if you are looking for a way to give back...a way to impact both the children of our community as well as our community at large, this is a great ministry opportunity! These students are simply waiting for you to step forward! Please contact Mark Walpus at 405.887.6067 if you are interested in helping these students change the trajectories of their lives! Remember these children and volunteer ministers in your prayers.

Other news

HOSPITALITY MOMENT VIDEO

It's been great the last couple of weeks to see people in the hospitality videos. We will be continuing them this coming week and if you haven't been a part we would love to have you do a quick video. You can either record it on your phone and sent it to pat@stmarksbethany.com or you can just let Pat know and he will set up a quick zoom with you and record it online. It only takes a minute and people would love to see and hear you. Call church office, Pat at 580-512-5204 or email pat@stmarksbethany.com and be a part. THANKS to all who have already taken part.

If you need to visit with someone

St. Mark's wants to extend an invitation to anyone feeling disengaged or just needing a friendly voice to share, pray and just hear a word of encouragement. If you would like to visit with someone who cares and wants to be there for you feel free to contact Jan Greve at [\(405\) 641-5863](tel:4056415863) and she will help you make that connection.

Do you need a mask?

If you are in need of a mask for going out we have members who are making them for people at no cost. If you have a need please contact us and we will connect you with them.

Food Pantry

Our Food Pantry is still open every Sunday and has been busy. Thanks for your support these past couple of week! You have supplied everything we have asked for. See pictures below of some of the donations. We are beginning to run low on the some other items which are listed below and if you would like to drop them off at the back door of the church Sundays from 3-4 pm we will pick them up at your car.

Flour

sugar

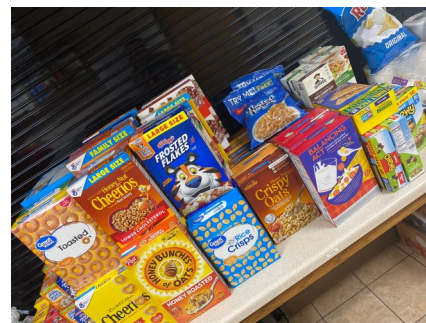
dry milk

canned meat

Peas

pancake mix

syrup





Since we haven't met I am sure you still have your rice bowls. We will gather them when we are able to gather again. Feel free to keep dropping some loose change in them. Rice bowls is an amazing organization feeding, orphaned and hungry children.

Facts and Figures

2020 Annual Budget620,218
 Rec'd toward Operating 4/12/202013,960

YTD 2020

Rec'd toward Operating 4/12/2020143,168
 Expenditures 4/12/2020128,341

Attendance

Sunday, April 26
 Online 274 views

Prayer Box

Corona Virus issues
 Don & Fran Nobles
 Votaw family
 Barbara Homer
 Beverly Clark
 Pam Barnes
 John Baumeister
 Andre Frehley
 Penny & James Hays
 Marilyn Cook
 Hazel Bremmer
 Don Greve

Sandy Kelly
 Cheryl Pavelko
 Boerner family
 Wenona Shaw
 Sherry Chesley
 Sharon Dean
 Dorothy Lynch
 Coral Snider family
 Mike Spiser
 Linda Pollock
 Cole Talbot
 Marty Croy
 Letha Davis