



Week 2
April 8–14, 2018 **“Ministry with our Neighbors”**

Sunday

I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, will give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation that makes God known to you. Ephesians 1:17 (CEB)

This week we are seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit for Saint Mark’s. We are considering seven challenge questions. Each one is posed to help us respond to God’s promptings to be in ministry with our neighbors.

These questions are related to St Mark’s ARISE! and correspond with the ARISE *Seven Days of Prayer*. Some demographic and other study results are available on the church website. You are encouraged to look and reflect on them as you pray the challenge questions.

The first question is “who are we?” We can approach the question as an essay test and come up with our best thoughts. But that is not all that is sought. The questions are questions to God. We are seeking his revelation, insight, wisdom and guidance. Make each question a prayer. Write what you “hear.”

Pastor Keith

First...

Prayer: Creator God, thank you for creating me as a part of your Church to worship you, serve you, love you and to make your glory known throughout the earth. In what ways am I/are we being and doing who and what you want us to be? Where am I/are we falling short? Amen.

First question: Who are we?

How does God see us?

How do you describe St. Mark’s? Make a note of examples demonstrating who we are in the community.

How do others see us?

Note any scripture verses that may come to mind:

Monday

Matthew 22:37-40

The Great Commandment includes love for God, neighbor and self.

Prayer: God of Love, help me to love as you love and do as you do. Help me accept your love for me. Fill me with your love, grace and truth for all people. Help me welcome your possibilities. Amen.

Second question: Who does God want us to be?

All of us are growing and changing. Where is God taking St. Mark's? Who does God see us becoming?

What is a "fully devoted follower of Jesus Christ?"

Write down your thoughts and scripture verses that come to mind.

Tuesday

Luke 6:31

The Golden Rule admonishes us to treat others as we would like to be treated.

Prayer: Great Shepherd, guide me, focus my thoughts and action. Help me sort through the "shoulda, coulda, oughta" playlist of my feelings to see what is in my ability and responsibility to respond. Give us your Spirit of wisdom and revelation. Amen.

Third question: How does St. Mark's best serve the community?

How can we re-present the Gospel among the people around us?

What needs are apparent from the community interview results?

What needs to be done that we can do and corresponds to how God sees us?

Wednesday

John 7:36-39

Who was being left out in this story in the Gospel of John? Why are they left out?

Prayer: Lord, help us see those we are missing. Open my eyes and heart to people who may have been invisible to me up until now. Amen.

Fourth question: Who are we leaving out of St. Mark's? Why?

Thursday

Luke 24:46-49

Jesus sent the Church out to the world.

Prayer: Jesus, lead me to those who you know I can help spiritually and physically. Help me overcome any feelings of inadequacy or fear. You are enough. Amen.

Fifth question: Can we take the church to those we are leaving out or are not yet included?

How can we share the Gospel of changed hearts, minds and lives and the message of forgiveness of sins in our communities?

Friday

Luke 19:1-10

Zacchaeus changed and immediately acted. The action reflected the change of his heart, mind and spirit. His personal change reshaped the way he acted toward others.

Prayer: Lord God, mold me and shape me to be and do what you need of me so that others will be reached in your name. Amen.

Sixth question: Are we/you willing to change?

Consider the words of the Apostle Paul: *...I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some. I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings.*
From 1 Corinthians 9:19-23 (NIV)

Saturday

Acts 2:47

As the disciples devoted themselves daily to Jesus, they had daily opportunities for ministry and the Lord saved people through them.

Prayer: Holy Spirit, open the eyes of my heart to those around me. Empower me to be like you for them. Amen.

Seventh question: Am I in mission daily?

With whom?

What am I doing/going to do?

Where am I able to serve in mission?

How often do I get to engage other with my ministry efforts?

Make us worthy, Lord, to serve those throughout the world who live and die in poverty or hunger. Give them, through our hands, this day their daily bread; and by our understanding love, give peace and joy. Amen.

Mother Teresa of Calcutta, Yugoslavia, 20th century.

This completes the seven challenge questions and seven days of prayer of ARISE. You are invited to share your experiences and insights of the week. *St. Mark's ARISE!* will meet at 5:00 PM, Sunday, April 15. Barnett Hall. Dinner is included.

Be sure to download next week's devotions, focusing on *prayer*.

The *50-days of Prayer* continues...