



MESSENGER

No. 29, July 15, 2019

I have been caught up in the idea of Divine Love for the last six months. I'm not saying that I have a full grasp of it yet, but I press on toward the goal. I want to share a little insight I've had into this thing we call Divine Love and how it can impact our daily life.

I am beginning to believe that these "Aha moments!", these revelations of God's love that we have are glimpses into the reality that Jesus embraced every moment He was on the Earth. He saw reality in a radical way that transformed the world as we know it. He was fearless, and it injected into the consciousness of humanity the idea of Divine unconditional love. We've heard of people having religious experiences where they have a clear understanding of the "oneness" of all things. Our culture often dismisses these experiences because this idea can be so contrary to our everyday experience. It's hard to believe that things as arbitrary as a sunset and the precious smile on my child's face can somehow be connected. I believe, and have experienced, that this is God at work revealing to us and perfecting our idea of what love is and can be in our lives.

To offer an example to help clarify I would like to bring your attention to a man named Pierre Teilhard de Chardin. He was a French Jesuit priest who was also a paleontologist and geologist. He came to believe that love is "the very physical structure of the Universe." For Teilhard things like gravity, the way atoms interact with each other, celestial mechanics, cycles in nature, how plants use sunlight, ecosystems, electromagnetic fields, sexuality, friendships, instinct, and evolution all reveal to us an energy that attracts and brings things together. All of these things are a movement toward life becoming more and more complex and complicated. I'd like for us to think of love in this way, and see that love is the driving force of the universe. It is love that brings the rain, the nudge that makes us go out of our way for others, the very binding of our cells, and the smell of rain on a spring day. Life on this planet is complicated. Going to work every day, loving our neighbor, dealing with medicine and a diagnosis, to loving and raising our children are all ways life can get complicated. None of us can argue that as life becomes more complex the future often seems more and more difficult to discern. Isn't this how we describe responsibility and what growing up means to our kids? Life becomes more complex, and we need to learn how to navigate it. I believe God wants to help us navigate this reality.

I offer this view of love to you in hopes that you will learn to live without fear and in the fullness of what God has for you. 1 John 4:17-19 tells us, "This is how love has been perfected in us, so that we can have confidence on the Judgment Day, because we are exactly the same as God is in this world. 18 There is no fear in love, but perfect love drives out fear, because fear expects punishment. The person who is afraid has not been made perfect in love. 19 We love because God first loved us." What this reveals to me, and I pray in you, is that when we begin to see reality as inherently "good" as God said it is in Genesis, and we begin to see love as the driving force of all things, the world becomes a much safer place to be in. When we live with a fear-based faith, we not only fear God, but we fear the world and all the things in it, including people. God did not give us a spirit of fear and confusion but one of love! This idea of divine love is what I see when I look at the galaxies and stars overhead. It is what I see in my daughter's eyes when she is giggling uncontrollably at nap-time. It is the same force. It binds and brings all things together. If we look closely enough we can have a glimpse at the reality Jesus spoke of when he said that the Kingdom is now! We can step boldly into that reality and find that we are never bereft of love, but have access to an infinite source all around us, in all things, and especially in the most unlikely places imaginable. That to me is a very encouraging thought and one I hope you will ponder over this next week! Where have you been surprised to find love and peace in the world?

Ryan Karr, Associate Pastor

OUR CHURCH FAMILY... NEWS AND NOTES

Sympathy

To the friends and family of Carol Youngblood, who died Thursday, July 18th.

Concert Here at Saint Mark

On Friday, July 19th at 7:30 pm, the Iron City Singers will present a concert entitled "Why We Sing." Music ranging from the renaissance to modern day expresses the universal ideals of life, love, and loss in an emotional, dynamic performance that hopes to foster a greater understanding and appreciation for song in our lives. This concert will feature songs by Mendelssohn, Gesualdo, the Beatles, and others, and is dedicated to Saint Mark United Methodist Church for their generous hospitality and support of the Iron City Singers. Admission is free. *Charles Henry*

Quarterly Statements

The quarterly giving statements have been emailed out, and those who need "hard copies" should receive them this week. Please be on the lookout for your statement. If you have any questions, contact Deanna Holmes, our Financial Manager. Deanna is in the office on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays. You can also email her at dholmes@saintmarkumc.org.

Churchwide Event on August 25th

Voices of the South, the exciting men's four-part a capella Barbershop singing group, will perform for us August 25 at 1 pm in the Saint Mark gym. The central Alabama chapter group continually earns top rankings in the Dixie District of the Barbershop Harmony Society's semiannual contests and has performed at venues including The Lyric Theater, American Village, Barons Baseball games, and special events at other churches. Come to the gym for lunch after the worship service ends at noon and stay to enjoy the entertainment. There will be no charge, but donations will be accepted to cover the cost of the food.

Please call the church office before August 22 to make your reservations so that we will know how much food is needed.



Mark Your Calendars!

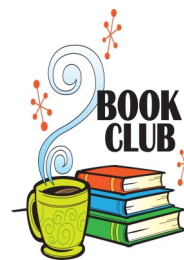
Wonderful Wednesdays will resume after Labor Day, on September 4th. Next month

we will have information available about the adult classes being offered, as well as menus for the meals. If you have not attended these great events in the past, you might want to give it a try. There is truly something for all ages!

The Book Club

The next meeting of the Book Club will be August 7th, at 11:30 am. The book we will be reviewing is *Still Life* by Louise Penny. The book for September is *Becoming Mrs. Lewis* by Patti Callahan. The meetings are held on the first Wednesday of the month.

New folks are welcome to join us any time! To learn more about the Book Club, contact Linda Kitchens at 492-9190.



Summer Meet and Eat

Come join the fun and fellowship as we continue our Summer Meet and Eat series at **Chick-Fil-A** on **Highway 31** in **Hoover** on Wednesday, July 24th at 6:00 p.m. Everyone orders their own food, and pays their own tab. So come join the fun, bring the kids to play in the play area, and have pictures made with the one and only Chick-Fil-A Cow!! It will be a fun time for all!!

Renovaré Presents "Living God's Questions" Conference Saturday, September 14, 2019 9 am to 5 pm

Featuring Trevor Hudson & Carolyn Arends

Trevor Hudson has been part of the Methodist movement in Southern Africa for more than 35 years. Serving primarily around Johannesburg, South Africa, he is deeply committed to the work and ministry of the local congregation.

Besides his local commitments, Trevor travels widely, preaching, teaching, and lecturing in the areas of spiritual formation, spiritual direction, and pastoral therapy. He is the author of 15 books including *Discovering Your Spiritual Identity* (IVP) and *Beyond Loneliness* (Upper Room).

Trevor Hudson will preach Sunday, September 15th at the 11:00 am worship service.

Registration is required for the Saturday Conference. The cost is \$25 per person, and includes lunch. More information about registration will be coming soon! You will be able to register by filling out the form and mailing it in with a check, or register online using a credit card.

Bill and Marynell Ford are coordinating this event.



Student Ministry

We had a great time at Music and Arts Week last week with plenty of our children, youth, and college students attending as campers and counselors. This week we started Mission Mondays where we will be doing service projects every Monday. Next Monday we will be painting in several areas in the community.

This Friday, July 19th we will be attending the Birmingham Barons Game as a group. Meet at the church at 6:00 pm and bring \$12, plus any additional money you want to spend on snacks.

Next Thursday, July 25th from 7:00-9:00 pm we will be having a pool party at the Smith's house for all students who are entering 6th, 7th, and 8th grade. Eat dinner before you arrive, but we will have an ice cream bar as part of the festivities. *Joshua London*

Kids Ministry is preparing for the fall and we are excited about the new school year! Please read about the special activities that will be coming up!

Blessing of the Backpacks will be Sunday, August 4 in the 11:00 service. Kids, bring your backpacks for a special blessing for the school year from Pastor Drew!

Promotion Sunday will be Sunday, August 11. 6th graders will move up to youth, 4th graders will move up to Quest, and 1st graders will move up to 1st-3rd grade. We are excited for the kids to experience new things in their new groups!

Wonderful Wednesdays will begin September 4th. Kids ages 3k-6th grade will have gym time, choir, Bible lesson, games and fun activities! Please join us from 5:45-7:30pm!

Quest, 4th-6th grade student ministry, Sunday nights will begin on September 8. We will meet every other Sunday night from 5:30-7:30 pm! Parents of 4th-6th graders, more information will be sent out soon!

We have some exciting things coming up in August and September and we hope you will mark your calendar and join us! Have a blessed week! *Liz Benninger*



Music Notes

The fun continues! Just back from another wonderful week at Camp Sumatanga for Music and Arts Week, and now headed to Tuscaloosa for the ACDA conference of classes for choral directors! I love learning, don't you? There is always more to know about how to do something better!

I hope all the children and youth who attended MAW had a great time! I know everything is not perfect for everyone, but hoping all of us can name some great moments! Watching our children in the talent shows is such a treat! They are affirmed by everyone! Hopefully, all will want to go back and take a friend, also! The concert was awesome! Our children and youth definitely contributed! Thanks, church, for supporting this week of growth!

Come hear Iron City Singers on Friday night at 7:30. Charles Henry, who directed Godspeed for two years, is one of the directors. Dan Cater sings with this group, also.

This Sunday, the Chancel Choir sings at 11:00 worship. Come hear Ryan preach to us about Colossians 3! *Ruth K. Miller*

Stewardship and Service

Sunday, July 14, 2019

Morning Worship	238
Sunday School	197
Toward Budget	\$20,940.00
Toward Capital Fund	\$1,210.00

Sunday, July 21, 2019

Counters

Dan Hendley
Scott Myers

Children's Church

9 am Alison Nelson
11 am DeAnna Ryan

Monday, July 22, 2019

Visitation

Connie Goodwin
Sally McClanahan



Please note: If you see any changes needed in the assignments, please call the office ASAP!

ON SUNDAYS,

WEDNESDAYS AFTER 4:00 PM AND OTHER CHURCHWIDE EVENTS

Upper Level Parking

Restricted to Seniors (75 and older),
People with Disabilities
& 5 Slots for Parents with Infants



SAINT MARK UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
2901 COLUMBIANA ROAD
BIRMINGHAM, AL 35216
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 EARLY LEARNING CENTER: 822-1312
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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

SENIOR PASTOR: Rev. Drew Clayton
ASSOCIATE PASTOR: Rev. Ryan Karr
ASSOCIATE PASTOR: Rev. Don Cross
DIRECTOR OF MUSIC MINISTRY: Ruth K. Miller
DIRECTOR OF STUDENT MINISTRY: Joshua London
DIRECTOR OF KIDS' MINISTRY: Liz Benninger
DIRECTOR OF ELC : Sandy Jenkins
SECRETARY: J. Ruth Miller
FINANCIAL MANAGER: Deanna Holmes
FACILITIES MANAGER: Ashley Kirby
DIRECTOR OF MODERN WORSHIP & YOUTH CHOIR: Dan Cater
ORGANIST: Matthew Toone
INTERN: Griffen Cope

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

Monday-Friday: 9 AM to 5:30 PM

Next Week at Saint Mark

SUNDAY, JULY 21

8:00 am Men's Club Breakfast (FH)
 9:00 am Modern Worship
 10:00 am Sunday School
 11:00 am Traditional Worship
 5:30 pm Chancel Choir Rehearsal
 7:00 pm Men's Prayer/Share Group

FRIDAY, JULY 26

8:00 am Feed the Homeless (Highlands)

SATURDAY, JULY 27

10:00 am Iron City Singers (Choir Room)
 1:00 pm Gym Set Up for Modern Worship

MONDAY, JULY 22

5:45 pm BB (Gym)
 6:00 pm Voices of the South (FH)
 6:00 pm Prayer Meeting (Sanctuary)

TUESDAY, JULY 23

8:00 am Feed the Homeless (Highlands)
 10:00 am Staff Meeting (202)
 5:45 pm BB (Gym)
 6:30 pm Church Council (208)
 7:00 pm Iron City Singers (FH)

WEDNESDAY, JULY 24

8:30 am Feeding the Homeless (Reconciler)
 6:00 pm Meet and Eat (Chick-fil-A)
 7:00 pm College Bible Study (Coffee Shop)

THURSDAY, JULY 25

6:00 pm Praise Band Practice (Gym)

July 2019						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

Please note:

If any changes are needed on the calendar,
 please call the office ASAP! Thanks!