



# MESSENGER

February 18, 2020

## **“Time Gifts That Smell of Freedom”**

Many of you have asked before or after worship services how our twins are doing. Thank the Lord, they have been doing well! They’ve been growing physically — rapidly transitioning through their PJs adorned with trucks to PJs emblazoned with blue and green dinosaurs. They’re learning to sit up on their own, and they think their big sisters are the funniest people on the planet. (I’m biased, but I agree!) Joanna and I talk often about how fast time is going. It seems like yesterday we were on the way to the hospital well before their official due date. It seems like yesterday that we held them and heard their cries for the first time. What I wouldn’t give for the ability to pause time and savor each stage of the way. My grandmother says, “Life is like a roll of toilet paper. The closer you get to the end, the faster it goes.” Time presses forward, and it takes intentionality to savor the moments we have with our loved ones.

Lent is a special season of the church year when we get to intentionally set aside time to grow closer to God. Trevor Hudson says that Lent is a gift of *time*. It makes me wonder how you will use your time-gift on our journey toward the cross and resurrection of Jesus. Are you a journaler? Will you begin or resume using words to savor time? Will you spend more time in prayer, so that God will maximize your use of time on a daily basis? Giving up a meal for fasting may provide you with extra time to rely on God more than usual.

How will you measure and evaluate your spiritual practice of savoring time? How will you know if you’re falling into works-righteousness or leaning into the means of grace? Trevor Hudson offers a wonderful and simple assessment question: “Does this spiritual practice smell like freedom?” If it feels heavy and a burden that is a heavy weight to carry, it’s worth re-evaluating. Does that mean we stay away from hard things? By no means! Developing the discipline of reading scripture and praying and serving our neighbors isn’t always easy at first. But when we are so convinced by the relative value of it, we will smell and experience the freedom!

This Lent, there are a few options we’d like to present to you. First, our season of Lent will kick off with Ash Wednesday on February 26th. Come by the sanctuary that morning, anytime between 7:30 and 8:30, and we’ll place the ashes on your forehead. We’ll also have an Ash Wednesday evening service at 6:30 pm in the sanctuary. The WW meal will be served between 5 and 6 pm. The children’s activities will conclude early. Parents will pick them up in the Upper Room at 6:20, prior to the service.

During the whole season of Lent, we’ll offer “Lent Chat Live” — a Facebook Live conversation hosted by Pastor Ryan. He and I will invite special guests to accompany us, and it’s a great way to tune in on your lunch break from wherever you are. We’ll also have a Wednesday night class called “The Incarnate God.” Pastor Don will lean heavily on teaching and experiences gathered on trips to Israel. I will accompany him in teaching.

All of these events are ways to help savor time. We want Easter to be transformative. But events themselves are rarely transformative without a journey leading to them. This Lent, may the gift of time be extra special for you!

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Drew".

# OUR CHURCH FAMILY... NEWS AND NOTES

## **Thank You**

We want to thank everyone for the visits, cards and gifts to our mother, Lillian Cole, that helped brighten her days and comfort her during the many months as her health declined. She loved this church and her church family. We truly appreciate Don Cross for his visits and prayers. A heartfelt thanks to Drew Clayton, Don Cross, Ruth Miller and the choir members for their parts in the beautiful service of remembrance. Also, to the hostesses for the delicious meal for our family and friends after the service. Thanks to Secretary Ruth Miller for her part in the lovely program and for her family's ministry at Aspire, where our mother enjoyed attending Sunday worship when she was able. *Linda Cole and David Cole*

## **Register Now!**

Don Cross will be leading a Lenten Bible Study entitled "The Incarnate God." It will be held on Wednesday evenings following Ash Wednesday. The dates are March 4, March 11, March 18 and April 1. The class will be held in Rooms 204-206 at 6 pm. Please call the office to register!

## **Wonderful Wednesday Menus for February**

Just a reminder that reservations are due by noon on Mondays, unless you are a "regular." If you have any questions, please call the church office.

February 19 Spaghetti for all  
February 26 Chicken Fingers for all

## **Wonderful Wednesday Dates**

Please make a note on your calendar that there will be no Wonderful Wednesdays meals or activities on March 25th (due to Spring Break) and April 8th (due to Holy Week). The last Wonderful Wednesday of the season will be May 6th.

## **Help Needed**

Good Neighbor Fellowship is in need of some volunteers who can come on the third Tuesdays to help with the takedown after the event. The reason the takedown is needed immediately afterwards is that the ELC uses the Gym at 7 am for the early care children the following morning.

It would probably take no more than 30 minutes, especially if there are two or three to help. Please call Margaret Alexander if you can help. (205) 823-2060 or (205) 913-2047

## **Rock-a-Thon This Saturday**

This coming Saturday, February 22, is the Annual McCoy Older Adult Day Care Rock-A-Thon. Again, it will be held here at Saint Mark.

There will be representatives, from other area United Methodist Churches, will be coming to rock in rocking chairs, and raise funds for the McCoy Older Adult Day Care.

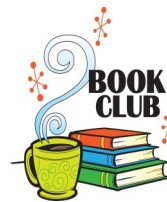
We are in need of refreshments for those coming to rock, as well as for those coming to cheer on their favorite rocker. We need sandwiches; cheese and crackers; different types of fruits cookies; brownies; chips; pretzels; and anything else you can think of that would fuel the energy of those rocking. Homemade or store-bought, it doesn't matter. If you would rather, you are welcome to make a monetary donation towards the food and snacks, and I'll do the shopping and the food preparations.

If you would like to come and share Saint Mark's hospitality with our guests, that would be great as well.

If you would like to make a donation to the McCoy Older Adult Day Care, please write your Check and leave it in the office.

Thank you in advance for considering this wonderful local ministry. Their outreach to families who have seniors who need to be supervised for their own safety is something you don't quite understand, until you or someone you know has that need in their life.

If you have any questions, please call me at (205) 901-9323. *Mary Linda Smith*



## **Come Join the Fun!**

The Saint Mark Book Club meets once a month, on the first Wednesday. Our next meeting is March 4th at 11:30 am in Room 202. You are welcome to bring a sack lunch if you like. For more information contact Linda Kitchens at (205) 492-9190. Some who are not able to attend the meetings like to know the books we're reading. Here are the titles for the next 3 books:

March:

*A Gentleman in Moscow* by Amor Towles

April:

*The Guardians* by John Grisham

May:

*The Art of Racing in the Rain* by Garth Stein

This past Sunday some of our youth had a fun night of worship attending Winter Jam at the BJCC with thousands of other Christians in our area. This week we are wrapping up our current Wednesday and Sunday series. Next week we will start new series in line with Lent.



## Student Ministry

Our youth ministry's Discovery Weekend is quickly approaching (March 6-8<sup>th</sup>). This is our largest youth event of the spring, and it is only made possible by church members volunteering homes, meals, transportation, and most important prayer. We still need volunteers in all of these areas. Contact me if you would like to know how you or your Sunday School Class can help with the weekend or if you have a student who would like to attend. *Joshua London* ([joshualondon@saintmarkumc.org](mailto:joshualondon@saintmarkumc.org))



This week in Kids Ministry we will be learning about Jonah's Bad Day. Our scripture for this week is Jonah 1: 1-2: 10.

We hope during the week you will discuss the lesson with them, ask them what they learned at church, and engage in helping them learn all about how God used Jonah!

It's time for Confirmation! If you have a current 6th grader or older child who has not gone through Confirmation, and would like for them to attend the classes, please let me know. Classes will begin soon! [liz@saintmarkumc.org](mailto:liz@saintmarkumc.org)

Quest, 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> grade student ministry, will be this Sunday night, February 23, from 5:30pm-7:30pm. Please join us for games, snack supper, lesson, activities and a whole lot of fun! Our next Quest Sunday night will be March 8<sup>th</sup>. With this being our only Quest for the month of March, due to Spring Break, we decided why not have fun with it! We will be going to Vestavia Bowl for some bowling fun! We will be sending out an email soon with all the details! *Liz Benninger*

Thanks so much to all who have been able to host the Otterbein University Concert Choir on February 29. The young men and women are excited to come sing for us at 7 p.m. that evening! Please come hear them and show them a warm Southern welcome, hosting or not!



## Music Notes

We are feeding them dinner before the concert, so if you want to be a part of that by providing a monetary contribution, let me know at [musicruth@saintmarkumc.org](mailto:musicruth@saintmarkumc.org) or call me at (205)706-8159.

This Sunday, February 23, the Women's Ensemble will sing at 9:00 worship; and the Chancel Choir at 11:00. Sing and make melody in your heart every day! *Ruth K. Miller*

## Stewardship and Service

### Sunday, February 16, 2020

Morning Worship	274
Sunday School	201
Toward Budget	\$10,749.00
Toward Capital Fund	\$405.00

### Sunday, February 23, 2020

#### Counters

Walter Bryant  
Jill Mann

#### Children's Church

9 am Kim Lyndon  
11 am Shelley Hamilton

### Monday, February 24, 2020

#### Visitation

Bonnie Gaston  
Lillian Sheffield



**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**  
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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

**CHURCH OFFICE HOURS**  
 Monday-Friday: 9 AM to 5:30 PM

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## Next Week at Saint Mark

**SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 23**

9:00 am Traditional Worship (Sanctuary)  
 9:00 am Modern Worship (Gym)  
 10:00 am Sunday School  
 11:00 am Traditional Worship (Sanctuary)  
 4:30 pm Adult Handbells/Youth Band Practice  
 5:30 pm Chancel Choir/Quest/UMYF  
 7:00 pm Men's Prayer/Share Group  
 7:15 pm Godspeed Rehearsal

**MONDAY, FEBRUARY 24**

5:30 pm Jim Macrae (Bagpipe Rehearsal)  
 6:00 pm Prayer Meeting  
 7:00 pm Voices of the South (Gym)

**TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 25**

8:00 am Feed the Homeless (Highlands)  
 10:00 am Staff Meeting (202)  
 1:30 pm ELC Staff Meeting (204-206)  
 4:30 pm ELC Staff Meeting (204-206)  
 6:00 pm Basketball (Gym) (Chris S.)  
 6:30 pm Church Council (208)

**WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 26**

7:30 am Imposition of Ashes (Come and Go)  
 8:30 am Feed the Homeless (Reconciler)  
 5:00 pm Wonderful Wednesday  
 6:30 pm Ash Wednesday Service (Sanctuary)

**THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 27**

4:55 pm B'ham Boys Choir Rehearsal  
 6:30 pm Modern Worship Band practice (Gym)

**FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 28**

8:00 am Feed the Homeless (Highlands)  
 9:30 am ELC Chapel (Sanctuary)

**SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 29**

9:00 am Voices of the South Retreat (Gym)  
 1:00 pm Setup for Modern Worship (Gym)  
 7:00 pm Otterbein Concert (Sanctuary)

February 2020						
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9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29

*Please call the office if any changes are needed on the calendar!*