



St. Mark's BETHANY



December 20, 2023

Join us this Sunday for worship at St. Mark's. This Sunday is the 4th Sunday of Advent & Christmas Eve. Pastor Randy will wrap up his series, "Places It Happened". This week the message will be "Bethlehem". The scripture reference is Luke 2:1-20.

There will be a combined service at 10 am, that will be family friendly. Then a traditional Candlelight Service at 7 pm and then a special midnight service starting at 11:00 pm. and Modern services are at 10:55 am. All three services will include communion and a candlelight service. If you are not able to attend Worship services there will be a live streaming of the 10 am and 7 pm worship. To watch the life stream, you can join us at

10 am Service or at 7 & 11 pm Service



St. Mark's has had a wonderful history with our Christmas Eve offerings. Each year money collected during Christmas Eve Services goes somewhere in the world to make a real difference in the world for the kingdom. This year we will be assisting to build a Women's Center in Kigoma, Tanzania. The Center will be next to the St. Mark's Methodist Church we helped to build there and will be heavily involved in the community to provide opportunities for events, teaching, shelter and other community events.

Start praying about how God would lead you into being a part in making a real difference.

Christmas Eve Services

Dec 24 10 am Combined Family Friendly Christmas Service

7 pm Traditional Candlelight Christmas Service

11 pm Midnight Candlelight Service



Join us for our Upside –Down News Years

Following Combined Services on the 31st, you are invited to join us for a unique celebration of welcoming in the new year. We will gather in Barnett Hall for a time of snacks and fellowship and then watch as the ball drops us into a new year. We will get the new year started in prayer and thanks for all that God has done for us.



New Sunday Morning Class



Starting Sunday, January 14th, 2024, at 10:50 a.m. in room 5, Don and Jan Greve will lead the class verse by verse with discussion and questions. Starting in the gospel of John, we will explore old and new revelations about God's word for His people.

To be a part scan code or sign up on counter

AA Group meets weekly at St. Mark's
Every Thursday at 10 am there is an open AA meeting at the church. During this time of year

this is a very difficult time for those who struggle with substances.

If you know anyone who needs a hand let them know about our group.



Looking into

2024



January 3 Choir Practice Resumes

January 4-6 Youth Adult Retreat

January 7-12 CDC Children's Conference

January 8 St. Mark's Bethany Women Resume

January 9 Tuesday Bible Study Resumes (Larry Gaston)

January 11 Second Winders

January 13 Men's Breakfast

January 14 New Sunday School Class Understanding the Bible (Don & Jan Greve)

January 14 All Church Pot Luck Lunch

January 15 Wrapped in Love Resumes

January 17 Wednesday Night Dinner & Programming Resumes

February 4 Kings & Queens Annual Chili Cook Off

St. Mark's Bethany

During 2024, I commit, with the grace and help of God, to know Jesus better and support the ministries of St. Mark's with my prayers, presence, gifts, service & witness.



The amount I intend to give during 2024 is:

yearly
monthly

Prayers Presence Gifts Service Witness

My financial commitment to St. Mark's for 2024 is: yearly monthly

If you have not turned in your pledge card, please take a moment to fill it out and turn it in. Cards are available in the Narthex.

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PREGNANCY SUPPORT

Now Collecting Donations for:

- Newborn clothes size 6 Gently used or new
- Shoes up to size 13
- Bath wash and Lotion
- Bottles
- Diapers size 4, 5, and 6
- Good Start Formula

Collection Box
outside of Sanctuary
near West Entry



Thank You!

ROC Still Needs Your Help



St. Mark's you have done a great job of meeting needs. We will keep the grocery cart set up in the narthex for your donations of canned and boxed food for a couple more weeks.

Ramen noodles, pasta, any type of canned beans and cake mixes have been requested. Plastic and paper bags are always needed to pack the food. Monetary donations are also gratefully accepted.

Thank you!

Sm kids NEWS

Sunday Mornings
November

Kidmin

9:30 - 10:45 ages 4-5th grade



December 24th
10:00 am service
childcare
available for
children 0-3

December 24th
7:00pm service
childcare
available for
children 5 and
under

December 24th
11:00 pm service
No childcare
provided

December 31st
One Service
Sunday
Nursery
available for
children 0-3



Nursery

9:30 - 12:00 ages 6mo - 4

Wee Worship

10:45 am ages 2 1/2- kindergarten



Bowling at
Andy
B's
January 2nd



Train up a child in the way he should go,
even when he is old he will not depart from it. Proverbs 22:6



December 2023

Prayer Guide

The Way to the Kingdom



Photo: John Wesley's prayer kneeler – The birthplace of Methodism.

Each morning at 4 a.m., John Wesley would kneel in prayer in his London home. It was in this place that the fires of Methodism began. As we seek to reconnect to our Wesleyan heritage, it seems the best place we can begin is in prayer. Join us in our monthly prayer series: The Way to the Kingdom.

The Way to Wisdom

Dr. Steve Seamands

“Select from among yourselves seven men of good standing, *full of the Spirit and of wisdom.*” (Acts 6:3, emphasis added) Faced with growing dissension within their ranks, that was the Apostles solution for the growing food distribution problem in the Jerusalem church. And their proposal *pleased the whole community* (Acts 6:5). So, they chose seven persons like Stephen. Later, even those who violently opposed him, “could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he spoke.” (Acts 6:10)

From its inception, the church has needed leaders, “full of the Spirit and of wisdom.” And how desperately we need them today, especially as we prepare to embark on a perilous voyage into uncharted waters, in the formation and establishment of the Global Methodist Church. So, we need to earnestly pray for wise leaders that the new church will walk in the way of wisdom. And that’s the focus of our prayer guide this month.

But what exactly characterizes a wise leader? In *New Testament Words*, William Barclay discusses the background and meaning of the three great Greek words (*sophia, phronesis, sunesis*) associated with wisdom found in the New Testament.

Each captures an essential element of wisdom.

- **Sophia** pertains to awareness of eternal things. It has to do primarily with knowledge of ultimate things, human and divine.
- **Phronesis**, often translated *prudence*, is the ability to apply knowledge to the practical problems of daily life and living. Much of the Old Testament wisdom literature such as Proverbs falls into this category.
- **Sunesis** is the ability to test, evaluate and form appropriate judgments. The wise can intelligently assess difficult situations and then choose the right course of action in response to them.

The way to wisdom combines all three elements. According to Barclay, it involves being “wise in the things of eternity and efficient in the things of time.” In Jesus, we find the perfect embodiment of wisdom. Paul stresses that He himself is wisdom, the wisdom of God (1 Cor. 1:24, 30). In Him are all the treasures of wisdom (Col. 2:3).

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A Suggested Pattern of Prayer

As you pray through the following prayer points, invite the presence of the Lord into your time of prayer. Each day's prompt has a Scripture reference for you to pray through. As you pray also allow time to listen to what the Holy Spirit is saying to you. When you have prayed through the Scripture and prayer point, you may be led to add your own prayers. Pray and consider what action steps you might take in response to the Lord's leading. Repeat this prayer pattern weekly for the month.

Sunday: James urges us to ask, and God will give us wisdom "generously and ungrudgingly". Pray, boldly asking God to grant us wisdom for the living of these days. (James 1:5)

Monday: Pray for wisdom as *sophia* in the GM Church, the ability to distinguish between the eternal and the temporal so that we can hold fast to the things that never age. (Matthew 7:24-27)

Tuesday: Since Christ himself is our wisdom, pray for a deepening of our union with Christ, so that as our love and devotion for him increases, our wisdom will increase. (Colossians 2:3)

Wednesday: Pray for prudential, practical wisdom (*phronesis*), particularly in relation to complex decisions GM Church leaders must make. (Proverbs 8:11-12)

Thursday: Pray that we would not be seduced by the power and wisdom of this world but hold fast to the foolishness of God's wisdom revealed in Christ's cross. (1 Corinthians 1:22-25)

Friday: Pray for an increase of wisdom as *sunesis*, so that we might discern the long-term implications and consequences of current decisions. (1 Kings 3:9)

Saturday: Pray that God will raise up women and men "full of the Spirit and of wisdom" to lead us in the coming days. (Acts 6:3)

In Him are all the treasures of wisdom. (Col. 2:3)

Dr. Stephen Seamands is Emeritus Professor of Christian Doctrine at Asbury Theological Seminary, where he taught for 35 years. He is the author of numerous books, including his most recent, Follow the Healer: Biblical and Theological Foundations for Healing Ministry, Seedbed, Inc.

Facts and Figures

2023 Annual Budget	601,800
Rec'd toward Operating 12/16/2023	23,745
Year to Date 2022	
Rec'd toward offering (thru 12/16/23)	561,394
Expenses (thru 12/16/23)	546,668
<u>Attendance</u>	
Sunday, December 17 Total	327
Traditional Worship	174
Modern Worship	68
Online Worship	85

Prayer Box

- | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------|
| Miller Gerardy | Dorothy Sipes |
| Laurie Bucholtz | Donna Denton (SIL Sandy Kelly) |
| Kristen & Mike Musick | Jeff & Tiffany Montesano |
| Barbara Hill | Geo Montesano |
| Winn & Ginger Lusk | Hand Brueggen |
| Diana & Jeff Davidson | Carol Hall |
| Judy McMinn | Mary Jane Svejkovsky |
| Jane Foreman | Beth Bidne |
| Dan & Norma Boland | Judy Knight |
| Cheryl Andrews | Cindy Wilkerson |
| Greg Spiser | Mary Desmukes |
| Mike Spiser | Kelli Pavelko |
| Paula Galt | Larry Gaston |
| Roger Pautsch | Elaine Talbot |