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PERMIT NO. 589
ANNISTON, ALA 36207

ST. MARK UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
1320 GOLDEN SPRINGS ROAD
ANNISTON, AL 36207

February 2023

SUNDAY WORSHIP

Communion is observed the first Sunday of each month.

Contemporary Service: Postponed

Prayer Team 9:50 am

Sunday School 10:00 am

Traditional Service: 11:00 am

CHOIR: The St. Mark choir is open to all.

Choir Practice Sundays at 4:30pm

Rev. Tony Wood-Associate Pastor / Music Director

St. Mark has assistive listening devices available during worship service for those with special needs.

Sunday School Classes

Agape / Faith (Lecture) Wesley (Discussion)

Faith Class 10:00 am April Ponder-Twardy

Agape Class 10:00 am Eanix Poole

Wesley Class 10:00 am John Smythe

Jesus Loves Me 10:00 am Suzy Roberts

Wednesday's Activities

Book Club February 18th at 5 p.m.

St. Mark Outreach Teams

Outreach Needed	Group Leader
Prayer/Phone/Visitation	Dot Ping / Abby Parks
Transportation	Richard Smith
Plumbing/Electrical	TBA
Outside Work	Richard Smith

A Message from the Prayer Team

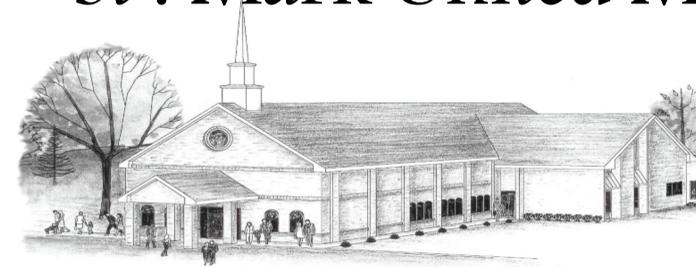
Prayer Team will continue to meet for group prayer each Sunday at 9:50 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall. Thanks to all for your faithfulness! And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all of the Lord's people.

Ephesians 6:18

BE A
DAILY
WARRIOR

God
Answers
Prayer

St . Mark United Methodist Church Newsletter



Rev. Jeff Ponder-Twardy - Pastor
Rev. Robert A. "Tony" Wood - Associate Pastor
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1320 Golden Springs Road Anniston, AL 36207
Office Hours: Monday—Thursday 8:00 am—2:30pm

“Growing in Christ, Reaching others!”

February 2023

From the Pastor's Desk:

There's No Joy in Mudville

“... There's no joy in Mudville. The mighty Casey struck out.”

Sunday, January 22, the Church Council received and accepted the recommendation of the Discernment Team for St. Mark to remain a United Methodist Church. By virtue of the council's vote to accept the recommendation, there will be no church-wide vote to disaffiliate. The discernment process is over. **There's no joy in Mudville.**

The poem, Casey at the Bat, written by Ernest Thayer in 1888, described an over-confident fan base expecting heroics from their favorite hometown player. The poem ends when the mighty Casey swings and misses and disappoints all those longing for a great clout from their hero to win the game. It didn't happen. **There's no joy in Mudville.**

There's nothing to celebrate in the Discernment Team's report received and accepted by vote of the Church Council. The report/recommendation had to come before the council and be accepted or rejected by vote of the council. The result is St. Mark stays UMC. Some like it, some don't. Some see this as a defeat, some see this as a victory. Nothing about the work of the Discernment Team was pleasant, but it was work that had to be done. **There's no joy in Mudville.**

Little by little, we're all learning of individuals and families choosing not to remain as members of St. Mark because of the whole process and the result of the council's vote. None of this news is pleasant to learn, but these individuals believe it's necessary to live out their devotion to Christ faithfully. There are no winners, there are plenty of losers. This wasn't a competition. It was a calamity. We all need healing. “By his stripes we are healed” (Isaiah 53:5).

There's no joy in St Mark.

Old Business: none

Finance Committee: Chairman, John Champion; Cheryl Smith, church accountant; reported St. Mark received donations in the amount of \$165,354.15 for 2022 while expenses amounted to \$178,079.87 resulting in a loss of approximately \$12,725.72. The donations throughout 2022 were less than anticipated. St. Mark Foundation Account realized \$1,351.90 for the 4th quarter 2022. It has made \$2,925.65 since the first of the year. The Foundation account total is \$122,292.41. The budget for 2022 was \$165,354.00 and the 2023 budget is \$199,490.00. With the uncertainty created by the discernment process, we may have to make changes to the budget.

Stewardship Committee: 31 pledges were submitted for 2022 totaling \$104,165.00. They gave \$103,267.00 thru 4th quarter 2022 which was 99.14 percent of their pledge. Eleven units gave over 100%. The 2023 Stewardship Program received 42 pledges for \$115,845.

SPRC: Chairman-John Smythe; The committee met on January 15th and discussed that they are planning to establish a membership outreach program. Pastor Jeff Ponder-Twardy and Diane Mason said that they would provide information on such programs to the committee at the next meeting.

Music Minister: Tony Wood; The adult choir continues to thrive. Christmas Cantata had 25 participates.

Membership: Melda Motz; We have 142 full time members.

United Methodist Men: President, John Smythe; John has agreed to preside temporarily depending on his health. There was no meeting in January.

UMW: President, Diane Mason; The UMW sponsored a coat drive in November-December, and the response was outstanding. The coats were delivered to Community Enabler. On December 15, they prepared and delivered 17 holiday bags to members of St. Mark who are living in assisted living homes or who are unable to attend worship services. The next meeting will be a planning meeting for 2023. Linda Smythe will replace Jody Ketch as their Treasurer. Future plans include a non-perishable food drive and Soup and Salad luncheon.

Shepherding: Beth Gorey; Members of the shepherding groups will be reviewed and the number of groups will also be reduced due to decline in membership.

Worship report: Jeff Ponder-Twardy: Ash Wednesday services will be on February 22 at Noon and at 630 pm.

Global Missions Report: Len Motz; We have donated \$1,000 each to SIFAT and UMCOR since the last Church council meeting. We do not have any hands-on projects planned at this time. We are coordinating with Randy Marshall for a presentation on their continuing mission work in the Ukraine at St. Mark on February 12 at 4:00 pm.

Scouting report: Danette Sweet; Re-charter was done in December and the program continues to grow. Scout Sunday will be February 12th. The Pinewood Derby will be January 28th, the Blue & Gold banquet will be March 4th.

Trustees Report: Chair, J. D. Smith; A church property inventory was conducted in December. A new Annual Affiliation Agreement was signed with the Scout program January 10th. Trustees' officers were also elected; Chair-J. D. Smith; Vice-Chair- Andrew McClure; and Secretary-Eanix Poole.

Nominations Committee: Chairman, Jeff Ponder-Twardy; Nominations will meet soon to address vacant leadership positions.

Pastor's report: Pastor Jeff-Ponder Twardy; The 9:00 am worship service will not meet after January 29th. We may start a new service during the week, but this would come before the Church Council for approval. The trailers in the parking lot are Disaster Response trailers brought over from Oxford First UMC and will be here temporarily. **(1 of 2)**

As a result of the vote of the Leadership Team on Discernment taken on January 15th, the Discernment Team recommended to the Church Council, the governing body of St. Mark United Methodist Church, that St. Mark should remain a part of the United Methodist Church. Several people felt the need for a church wide vote, but Dee Gorey and Pastor Jeff explained that St. Mark is not congregational and goes by The Book of Discipline. In the United Methodist Church, the Nomination Committee asks people to serve on the church council and the names are presented and approved at charge conference. Therefore, the church council members are the only ones to vote on the recommendation from the Discernment Team. After a paper ballot vote, Danette Sweet and Beverly Carlee tallied the votes. The vote was 12 yes and 4 no to remain a United Methodist Church.

The Agape Sunday School Class

Recent lessons covered the Prophet Isaiah who served the Israeli Nation of Judah between 740 and 681 BC. What can we learn from events that occurred almost three thousand years ago? Well, quite a lot actually, as human nature has not changed from that time till now and people and nations keep making the same mistakes over and over concerning their relationship with God. Israel as a nation had a covenant with God that originated with Abraham. If the people would worship the one true God and live righteous lives, God would bless them and they would prosper. If they did not, then God would pass judgement on them and they would suffer the consequences. This covenant was passed to Gentiles after Christ the Messiah was resurrected. Prophets were chosen by God as His spokespersons to His chosen nation of Israel and sometimes others. Their purpose was to present the reality of God to the people and their leaders. Everyone, more or less, believes in God. But most of us do our best to keep God on the margins of our lives or, failing that, refashion God to suit our convenience. Prophets insisted that God is the sovereign center, not off in the wings awaiting our beck and call. Prophets insist that we deal with God as God reveals himself, not as we imagine him to be. Consequently, most prophets were popular with the people for a while and then later fell out of favor and many suffered early death at the hands of the Jewish leaders. Isaiah was one of the greatest prophet-poets to come out of the Hebrew people. He had a close relationship with God and insisted that his words be recorded for future reference therefore, we have his book to study. He prophesized events that would happen soon as well as future events that have not occurred yet. One of his major prophesies was the coming servant, Messiah. He was a master craftsman with words. For him words were watercolors and melodies and chisels to make truth and beauty and goodness, and in some cases his words were like hammers and swords to unmake sin and guilt and rebellion. He not only conveyed information, he created visions, delivered revelation, and aroused belief. The book of Isaiah is expansive, dealing with virtually everything that is involved in being a people of God on this planet Earth. The impressive art of Isaiah involves taking the stuff of our ordinary and often disappointing human experience and showing us how it is the very stuff that God uses to create and save and give hope. As this vast panorama opens before us, it turns out that nothing is unusable by God. He uses everything and everybody as material for his work, which is the remaking of the mess we have made of our lives. "Symphony" is the term many find useful to capture the fusion of simplicity and complexity presented in the book of Isaiah. This is the reason this book is quoted in the New Testament than any other Old Testament book. The major thrust is clearly God's work of salvation that ensures that every human being has a chance for everlasting life. The prominent themes repeated and developed throughout this vast symphonic work are judgement, comfort, and hope. All three elements are present on nearly every page. We hope that we have tweaked your curiosity to study the Bible. Sunday School classes are a good place to begin or continue your study. We invite all who attend church to attend one of the classes offered at St. Mark.

The Faith Sunday School Class

Hello, St. Mark family, this is April Ponder-Twardy. I am the current teacher of the Faith Sunday School Class and it is a joy. I am teaching from the Standard Lesson Commentary which is divided into quarters and themes. This winter quarter we have been exploring the theme "From Darkness to Light." We will continue this theme through the end of February.

This month we have been looking at God's promises to love us, to guide us, and to show us how to live. We will finish this month with God's promise of his presence. Next month we will dive into God's Call. Let me end with one of my favorite scriptures that we have studied this month:

"Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name and you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. For I am the Lord your God...you are precious and honored in my sight, and I love you." Isaiah 42:1b-2, 4a

Ukraine Mission Update

St Mark was introduced to the Ukraine Mission work of Randy and Shelly Marshall many years ago. Since, through the untiring efforts of Larry and Pam Russell, the St Mark family has supported this mission with generous donations. I hope that the St Mark family will be able to continue our support for years to come.

The Marshalls will be in Alabama on February 12, 2023 and have offered to stop by St Mark and give an update presentation on their ongoing efforts. The time for this event is tentatively 4:00 PM, but is subject to change, so please look for any updated to this time. Because of the ongoing hostilities in the Ukraine, they now must conduct their mission work from across the border in Hungary. This is a challenge, but they are still managing to do their vital mission across the border.

Please share the word with your friends and family. I will also be inviting the local homeschool families to attend this timely current history presentation. I hope we can fill the room to overflowing with families to hear their presentation. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me. Len Motz—Global Missions Chair

Agape Trivia: Trivia Question: True/False

Did God back up the shadow on a sundial as a sign for King Hezekiah working through the prophet Isaiah?

Nominations Committee Meeting

Nominations Committee Meeting will be scheduled in the near future to nominate candidates to fill positions needed in church leadership. If you feel a call to serve please contact one of the following members. Date & Time to be announced.

2023 Nomination & Lay Leadership Members Jeff Ponder—Twardy—Chair

J.D. Smith
Sue Anderson
Dot Ping
Dee Gorey

Jane Banister
Danette Sweet
Mary Walker

Contemporary Service

Contemporary 9:00 am service will be on hiatus until further notice.

Oxford Senior Day

Oxford Civic Center
Monday, February 13, 2023
Registration begins at 8:00 a.m.
Lunch is served at 11:30 a.m.

Free entertainment, sack lunch & drink for all senior citizens will be provided. Average attendance 300-600.

YOU ARE INVITED



The Book Club
will meet
February 15th
@ 5:00 pm



Birthdays to Celebrate
Feb. 6th @11:30 am
Location TBA.

Anniston Soup Bowl

301 West 15th Street
(Walnut & 15th St. Corner)

St. Mark UMC Volunteer
Schedule 11 am—1 pm

2023 Volunteer Schedule

Tuesday, February 7th

Wednesday, May 3rd

Friday, August 8th

Thursday, December 14th

We need 5 volunteers
(3 serve food, 1 serve water, 1 count)
each time it is our turn to serve.



Abby's Old
Time Jam

Feb. 17th
@ 7 pm



Will meet
on Feb. 7th
@ 6pm



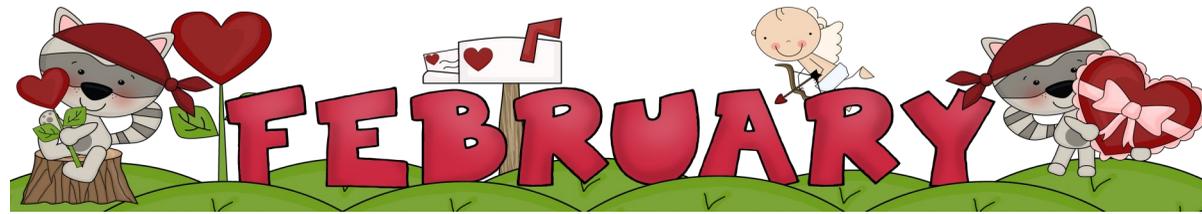
Prayers for our Church Family

Ann Angel (YMCA), Natalie and Bree (Margie Barker's daughter & granddaughter), Carol Barker, Gretchen Batesky (Abby Parks aunt), the Black family, Jane Borden, Dean Boucher, Marsha Bowman (previous member) Elaine Burgess, Janie Coffey (Jeanie Hampton's sister), Rebecca Carden, Marleigh Conley (friend of Lou Crosby), Dee Dean (friend of Jack Williams), Janice Drake, Ann Draper (Jeanie Hampton's daughter), Patsy Flint, Pat Fitzgerald, Judy & Micky Foster (Pam Russell's sister), Kathy Gaffney (friend of Gail Kochie) Frankline & Judy Headrick (Sharon Branstetter friends), Richard & Linda Hodges, Steve & Brenda Holder (Cousin of Diane Mason), Lynne Lawler, Ed Hamilton, Jane & Dewey Hughes, Shirley Humphreys (sister of Jeanie Hampton), Martha Johnson (Dot Ping's friend), Hudson Ketch, James Lipham (Dot Ping's friend), Patrick McCrimmon (Ed & DiAnne Hamilton's son), Kevin McKinzie & family, Lisa Miller (Jim's Daughter-in-law), The Motz Family, Avena Nelson (Frank & Carolee Warneke granddaughter), Pat Neth (Jeanie Hampton's Cousin), Bill, Cody & Rodney Nowland (friends of John Champion's) Bill Owens, the Parks family, Pam Price, The Poland Family, Jean & Jerry Ray & family, Connie Russell (Danette's mom), Larry Russell & family, Kim & Wayne Selph (Gina's sister), Barbara Smith (Larry Russell's sister), Richard Smith, The Smythe & Strickland families (Ann Strickland was John's Aunt), Lulu Stewart, Ralph Teasley, John Toland, Edna Traywick, Chuck & Mary Walker.



Pajama
Day
was
January
13th





2023



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2 Scout's Round Table	3	4
5 Communion Sunday Prayer Team 9:50 am Sunday School 10 am Traditional Svc 11 am	6 Scouts Women's Birthday Luncheon: 11:30 a Location TBA	7  Meeting 6pm Soup Bowl 11 a—1 p	8	9	10	11
12 SCOUT SUNDAY Prayer Team 9:50 am Sunday School 10 am Traditional Svc 11 am	13 Scouts Senior Day @ 8 am Oxford Civic Center	14 Trustee Meeting 6pm 	15 Book Club 5pm	16  Meeting 10 am	17	18
19 Prayer Team 9:50am Sunday School 10 am Traditional Svc 11 am SPRC— 12 noon	20 Scouts Newsletter Deadline 9am	21	22 Ash Wednesday Services 12:00 noon 6:30 pm	23 Emmaus Cluster Oxford 1st UMC 6pm	24	25
26 Prayer Team 9:50am Sunday School 10 am Traditional Svc 11 am	27 Scouts	28				

2. Jessica Bonner
4. Leslie Boyd, Linda Smythe
5. Dean Boucher
7. Judy Smith
8. Donald Stewart
14. Eanix & Wavene Poole
16. Jane Banister
21. Richard Smith
26. Rev. Jeff Ponder-Twardy
28. Houston & Diane Mason

Special Note : Due to COVID-19 Facemask encouraged especially if you have a cold or cold like symptoms. If you have been exposed to Covid in the last 14 days please join us online until you test negative.

Agape Trivia Answer:
True
The answer can be found in
2 Kings Chapter 20: 8-11
&
Isaiah Chapter 38: 7-8.