

Welcome to The Saint Mark Good News Gazette! In this issue: A Note from Pastor Jay, Finance Report, 2023 Stewardship Plan and Activities, Church Photo, Blessing of the Animals, Old Friends Visiting and Leaving, Upcoming Events (Adult Sunday School, Eagle Scout Project, Derek Black talk, Walking Together, Women's Retreat Save the Date), Mission Ministry Updates (Manna & DC Diapers, Recent approvals), Advent Activities and Schedule, Calendar for Nov and Dec

Halloween and Saint Mark

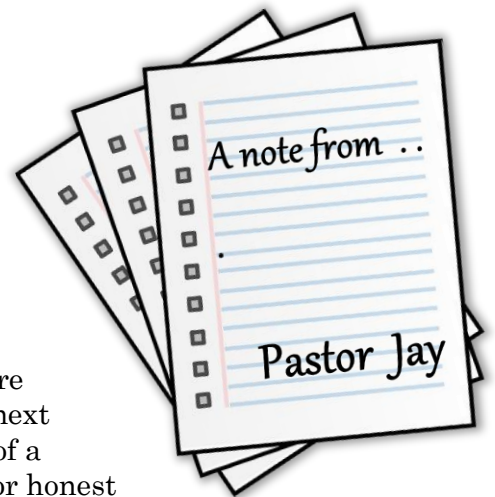
It is, or soon will be, Halloween. As a Pastor, I suppose it may surprise some that Halloween is my favorite holiday. The attraction is not really the candy (I've gotten too conscious of my health to eat it) or dressing up in a costume (I do that on Sunday mornings as it is). Rather, what attracts me, is the sense of the in-between-ness of the fall equinox, and of course, the sense of darkness which descends as is its task.

Ghost stories originated around the fire, or much better, inside, where there is safety to speak of things that bring fear and doubt. Sitting next to a light, even with its sibling darkness surrounding, gives a sense of a fleeting confidence that perhaps there is a safety given that allows for honest conversation about what makes us most anxious; that which we do not fully know, and cannot fully see. It remains stubbornly hidden.

It is worth stating that Jesus is described as a ghost several times in the New Testament, I suppose he startled people. I'm not sure what glossary you use to speak of Jesus or the invasion of the sacred in life, but "startling" is not one we often use, or even desire. Yet Christ can awaken in a way that troubles, even as one is given the promise of hope. We are living through painful times as we see the failure of humanity on multiple levels if we seek to gaze fully. Yet the light, and one can say, the darkness, which startles, continues to beckon us closer, asking only for full honesty. Change often delays when we are comfortable, it is through uncanny revelation of needed truth from which we begin to awaken to a new perspective, and new action.

On this Halloween, I wish all of you, but especially your children, a safe and wonderful "All Hallows Eve." For those who know their church calendar, All Saints Sunday is just around the corner, seeking to give closure to what has breached open upon the night of the Irish Samhain.

May Christ confound you, but also bless you,
May your life and the lives of others be fuller,
and able to bless the dark,
and give peace.



Pastor Jay



Finance Elder's Report

Saint Mark Presbyterian Church Budget vs. Actuals: 2023 Budget - FY23 P&L January - September, 2023

RED: Actual Expenditures Exceed Budgeted Amount

YELLOW: Actual Expenditures Tracking Low

GREEN: Actual Expenditures ON Track (+/-2%)

	YTD Actual	Prorated Budget 75%	Over / (Under) Prorated Budget	Annual Budget	% of Annual Budget
Income					
4010 Pledge Collections	319,256.34	363,375.00	(44,118.66)	484,500.00	65.89%
40101 5% less for pledges not rec'd	0.00	(15,000.03)	15,000.03	(20,000.00)	0.00%
4014 Per Capita Contribution - congr	86.00	3,750.03	(3,664.03)	5,000.00	1.72%
4015 Pledge collections - new member	0.00	749.97	(749.97)	1,000.00	0.00%
4020 Prior Year Pledges	14,195.00	1,500.03	12,694.97	2,000.00	709.75%
4030 Non-Pledged Giving	79,849.56	29,999.97	49,849.59	40,000.00	199.62%
4050 Building Use/Service Income	42,138.75	37,500.03	4,638.72	50,000.00	84.28%
4060 Interest on Investments	3,017.44	2,999.97	17.47	4,000.00	75.44%
4090 Other Income	1,104.49	749.97	354.52	1,000.00	110.45%
Total Income	\$ 459,647.58	\$ 425,624.94	\$ 34,022.64	\$ 567,500.00	81.00%
Expenses					
5100 Connections Ministry	2,200.78	2,250.00	(49.22)	3,000.00	73.36%
5200 Christian Formation	2,420.81	6,750.00	(4,329.19)	9,000.00	26.90%
5300 Worship and Music	10,374.39	13,124.97	(2,750.58)	17,500.00	59.28%
6100 Mission (Global & Local Mission)	11,300.00	18,749.97	(7,449.97)	25,000.00	45.20%
8000 Personnel	314,441.00	336,750.03	(22,309.03)	440,000.00	71.46%
8100 Finance Ministry	37,294.01	33,000.03	4,293.98	44,000.00	84.76%
8300 Property Ministry	139,504.39	109,125.00	30,379.39	145,500.00	95.88%
8390 AST (Administrative Support)	18,315.33	14,249.97	4,065.36	19,000.00	96.40%
8400 Stewardship Ministry	0.00	1,125.00	(1,125.00)	1,500.00	0.00%
Total Expenses	\$ 535,850.71	\$ 535,124.97	\$ 725.74	\$ 704,500.00	76.06%
Net Income	\$ (76,203.13)	\$ (109,500.03)	\$ 33,296.90	\$ (137,000.00)	55.62%

During Q3 (as of September 30th), the financial picture has improved in that we are on track to have a smaller deficit than the \$137,000 deficit that was originally planned. At the 3/4 point in the year, our deficit stands at about \$76,000. A major contributor to the improvement has been Building Use/Service Income. A total of about \$26,000 in Business Use/Service Income was collected during Q3, as compared to a total of about \$16,000 during the first two quarters of 2023. However, the above excludes major (6-figure) costs that it now appears are likely to be incurred during 2023/24 to address urgent issues with the HVAC system in the Education Building. The Property Team is in the process of soliciting and evaluating bids for this work, before recommending a specific proposal. If you have any questions about the finance report, please contact Vinod George or John Johnson.

Submitted by Vinod George, Finance Elder

Back to the Future

Stewardship Ministry 2023-24



Stewardship season 2023 has been a time of reflecting back about what has made Saint Mark the special place that it is, so we can rebuild our church (post Covid) to meet our future with the capable leadership of our Pastors, Jay Moses and Shelby Etheridge Harasty, the Session, and the Holy Spirit.

The mood was set with hula hoops, root beer floats, and the DeLorean car at our fifties-style kick-off celebration on October 8.

At worship the next week (October 15), we were visited by some characters from the past (the **back**) to help us reflect on what we love about Saint Mark.



The next week, (October 22) **Vinod George**, Elder for Finance, shared highlights of the current church budget, giving us a sense for our **present** reality, the good news, the challenges, and the “opportunity to soar”.

And the following week (October 29), our youth gave us a glimpse of what they hope our **future** may hold.



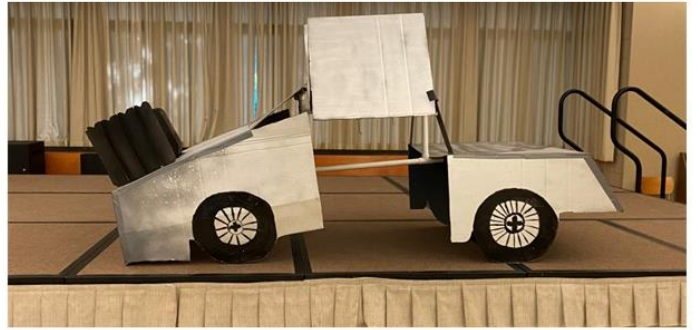
November 12 will be Consecration Sunday.

The day when our season of reflection turns to action. It is the day we will have the opportunity to pledge how we will support Saint Mark, as we plan and anticipate how Spirit and Service will come together in our future. Look for pledging information in your email (or postal mail if the church knows you do not use email or you use checks).

“If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.” 1 John 13:18-21

Submitted by the Stewardship Ministry Team

Enjoy some additional photos from the October 8th Stewardship Kickoff!



We had poodle skirts, hula hoops and a fancy car! Plus old time soda jerks serving root beer floats and Krispy Kreme doughnuts!



Fantastic Fellowship time and thoughtful submissions of what we loved from the past.



Cora and Clara Hooker brought us the Future from the Youth!

The Youth collaborated during their Sunday School class to write a “look into the future” letter in the mode of letters Paul wrote to the churches.



Good morning Saint Mark. We are here to speak on behalf of the youth of our church.

God’s grace be with you!

As many of you may know, Sunday School is back and running. It has given a new life back in Fellowship Hall. In a way, it has made going to church easier and more welcoming all the way from being babies until we graduate high school.

We came up with some advice and reminders for the church:

- First, be spirited in your praise of God; be passionate about what you believe in.
- Number two, in Thessalonians Chapter 1, Paul says “taking the trouble with the joy, and the joy with the trouble.” This means in times of darkness there is light.
- Lastly, as all of us have heard before – **love one another**.

In the future we hope to have more people in the congregation and more youth at Sunday School. We also hope to have ASP [Appalachia Service Project] and Montreat go on forever, since we have experienced going for a few years and have made some incredible memories on the way. We hope many more can have similar experiences. Finally, adding more activities that are appealing to all ages, which will create a stronger bond with everyone.

Thank you all for creating a great atmosphere for all of us to grow up in.



Thank you.

Recent Activities and Events

The Herding of the Cats! also known as The Saint Mark All Church Photo



A big **“Thank You!”** to Les and Carol Henig, who herded all us cats on October 1st to smile for the **“All Church”** photo to put on the Saint Mark website. We are sad that the photo is missing those of you who could not be there in person, but we were all thinking of you while we were smiling, so you were there in spirit!

Thank you Les for a wonderful photo!!

BEHOLD – THE 2023 SAINT MARK ALL CHURCH PHOTOGRAPH!





Blessing of the Animals (including the stuffed kind!) October 8th

Pastor Jay and Shelby had a blessing for each animal!

It looks like Ilo (Beth's dog) and Jay are really communicating while Shelby prepares Rosko for sanctification.



We were fortunate to greet an old friend and member

Nathalie Lowe and her two children, **Queenie** and **William**, were well loved members of Saint Mark who moved to Houston approximately ten years ago. She has kept in touch with many of us, and we were delighted on Sunday morning, October 8th to welcome her back when she visited with her (new) husband **Denis**. Not only did they visit, but a local ex-member, **Jean Bedenbaugh**, also visited so that she could be with Nathalie and Denis during this wonderful visit! Queenie and William were at college and not along for the visit.



And bid a fond farewell to someone who greeted us every Sunday.

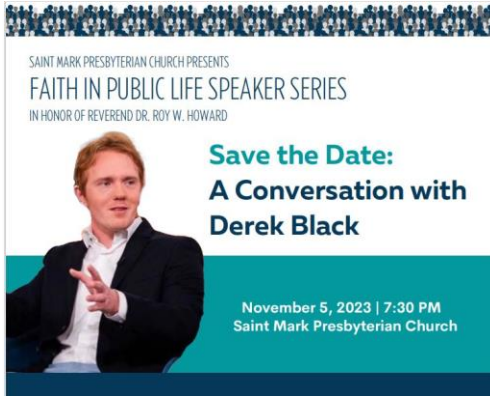
On that same day, we said farewell to **Betzabe Butron**, otherwise known as **Betzy**. Betzy had never joined the church, but she religiously came every Sunday to help usher and greet everyone coming into worship. She had recently retired and returned to her home in Lima, Peru. We will miss her warm welcome on Sunday mornings!



Upcoming Events

Adult Sunday School – Nov 5 @ 9:30

What does the life of a reformed white nationalist mean to us?



- When:** Sunday, November 5th at 9:30am
Who: Members of Book Lovers – and – YOU!
What: What does the life of Derek Black mean to us? Derek is our first “Faith in Public Life” speaker.
Why: To help us understand white nationalism and how we can respond to it.
Extra: Perhaps your questions will be ones he will discuss, and try to answer, later that night



Click on the image to the left to read an excellent overview of Derek’s early life in a 2016 Washington Post article.



Will Porter – working to be an Eagle Scout with YOUR help!

Dear Saint Mark:

I am a 9th grader working on my Eagle Scout project and wanted to see if you would like to help me with a towel donation drive. My Eagle project is supporting Second Chance Wildlife Center in Gaithersburg. Second Chance is a non-profit that gives care to injured and orphaned wildlife with the goal to release them back to their intended roles in nature. Each year they receive 3,000 wild animals to rehabilitate. I am organizing several different projects to support Second Chance, and one of them is a towel drive.



I'm asking if folks have any clean new or used beach or large towels (no holes or frayed edges; stains are OK) that they'd like to donate. The towels will get used when rehabilitating the injured or orphaned wildlife.

If you have any beach or large bath towels you would like to donate, please bring them to Saint Mark and put them in the plastic bins that have signs saying they are for collecting towels. I will collect towels at Saint Mark until Sunday, November 12. Thank you so much for your help.

Yours, Will Porter



Editor’s Note: Saint Mark rallied to support Will’s brother **Luke** to complete his Eagle Scout project earlier this spring by donating bicycles to be shipped to locations where they are needed.

Faith in Public Life Inaugural Talk!

Sunday, November 5 @ 7:30

Saint Mark will host our first speaker of the “Faith in Public Life Speaker Series” under the Rev. Dr. Roy W. Howard Scholars program. This program was dedicated in December 2021 after Pastor Roy’s retirement (12/2019), and it continues now with our first guest speaker, Derek Black, raised since childhood to be a leader in the white nationalism movement. After a long and often painful journey to discover his truth, Derek eventually found himself denouncing his former ways.



Click the graphic for more information and to join us on **Sunday, November 5th** to hear about his journey and to consider “How shall we respond?” **Tickets are FREE** and can be reserved in advance accessing <https://www.smpcfaithinpubliclife.com/>.

Walking Together – First Saturday

October walk was Rained Out! Trying again for November!

The October walk at Cabin John Regional Park was rained out. So, the group will try again in November at the same location.

When: Saturday, November 4 @ 8:30am
Where: Lakeside drive parking lot, Cabin John Regional Park
Questions?: Contact Rosemary Johnson



Women’s Retreat – February 23 - 25

Shelby has reserved the Hollywood Retreat Center for the weekend of February 23-25, 2024, for our Annual Women’s Retreat. Maybe it’ll be cold but at least we can have the fire going in their huge fireplace!

Registration and additional information will be coming closer to the date but **go ahead and save the date now**. We hope you can make it!

Mission Updates

Food First Sunday: We continue to collect packaged food for **Manna** and baby and new mother supplies for the **DC Diaper Bank** the first Sunday of each month. (Of course, you can always bring your donations at any time and leave them under the table near the Office door.) Thank you for continuing to support these important local non-profits!

Donations: The Mission Ministry recently approved unanimously the allocation of the following 2023 funds:

- \$ 2,000 Montgomery County Coalition for the Homeless
- \$ 2,000 Solutions for Hometown Connections
- \$ 1,500 Interfaith Works Food pantry
- \$ 1,500 Manna Food program and services





Advent 2023 Schedule

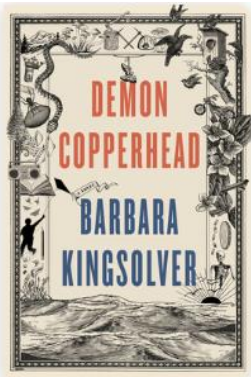
Hybrid Worship, Sundays @ 11:00 am
unless otherwise noted



Day	Date	Time	Activity
Wednesday	Nov 29	7:00 pm	Advent Bible Study (Zoom and In-Person)
Sunday	Dec 03	9:30 am	Advent Festival, Crafts, Potluck Breakfast *
Wednesday	Dec 06	7:00 pm	Advent Bible Study (Zoom and In-Person)
Sunday	Dec 10	9:30 am	Youth Group Cookie Sale Fundraiser
Wednesday	Dec 13	7:00 pm	Advent Bible Study (Zoom and In-Person)
Sunday	Dec 17	9:30 am	Practice for Pageant
Sunday	Dec 17	11:00 am	Christmas Pageant during Worship
Wednesday	Dec 20	7:00 pm	Longest Night Worship Service (in person only)
Sunday	Dec 24	11:00 am	Worship (Hybrid); NO 9:30 am activities
Sunday	Dec 24	5:00 pm	Christmas Eve Family Worship Service
Sunday	Dec 24	7:00 pm	Christmas Eve Worship Service with Communion

* Please contact Pastor Shelby if you can help with the Advent Festival. We need folks who can help with crafts, donate greens for Advent wreaths, contribute food for breakfast, and generally have fun celebrating the Advent Season!

Book Lovers - November Meeting Wednesday, 11/15/23 @ 7:00 pm on Zoom



Join us to discuss Pulitzer Prize winning **Demon Copperhead** by Barbara Kingsolver. Set in the mountains of southern Appalachia, this is the story of a boy born to a teenaged single mother in a single-wide trailer, with no assets beyond his dead father's good looks and copper-colored hair, a caustic wit, and a fierce talent for survival. In a plot that never pauses for a

breath, relayed in his own unsparing voice, he braves the modern perils of foster care, child labor, derelict schools, athletic success, addiction, disastrous loves, and crushing losses.

Note: This is a fairly long book, but also an “easy read”. Remember, you do not need to have read or finished the book to come to Book Lovers and enjoy the discussion. Contact Phyllis Norrie with questions.

Advent Bible Study

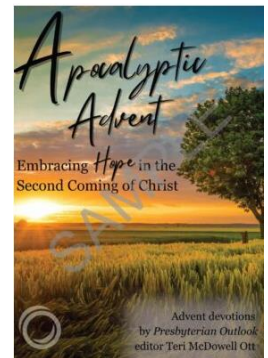
Three Wednesday nights
@ 7:00 pm
(in person and on Zoom)

11/29, 12/6, 12/13

For the Advent Bible Study we will be using the daily devotional, *Apocalyptic Advent: Embracing Hope in the Second Coming of Christ*.


Learn more about the devotional by clicking [here](#). The devotional will be available via print or digital copy beginning the Sunday before Advent. We will focus on three different Apocalyptic Advent passages during the Bible study.

Note: on the fourth Wednesday night (Dec 20) we will gather in person (only) for the Longest Night Worship Service instead of Bible Study.



November

2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4`
				E-News delivered		8:30 am – Walking Together (Cabin John Park) Remember to turn clocks back one hour
Daylight Savings Ends! 5	6	7	8	9	10	11
All Saints Day 9:30– SS & In-Person Worship 10:30 – Coffee Hour 11:00 – Worship (Hybrid) Food First Sunday 7:30 – Derek Black; Faith in Public Life talk				E-News delivered		
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Consecration Sunday 9:30 – SS & In-Person Worship 10:30 – Coffee Hour 11:00 – Worship (Hybrid) 1:30 – Mission Mtg on Zoom 5:00 – 7:30 – Youth Group		7:00 PM – Deacons Meet		E-News delivered		
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
9:30 – SS & In-Person Worship 10:30 – Coffee Hour 11:00 – Worship (Hybrid)		7:00 PM – Session Meets	E-News delivered	Thanksgiving Day!  Office is Closed	Office is Closed	
26	27	28	29	30	December 1	2
Christ the King Sunday 9:30 –In-Person Worship (NO Sunday School) 10:30 – Coffee Hour 11:00 – Worship (Hybrid)			7:00pm - Advent study Zoom and in person	E-News delivered		

December (continued)

NOTE: 9:30 Worship is replaced by special activities Dec 3-17

2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
<p>9:30–10:45 - Advent Festival, crafts (no worship) 9:30 - 10:45 - potluck breakfast 11:00 – Worship (Hybrid) 1:30 – Mission Mtg on Zoom Food First Sunday</p>			7:00pm - Advent study Zoom and in person	E-News delivered		
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
<p>9:30 – Youth Group Cookie Sale Fundraiser (no worship) 10:30 – Coffee Hour 11:00 – Worship (Hybrid)</p>		7:00 PM – Deacons Meet	7:00pm - Advent study Zoom and in person	E-News delivered		
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
<p>9:30 – Practice for Pageant (no worship) 10:30 – Coffee Hour 11:00 – Christmas Pageant</p>		7:00 PM – Session Meets	7:00pm – Longest Night Worship Service (in person only)	E-News delivered		
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
<p>9:30 – NO Worship or SS 11:00 – Worship (Hybrid) <u>Christmas Eve Services</u> 5:00 – Family Service 7:00 – Communion Service</p>	<p>Christmas Day!</p>  <p>Office is Closed</p>	Office is Closed		E-News delivered		
31	January 1	2	3	4	5	6
<p>9:30 – NO Worship or SS 11:00 – Worship (Hybrid)</p>  <p>Office is Closed</p>	<p>New Years Day!</p>					