The NEW

GOOD NEWS GAZETTE

Saint Mark Presbyterian Church ✠ June 2026

WELCOME!

Welcome to the "new" Good News gazette, our quarterly newsletter with photos and highlights of Saint Mark activities brought to you by the Library Ministry Team. We welcome your contributions of good news and photos; please send all items to Becky Johnson at rebecha1@verizon.net

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- Rebuilding Together
- Mother's Day Celebration
- Book Trivia Night
- Young Adult Outing
- New Officers & Graduates
- Father's Day Celebration
- Rhonda's Retirement
- Book Lovers Update

Perpetual Change

Pastor Jay

Lately I've been pondering a lot about the past; family I miss; friends who are far away; even places I have called home throughout my life. I would like to say those people and places aren't "gone", they live on in different ways in spirit and memory, but things have changed in the present for sure. Our Buddhist friends would say that this perpetual change is part of the dharma; the giveness of this life, therefore to hold onto anything too tightly in the end causes discomfort and challenge. Jesus speaks about this in a similar way when it comes to relationships. He speaks of presence through transition in what is called the "Farewell Discourse" in the Gospel of John, stating that when relationships change, God sends a "Comforter" for that particular time, and therefore the clear message "not to fear."

Saint Mark is in transition right now, and always will be :) We are in the process of both Rhonda Ricci and Briana Stewart moving forward into the next chapter of their lives. We have had the stability of the both of them for two years, and now we enter into a time of change. I encourage you all to give thanks to them as you read this in whatever way that is fitting for you; giving thanks or eucharist is something Jesus taught us to do, and then realize that God is sending new life, comfort and tools for new vistas and experiences for our journey.

LaTonia White is a wonderful gift given to us as our new Office Administrator; she is full of competence, care and spunk. Pastor Sam will lean closer to us as we move forward with all the vibrancy and welcome that she always is. And there will be more to come; it has been prepared for, yes because myself and the Personnel team has been hard at work, but more-so because the Spirit gives gifts for a journey that continues for all of us.

Life after all is full of perpetual change.

Stick around, I am excited for this new season!

Rebuilding Together on April 25

Nancy Shea

Teams of volunteers from Saint Mark, Holy Cross Catholic Church and Bethesda United Church of Christ met on April 25 to work on refurbishing a Housing Unlimited group home for men. Housing Unlimited provides independent housing for folks in mental health recovery.

The crew met at 8:30 am. One group started painting the first floor and two upstairs bedrooms, which was the big project for the day. Another group worked outside to clean up the front yard and back patio, trim bushes and add some new plantings. Everyone worked so efficiently that all the tasks were completed by lunchtime. After a delicious lunch provided by the ladies from Holy Cross, cleanup was done and the volunteers could see a big improvement before leaving for home. There is one more project to come. John Casper has arranged for a team from Home Depot to install new flooring throughout the first floor to complete the home improvements.

A big thank you to this year's volunteers from Saint Mark including House Captain John Casper, House Ambassador Estelle Casper, George Casper, John Johnson, Bill Merritt, Helen and Joe Piff, and Volunteer Coordinator Carl Shea.

THANK YOU TO OUR VOLUNTEERS!

Saint Mark Volunteers:

- John Casper, House Captain
- Estelle Casper, House Ambassador
- George Casper
- John Johnson
- Bill Merritt
- Helen Piff
- Joe Piff
- Carl Shea, Volunteer Coordinator

Many hands made light work and a big difference!

Volunteers from Saint Mark, Holy Cross Catholic Church and Bethesda UCC worked together on April 25 to refurbish a Housing Unlimited group home.

Painting brightens the first floor and upstairs bedrooms.

Lunch together after a morning of hard work!

Volunteers gathered at the home before the work began.

Mothers Day Celebration on May 10

Barbara Caskey

On Mother's Day, we enjoyed an amazing breakfast! The Connections Ministry cooked up waffles, French toast, bacon, sausage, and strawberries four ways; strawberries dipped in chocolate, strawberries and cream, strawberries in a sauce, and plain delicious strawberries.

There were over 40 Saint Markers who enjoyed the feast and fellowship. Many shared the advice from their mothers, here are a few:

Advice from Moms:

- If you can't say anything nice say nothing at all.
- My Mother said make sure your underwear is clean and no safety pins in case you have to go to the hospital.
- Wait till your father comes home.
- No Activities on Sunday unless you attend Sunday School and Church!"
- Don't expect other people to make you happy - make your own happiness.
- Beauty isn't everything.
- A smile makes the prettiest outfit.
- If you're bored I've got a job for you.

New Church Officers Installed

New church officers, Mariechen Bressler, Todd Kenreich, Pat Houser, Margaret Clark (on Zoom), Vicky Wood and Estelle Casper, were installed on June 14.

Celebrating Saint Mark's Graduates

On June 14 we also celebrated Saint Mark's graduates: Clara Hooker and Liam Salganik (pictured), also Brandt Kaufmann and Connor Moses.

Young Adult Group Outing at Pinstripes on June 10

A group of fifteen Saint Markers and friends had a "frolicking good" night of competitive bowling at Pinstripes with Pastor Jay and Pastor Sam. More fun events are being planned.

Dinner and Book Trivia on June 18

Barbara Caskey

Trivia Night was a big success and lots of fun! We began the evening with a delicious dinner of lasagna, salad, and a variety of cookies.

There were 10 teams and the competition was fierce with two teams tying for first place.

It was neck and neck when they went into overtime! And the Teachers team won over the Cat's Meow team! *(Moses vs Moses)*

The winning team—The Teachers!

The Book Lovers Have Been Busy Reading This Year

Sara Coe

The Book Lovers have been busy reading this year. We meet in June to select books to read over the next year. Then we meet monthly (on Zoom) to discuss books, rotating discussion leadership among the group.

This past year we read both fiction (mostly) and nonfiction. Among the books we read were *The Briar Club* by Kate Quinn, *By Any Other Name* by Jodi Picoult, *The Dictionary of Lost Words* by Pip Williams, and *The Lion Women of Tehran* by Marjan Jamali.

Books coming up for 2026/ 2027 will begin with *The Calamity Club* by Kathryn Stockett in September and include *The Correspondent* by Virginia Evans, and *The Carpool Detectives: A True Story of Four Moms, Two Bodies, and One Mysterious Cold Case* by Chuck Hogan.

All are invited to join our meetings—a Zoom link is posted in the Saint Mark E-News.

The Calamity Club by Kathryn Stockett (September 2026)

The Correspondent by Virginia Evans (October 2026)

The Carpool Detectives by Chuck Hogan (November 2026)

Father's Day Celebration on June 21

Barbara Caskey

Father's Day was celebrated with a bagel bar, scones, and lots of fruit. Brianna provided lovely gifts for the men and we remembered our fathers' words of wisdom, including:

Wise Words from Our Fathers

- Your arms and legs are not pasted on.
- The road to hell is paved with good intentions.
- The squeaky wheel gets the grease.
- You can fix almost anything with duct tape and zip ties.
- Always believe in yourself and know how blessed you are.
- Work hard and Dream.
- Use the right tool for the job.
- You catch more flies with honey.
- Socks first then shoes.
- I might need this.

We Love You Dad

Goodbye Rhonda, Hello LaTonia

Sara Coe

At the breakfast and service on June 21, we celebrated Rhonda Ricci's exceptional service as Saint Mark's office administrator and wished her a happy retirement. Rhonda stood out in her ability to immediately memorize every Saint Mark member, her outstanding administration of the office, and her constant good spirits.

Our new office administrator is LaTonia White. Rhonda will spend time with LaTonia to ease the transition. We welcome LaTonia to Saint Mark.