



**saintmark's**  
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January 2020

## Paula's Pondering

Happy New Year! As another year begins, the leadership we elected at our charge conference takes office. Their job is to govern the church in the performance of its mission to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world and our community. Their job is not to simply maintain the church, nor is it their job to do all the work or lead all the projects. The responsibility for the ministry of the church falls to those who attend the church. If you have ideas for ministry or suggestions for how we can better meet our mission, please bring them to the leadership council meeting, or, if your idea meets the ministry guiding principles (for a copy, contact the office). St. Mark's leadership meeting is held the 3rd Thursday of the month. Everyone is welcome to attend and give input.

The Leadership Council for 2020:

- Chuck Townsend (Council Chair & Treasurer)
- James Brison (Lay Leader & Vice Chair of the Council)
- Rosemary Garten (Lay Member to Annual Conference)
- Craig Bolen
- Keith Buhrlle
- Beckie Stark
- Mary Morris
- Rebecca Clark
- Larry Albertson
- Josh Brison
- Diana Bennett
- Shirley Weaver

The Nominations Committee:

- Rebecca Brison
- Gayle Elliott
- Joe Brison

I hope you will join with me in praying for the leadership of St. Mark's. And I hope you have a very happy and prosperous New Year. May the peace of Christ be with you and the immigrant and refugee children and families in our midst who are suffering in hope.

Blessings,

*Pastor Paula*

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## God Will Guide You

Are you feeling overwhelmed by the task of taking back your life? Have you been faced with a situation that just doesn't seem to be solvable? You sit and ponder, and it all seems dark to you.

It's time to turn to the Lord for help. Actually, it's past time to do that.

So often we turn to God as a last resort when he has been waiting to help us all along. He longs for us to lean on him daily, to develop a habit of turning to him in even the most minor situations, and to allow him to be a part of our healing process. When we do that, we'll also be in a better position to face crisis situations. Even in our times of overwhelming darkness, we'll be able to see his light.

### Ask Yourself

When you are faced with an overwhelming task, how does God fit in to your efforts to tackle the job? What can you do differently the next time you are in an overwhelming situation?

What are some strategies for developing new habits of turning to God for help and guidance on a daily basis?

### Ask God

O Lord, how I need you in the process of taking back my life. Yet I get so involved in my own efforts that I even forget to ask for your help. Help me develop new habit patterns that allow you to be my light in the darkness.

## Upcoming Events

- 1/1 .....New Year's Day
- 1/5 .....Communion

## Sunday Sermons

- 1/3 ..... The Journey: Do You See What I See ..... Luke 2:22-38
- 1/10.... The Journey: Born to Give Us 2<sup>nd</sup> Birth ..... Matt. 2:1-12
- 1/17.... The End of Time: What Happens After I Die?..... 1 Thes. 4:13-18
- 1/24.... TBD
- 1/31 .... The End of Time: When Will Christ Come Back? .... Matt. 24:36-44

## Birthdays

### January

- 1/2 Christian Holmes
- 1/5 Paul Sorensen
- 1/12 Diane Bennett
- 1/15 Grayson Hough
- 1/17 Gayle Elliott
- 1/21 Raymond Whitaker
- 1/22 Phyllis Peters
- 1/23 Linda Calvert
- 1/29 A.J. Rainwater

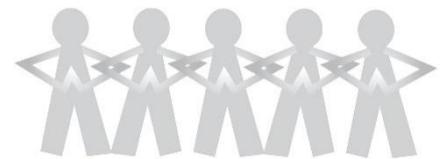
## Phone Prayer Chain

If you know of a member going to the hospital, have a need, a concern, or a joy, please call someone on the following list, starting at the top, if possible. Call any time, day or night. If the person you call is not at home, leave a message or call the next person on the list.

- Pat Townsend .....373-3915 or 225-9459
- Rosemary Garten .....427-5725 or 519-8500
- Carol Marcks .....427-5725 or 560-5627
- Marilyn Berry ..... 796-5789
- Lucille Bolen ..... 560-5131
- Mary Branstad .....796-9659 or 868-3752
- Ann Fiene ..... 257-5214
- Jackie Leffingwell..... 257-1123
- Linda Roberts .....650-5131 or 853-3398

- Carol Buhrlé ..... 796-3630 or 225-8174
- Shirley Weaver..... 461-9224 or 716-1184
- Chris Pauley ..... 571-3922
- Gayle Elliott..... 257-9655
- Arletta Cahill ..... 600-9203
- Flora Costanza ..... 914-8034
- Sandy Bower..... 373-5603
- Anna Inman ..... (660) 232-1221
- Jackie McMenemy..... 461-7577

## Prayer Chain



## St. Mark's Leadership Word Search

Q G H B R I S O N T D W  
 T T O I L L E Y H L Y E  
 F K R A T S J C W U A A  
 B S T A R K T A L C K V  
 E B I C R M I U G A T E  
 N N O S T R E B L A R R  
 N E G A R T E N G Q H K  
 E J F L F D X N E L O B  
 T Q A B U H R L E V R O  
 T D N E S N W O T H W P  
 T S I R R O M H T I M S  
 E T E C I R U A M F W J

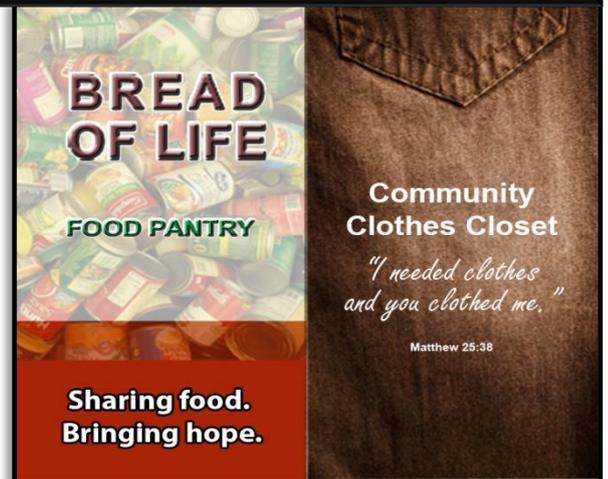
- Albertson
- Bennett
- Bolen
- Brisson
- Buhrlé
- Clark
- Elliott
- Garten
- Maurice
- Morris
- Smith
- Stark
- Stark
- Townsend
- Weaver

*I think I made too many New Year's resolutions this year. It took me almost a full day to break them all.*



## Community Outreach

FOOD PANTRY				
2019	FAMILIES	PEOPLE	ITEMS OUT	ITEMS IN
NOV	39	117	966	1393



New operating hours:

Monday .....9—NOON  
 Wednesday .....3—5:00pm

Website: <http://stmumc.net/outreach-ministries/>



[St. Mark's UMC Food Pantry](#)  
[St. Mark's UMC Clothes Closet](#)

## UMM Minutes

Eleven (11) in attendance for **December 14** meeting at Denny's on 291 Highway. November meeting minutes were approved. Treasury balance is \$4,452.72. Treasury report was approved.

**Old Business:** New Ceiling Tile has been ordered for kitchen to meet city health standards. Salvation Army Bell Ringing was at J.C. Pennys on December 7, 2019. To date, the amount received, has not been given to us.

**New Business:** Joshua Brison voted in to replace Joseph Brison as new vice president.

Next meeting is January 11, 2020. Meeting was adjourned at 8:20am.

## Prayer Makes a Difference

1 Timothy 2:1-8

When we observe the godless condition of our nation, we readily recognize the need for change. But the biblical solution for our predicament is surprising. In his first letter to Timothy, Paul instructed his protégé to establish some priorities in the church, including prayer “for kings and all who are in authority” (1 Timothy 2:2). Our petitions help us live tranquil and godly lives and thereby provide opportunities to tell others about the Savior (1 Timothy 2:2-4).

Paul would never have given this command to Timothy if he didn't believe that the church's prayers made a difference in achieving God's purposes for their nation. Our problem is not with the Lord's promise or power, but with our doubt. By focusing on the enormity of the problems or the power of those in office, we lose sight of our sovereign God, who listens for our pleas that He intervene.

Political policies and legislation are not ultimately determined in conference rooms and governmental chambers, but in prayer closets. The voices that shape the direction of a nation are not necessarily those that loudly ring out in legislative halls, but those that approach the throne room of the heavenly Father with bold faith (Heb. 4:16). As the church believes and prays, the Lord will respond.

Knowing that God can change a country, you may be wondering why He has waited so long. But He is likely already working in ways we don't recognize or understand. Every authority on earth can be touched by the power of prayer if we are willing to ask and believe God.



## 10 Ways to Pray Bigger Prayers in the New Year

### 1. Pray the Word of God

There is power in the name of Jesus, and John 1:1 reminds, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” (NIV) Praying the Word of God, and speaking Jesus’ name brings the power of God’s presence into our everyday lives. Our purposeful God chooses to communicate to us through His the Truth in His Word.

Scripture is layered in God’s love for us, and through the power of the Holy Spirit, we are able to connect it to our everyday lives. Spend time in God’s Word daily, and pray the Scriptures He highlights. The Bible promises, when we seek Him, we will find Him. In our everyday lives, we can meet with Him, praying for the perspective to see the way He is weaving it into our daily situations.

### 2. Pray Big Things

God is not unable to fulfill big requests in our lives, so long as they align with His will. Discerning which dreams are futile and worldly, and which are God-planted, can be hard to discern at times. Lift up every beautiful dream to God, because He is the God of all ...including our dreams! He already knows our hearts better than we do. Our faithful Father matures us in Jesus’ with every faithful step we take towards Him. Important, though, after we share our dreams with God, is to pray His will above all else. If our dreams do not align with God’s will and purpose for our lives, we don’t want them to come true! Always pray for God’s perspective and overarching will in life over any dreams we have and plans we make.

### 3. Pray for the People God Has Placed in Your Proximity

God places us purposefully in this life, and surrounds us with people to encourage ...and others to encourage us. It’s good to honor those people in our prayers, and express our gratitude for family, friends, and community. Before we walk out into our day, it’s important to think of the people our lives border, and to lift them up to God in prayer. He hears us! It matters when we pray for our neighbors, and those who we know are hurting, sick, or lost. Pray even bigger, including those who we don’t know yet, but will cross our paths today or in the near future. Pray for eyes to see those around us as He does, and to be an extension of His love to them.

### 4. Pray for Purpose

Humanity, created in God’s very image, is purposed to honor and glorify Him. Each in our own unique way, knit together with different personality combinations and talents, we have the opportunity to participate in the furthering of God’s Kingdom. Jesus told His followers in the Sermon on the Mount to “Go!” and tell the good news they had heard. It’s a command still ringing true today, our lives the very feet carrying the Gospel to the far corners of the globe. Our jobs, careers, educations, service, and statures in life are all meant for one purpose ...that every ear will have the opportunity to hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ and His gift of salvation. We are living life to the full, as Jesus died for us to do, when we are operating within the will of God for our lives.

### 5. Pray for Perspective

Perspective can be easily skewed by social media, marketing, and calendars full of business. Quiet the noise for a portion of each day to adopt God’s perspective. Pray for the ability to see people through His eyes. When we fail to slow enough to really see each other, we miss the chance to fill our hearts by the opportunity to serve others. A friendly conversation at the checkout line, instead of rushing through our mind’s agenda, can bless a soul that desperately wants to be noticed. Our smile is valuable. Our friendly “Hello” life-giving, especially when we attach a name we’ve remembered to it. God’s work is in the big things, yes, but the big things we do for God are anchored in the small specs of love we spread as we walk through our lives.

### 6. Pray for Enemies

Ugh. It’s easier to pray for the demise of our enemies than it is to remember they, too, are fearfully and wonderfully made by OUR Creator, Provider, Sustainer, and Good ...Good Father. Praying for our enemies in light of who God made

and purposed them to be goes beyond asking Him to help us forgive them. When we pray the best for people who have wronged us, God blesses us. Big faith is mature and wise beyond what we understand ...and WANT to do. When we pray big things, for our enemies, we experience the peace of God that surpasses all understanding. As all His commands are, praying for our enemies is for the good of our own hearts.

### 7. Pray Prayers of Praise for Who God Is

Big prayers start with big praise for our unsurpassable God. Start by naming the characteristics of God. He is all-knowing, everywhere, completely fair, always good, the very definition of love and compassion, forgiving, understanding, caring, and relational. Recall and include the big things God has done: miraculous healing, peace, purpose, provision, and the beautiful ways He's chosen to decorate the scene in nature that surrounds us.

Play or sing a favorite worship song as the beginning of prayer. God gave us music to express what we cannot simply say ...and our Great God can be hard to capture in words ...or even a song! Recognizing who He always is and will be sets the stage for big prayers that move mountains.

### 8. Pray Prayers of Gratitude for What God Has Done

Gratitude is clinically proven to improve our psyche. God knows it's good for us to recall our blessings, especially in times of trial. Some of the biggest prayers are the ones muttered through a soggy and crumpled up state, but capped with "I love You, I thank You, I trust You, You are good, God." Big faith has the courage to remain grateful despite pain, injustice, loss, and sadness. Our joy isn't fleeting like happiness, but a sustaining hope. When we intentionally set aside time and make the effort to recall the ways God has moved in our lives, we will find a rich treasure full of godly gratitude.

### 9. Pray for Increased Trust in God

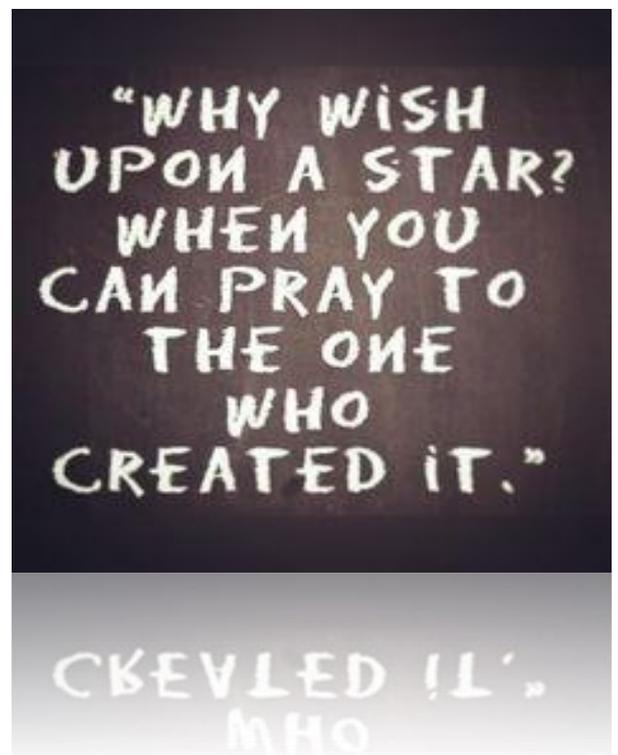
Praying big means trusting God's plan for our lives, not asking Him to trust us with ours. If we're not careful, we'll pray for Him to put a stamp of approval and blessing on the big dreams we've mapped out! Big prayers not only trust God with the big picture of life, but the mundane details vying for our attention throughout the day. Scripture tells us to "pray continually," which allows us to consider what God is prompting us to do as we walk through our days. Do we accept those little whisperings to text that friend or call that sibling to check in on them? Are we available to listen when He intends to comp coffee for the car behind us or pop in to visit someone who is alone? When we pray for God to use us in big ways ...He will! But sometimes, it's the smallest acts of obedience that make the largest eternal difference. It's a matter of the heart.

### 10. Pray for Provision and Prosperity

God knows the number our days here on earth, and when they are finished, we cannot take anything we've accumulated in this life with us onto heaven. A big prayer life keeps that perspective priority. Our good Father blesses us more than we can ask for or imagine in this life. Sometimes, it's monetary and material things for us to enjoy, but we are never to cling to them.

In our prayer lives, we can diligently ask God to be the God of our finances and material possessions. Acknowledging all we have is His, and from Him, guards our hearts against pride and idols. Colossians 3:23 admonishes us to work hard in everything our hands find to do. God is the reason we are, have, and do anything.

Prayer is the most powerful weapon we have on this earth. God hears us, loves us, defends us, and provides for us. His compassion for us is inexplicable. As we pray big things, let us discover more and more about our amazing God.



Do not be misled:  
Bad company  
**CORRUPTS**  
good character.  
1 Corinthians 15:33

## Choose Your Friends Wisely

Community — a body of individuals who unite together in fellowship, sharing attitudes, interests, and goals.

Glance to your left, then to your right. Who's standing beside you? Would you consider them friends? Is the time that you spend together making all of you better people? Or do things you do together sometimes lead you to regret?

Anyone who walks with wise people grows wise. But a companion of foolish people suffers harm. PROVERBS 13:20

Relationships are like nutrition for your soul. Do the people closest to you make you healthier? Or do you binge on junk food together? You are directly influenced by the people you spend the most time with. Even if you feel like you're different from them right now, in five years... you won't be.

...that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together. Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. 1 CORINTHIANS 12:25-27

God made us to need each other. We all have different gifts and strengths, different failings and weaknesses. When we join together, we can look out for one another, help each other, encourage one another, and even challenge each other to grow.

**Here are 3 simple things you can do to start building your community:**

### Cross the Street

Do you know your neighbors? If you live on the same street, or even in the same building, you already have something in common. Don't overthink this. Jesus loves your neighbor. Maybe you will too... and you just don't know it yet.

Challenge: Start a conversation with a handshake and, "I'm sorry, we haven't met before. My name is . What's yours?" Even if you're shy, you only have to be brave for 30 seconds.

### Share an Experience

We all have things we need to talk about, challenges that would be helpful to process in conversation. And we all have something to offer, even if it's just a sympathetic ear.

Challenge: Invite a friend to do something together: share a meal, tackle a backyard project, or just take a walk. Talk about whatever. Just be honest, and get real.

### Invite Deeper Friendships

The Bible reminds us again and again that we need relationships with people we can trust: Close friends who will encourage you, inspire you, challenge you, love you, and pray for you. And they need you to do the same for them.

So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith. GALATIANS 6:10