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**February 2020**

## Paula's Pondering

As 2019 closed, the Leadership Council received some disturbing news. St. Mark's United Methodist Church spent more money than it took in. Quite a bit more. Indeed, we spent more than \$22,000 more than we brought in. (I hope you were sitting down when you read that!)

There are several reasons why this happened. First, we hired an associate pastor and paid her salary and expenses for that year. We also didn't hold our largest general fund fundraiser, the Chuckwagon Cookie sales, due to illness and lack of participation. And, finally, we had to cancel worship services twice last year due to weather. Since the lion's share of our income comes from the offering plate, and since most congregants don't give when they're not at church, those closings hurt us financially.

Now, don't panic! We had money in reserve for just such instances. All the church's financial obligations were met, including paying our apportionments in full. But clearly we cannot continue to spend money like that and hope to exist for long. So the Leadership Council took a hard look at what we're spending our money on and where we can cut back.

By far, our biggest expense is in salaries; and the largest expense is the pastor's salary package. I have been at the conference's minimum salary since I came in 2013. For the first 3 years, St. Mark's only paid a portion of my salary and St. Matthew's made up the rest of it. But when we merged in 2016, St. Mark's had to pick up the whole salary package. We also received money from the conference (equitable compensation) to help pay my salary for the first 5 years. But for the last 2 years, the burden of paying for my entire salary package has fallen completely on the church.

The sad truth is, it takes an average attendance of around 120-150 to support a full-time pastor in the United Methodist Church in America. Our average attendance in 2019 was 69, and that includes people who watched on-line, but did not contribute to the offering. Our average attendance of people in the pews

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is probably closer to 55. Regardless, it's not enough to support a full-time pastor.

Taking all this into account, the council decided to ask the conference for a part-time pastor to replace me when I retire in June. In addition to lowering the amount we will pay the pastor in salary, this would also mean the church doesn't have to pay \$8900 annually for the pastor's health insurance.

Our second largest expense is utilities, and everyone can help with that. Please be sure to turn off lights when you are the last person out of a room. Please turn the thermostats back to 68 during the heating season and 78 during the cooling season when leaving a room. Please check to make sure the gas is fully turned off on the stoves, and the lights are turned off in the rest rooms before leaving the building, if you are the last one in the building. If you hear a toilet running needlessly or notice the water is turned on unnecessarily, please turn it off or, if you can't, let someone in leadership know of the problem.

Finally, please remember that, even if you are not present at church due to illness, vacation, weather, or whatever reason, our expenses still continue. Please support the church financially as you are able in your absences as well as when you are present.

Blessings,  
*Pastor Paula*

## Upcoming Events

- 2/2 ..... Communion
- 2/2 ..... Souper Bowl
- 2/29 ..... Sweetheart Dinner

## Sunday Sermons

- 2/2 ..... Clear Vision ..... Mark 3:22-25
- 2/9 ..... A Light in the Darkness ..... Psalm 46:1-2; 10-11
- 2/16 ... Down from the Mountaintop ..... Matthew 17:1-9
- 2/23 ... TBD
- 2/26 ... Ash Wednesday: We Don't Have to Stay the Way We Are ..... Joel 2:11-14a



**\$5**

Please bring a food item for the Food Pantry.

Takeout available.

## Birthdays

### February

- 2/9 Darlene Clark
- 2/19 Bill Yaegar
- 2/20 Tammy Costanza
- 2/25 Sherri Bradshaw



## 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

## Prayer Chain



- Carol Buhle ..... 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

## Community Outreach

FOOD PANTRY				
2019	FAMILIES	PEOPLE	ITEMS OUT	ITEMS IN
DEC	37	129	946	1132

We are in desperate need the following staple foods: pancake mix / syrup, canned meat (tuna, chicken etc), canned meals (chili, raviolis etc), soups, spaghetti sauce, canned beans, rice, canned tomatoes, canned fruit, canned vegetables, pasta, hot/cold cereal, peanut butter, crackers , boxed meals, side dishes (rice a roni, instant potatoes, etc.), bath tissue



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



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

## Leadership Meeting

Fifteen (15) were in attendance for the **January 16** meeting. It was opened up in prayer by James Brison @ 7pm.

Reviewed last month's minutes. No changes.

**Old Business:** The women's group donated \$1,000 to Heifer International for a milk menagerie.

**New Business:** We will no longer discuss group issues at the Leadership Council.

Debra asked that the men's women's groups, and Leadership Council notes be sent to her ASAP each month.

The new book for discussion in 2020 is "Get Up" by Karen Katon.

New goals for 2020:

- To do more outreach events to invite the community to our church, e.g., Easter Egg Hunt
- Keep our goals to reach out to the community
- For the church to be more financially stable

Rebecca Clark asked for prayers on how to sustain the Food Pantry.

Not meaning to, a discussion was had and there was no resolution.

Rosemary Garten lead the closing prayer.

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## UMM Minutes

Twelve (12) in attendance for **January 25** meeting. Minutes for 12/14/19 were presented. Bob Buhrle gave Treasurer's Report with an ending balance of \$3,939.81.

**Old Business:** No report yet on Salvation Army Christmas Bell ring amount.

**New Business:** Sweetheart Dinner is planned for 2/22/20 at 5pm. Admission will be \$5 and food item. Profit to go to the Food Pantry.

UMM October meeting will be planning for 2021.

Next meeting is February 8, 2020. Brisons and Bolens will be making egg pie. Joshua Brison will give the devotional. Lisa Elliott will give testimony for Clothes Closet.

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## UMW Minutes

Nine (9) in attendance for **January 8** meeting. Carol Marcks gave a devotional and read a poem. December minutes approved. After \$1,500 was given to Apportionments, the ending balance is \$2,749.09.

**Old Business:** There was discussion whether Heifer Project donation should come from the church or from the UMW. Leadership Council voted that Christmas Eve offering of \$489 will go to Heifer International, bringing total balance to \$859.96. UMW recommended to the Council that they donate (\$140.04) from UMW treasury to bring total to \$1,000 to purchase a Milk Menagerie.

It was suggested that UMW provide a new toilet in the nursery, but UMM is currently working on that project.

There was discussion of strangers entering the church. Some petty vandalism has occurred. No solution was reached.

Shirley Weaver closed in prayer. Next meeting is March 4, 2020.

## Getting It All Together

The United Methodist Women of St. Mark's created this beautiful masterpiece many, many years' ago.

- Hair, Beard, Facial Features: Island of Caribbean
- Chain: Slavery, Criminal Justice System, Sin
- Gear: Modern Technology, Contemporary Concerns
- People: Supportive Community, Brotherhood
- Ballot: Voicing Christian Concerns at the Poll
- Triangular Piece with Medical Sign: Healing
- Window: Local Church Need to "See Through" or "See Beyond" the Stained Glass
- Hand: Outstretched in Love to All, Prayer
- Stone Tablets: The Law, Justice, Ancient Heritage
- Women's' Sign: Changing Role of Women
- Dollar Sign: Material Resources, Economic Policy
- Palm Tree: Caribbean Crescent, Ecological Concerns
- Bahamas: Caribbean Crescent, Trade, Economic Policy
- Fish: Early Christian Symbol, Ecology, Law of Sea
- Tennis Player: Our Recreational Life
- United Methodist Symbol: U.M. Church's Part in Total Picture
- Heart: Love



- Bread: World Hunger, Bread of Life
- Jug: As "Wine" in "Bread and Wine" or Utensil in Bible Days
- Wrench, Saw: Our Work, Occupations
- Ship: The "Church" or Law of Sea
- Bible: The "Word", Basic for All Study, Living
- Mother & Child: Women of Bible, Role of Women
- Tent: Our Recreational Life, or Biblical Home
- Church: Local Church Today, Open Door
- Books: Need to be Informed
- Woman with Raised Arms: The Importance of the Individual Woman's Part in "Getting It All Together"

