

St. Mark's UMC what a wonderful response to the Blood Drive on **St. Mark's UMC Missions Fair** Sunday! We had first time donators and those who donate regularly! 30 units were collected! Thank you to everyone who came to the coach! If you missed it, please stop by the MS Blood Services location on Lakeland Drive and mention St. Mark's and they will continue to give us credit!

Pictures from the recent Mission Fair/Blood Drive



Jo Hebert

An Encouraging Word From Jo Hebert

When this Beacon is delivered, spring will most likely be in full bloom, but as I write this, temperatures are expected to drop all day to a low of 30 (and it was in the 70s yesterday!). Even though these fluctuations are not surprising this time of year, no one likes them...we are eager for warmer temperatures, flip-flops, and baseball. The daffodils, Bradford pears, (and yes, the weeds) are ahead of the game, while the red maple in my back yard barely shows a hint of buds appearing. Other trees show no signs at all that they will give life again...but they will.

All of creation tells us the story of death and resurrection, and the hope of the gospel. The bleakness of winter causes us to long for spring. Since we have grown accustomed to the changes of the seasons, we always know that, even on the most bitterly cold days, it will get warm again. We just have to wait for it.

This demonstration of death and resurrection can be seen in all facets of life: an injury slowly healing, a filthy person becoming clean again, getting to the end of yourself and then finding a renewed strength, cutting words followed by "I'm sorry." And, I believe one very powerful place the gospel is displayed is in the marriage relationship.

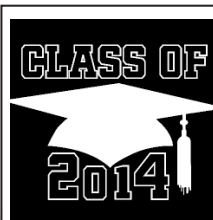
A deeply fulfilling marriage is nourished and enriched by periods of change and challenge. Sadly, not every marriage survives, but couples who hold on through the winters, looking to the Lord for endurance and guidance, will see their marriages bring forth some breath-taking blooms when spring comes. Unlike the earth's seasons, the seasons of marriage are not predictable...we don't know for sure how long the winter will last or even if our spouse will produce the fruit we are desperately hoping for. That's why we have to go to Jesus.

In *The Meaning of Marriage*, Timothy Keller speaks of the power of the gospel in marriage: *"The gospel can fill our hearts with God's love so that you can handle it when your spouse fails to love you as he or she should. That frees us to see our spouse's sins and flaws to the bottom—and speak of them—and yet still love and accept our spouse fully."* He isn't talking about over-looking sin, but depending on the love of God to enable us to love when we don't feel loved. Keller also says, *"The reason that marriage is so painful and yet wonderful is because it is a reflection of the gospel, which is painful and wonderful at once. The gospel is this: we are more sinful and flawed in ourselves than we ever dared believe, yet at the very same time we are more loved and accepted in Jesus Christ than we ever dared hope."*

If you are married, I encourage you to look really closely for the buds on the branches. Nurture them through kind words, apologies, and forgiveness. Water the flowers and not the weeds. Spring is coming. If you're not married, you still get to experience new life in Christ through all the seasons of your life, as you fall and get back up, become empty and full again.

Our Savior died and rose again to give us new life in Him. The whole earth tells His story. Happy Easter!!

My office is just off the robe room in the main church building. I am available Mon., Wed., and Fri. mornings and some evening hours. You can reach me by phone (601-259-1749) or email (jhebertlpc@comcast.net).



We want to celebrate and recognize all of 2014 graduates. If you are graduating from high school, college or graduate school, please submit your name and address to the office or to Jeanne Chapman no later than April 30. Thank you!



Saint Mark's United Methodist Church
 400 Grant's Ferry Road
 Brandon, MS 39047

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 ORGANIZATION
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DATED MATERIAL APRIL 6, 2014

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Saint Mark's United Methodist Church

Phone: 601-992-2131

Church Staff:

- Rob Gill, Senior Pastorx103
- Jeff Nesbit, Teaching Pastorx105
- Sandra Thomas, Minister of Worship & Musicx104
- Martha Hand, Director of Nurture/Outreachx102
- Karie Sue McCaleb, Pastor to Children & Familiesx109
- Jeanne Chapman, Youth Directorx113
- Jim Readell, Church Facilities Manager.....x112
- Delores Seward, Administrative Assistantx101
- Martha Toombs, Business Office.....x106
- Corrine Carpenter, Preschool Officex110
- Darlene BakerMusic assistant/pianist
- Jason BoydMusic assistant/organist
- Robert GhostonCustodian
- Dennis O'NealMedia Director
- Ed Chapman.....Media Assistant

Check the church website or Sunday bulletin for times of events and further information. See the bulletin for all on the caring list.

Worship is each Sunday at 8:20, 10:45 and 11:00 a.m.; Sunday School is at 9:30 a.m.

www.saintmarksum.org

Annual Garage Sale/Auction

Friday, April 4 ~ 6:00 - 9:00 PM (Cost: \$5)

with Live Auction @ 7 PM

Saturday, April 5 ~ 7 am - Noon

St. Mark's CLC & Youth Building



We need your donations!

This is a great opportunity to clean out closets, garages and attics! Please share your consignment quality "treasures" with others! We will accept donations through Wed., April 2. The PODS are open Sundays and Wednesdays and by appointment. Need help with a pick up? We can help. Last day for pick ups is Sun., March 30. Please contact Jeanne for more information. All donations are tax-deductible.



the BEACON

Shining Christ's light into the community



April 2014 • Number 91

From Palm Sunday to Resurrection in Worship and Song

Be sure to put these dates on your calendar and join St. Mark's in Holy Week services and activities.

■ PALM/PASSION SUNDAY

April 13 - 8:20 am/10:45 am/11th Hour

All children are invited to lead us into worship with the processional of palm branches. Our musicians will offer music of celebration and passion as we begin Holy Week and the events leading to the Crucifixion and Resurrection of Christ.

■ MAUNDY THURSDAY

April 17 - 6:30 pm

The Sanctuary Choir presents "Acts of Kindness" - A contemplative worship experience of music, reader's theatre, Holy Communion and prayer. (Dinner will be served at 5pm - NO ACTIVITIES ON WEDNESDAY NIGHT)

■ GOOD FRIDAY

April 18 - 6:30 pm

A Tenebrae Service - The crucifixion of Jesus Christ is expressed in this service through hymns, scripture and special music. Candles will be extinguished as today is the darkest day in Christianity.

■ HOLY SATURDAY

April 19 - 6:30 pm

Flowering of the Cross - In preparation for Easter Sunday, everyone is invited to bring fresh flowers to decorate the cross at the front of the campus. This is a wonderful event for all ages.

■ EASTER SUNDAY

April 20 - 8:20 am/10:45 am/11th Hour

The Resurrection of our Savior!!!

Rob's Remarks



As a member of the Centenary College, I spent four Easter Sunday mornings in a row at Hodges Gardens which is akin to Bellingrath Gardens near Mobile. Hodges Gardens was the sight of the community Easter Sunrise service held for the churches and communities near Hodges Gardens in west central Louisiana.

The choir would ride down on Saturday evening and spend the night though we were awakened at 4:00 AM sharp. I am not a morning person so it took several cups of coffee for me to even think about singing. However, we gathered in the lakeside pavilion with six or seven church choirs. The cantata began in darkness. There were some dimly lit florescent lights that offered some assistance.

The music told the story of the entry into Jerusalem and then the Passion (trial and crucifixion). The climax of the worship was two pieces from Handel's Messiah, the "Hallelujah Chorus" and "Worthy is the Lamb." I will never forget one year as we were singing the closing, the sun rose with such a miraculous light that it split the horizon. It might have been my imagination most likely, but I saw the glory of the Lord. It was one of the most amazing experiences of my spiritual life. I would only weep as I tried to sing from the bottom of my heart, "And He shall reign forever and ever, Hallelujah!"

That is my wish for you this Easter. I wish for you to see the glory of the Lord and know that he reigns in your life forever!

Rob



Jeff Nesbit

"Where are you going?" -Zechariah 2:2

The prophet Zechariah asked the above question to a young man who was on his way to measure the city of Jerusalem. The man wanted to get the measurements down in order to build walls around the city that he loved. The Lord told him to put down the measuring tape. What God had in mind for the city would be beyond measure and could not be contained by walls.

I wonder if what the Lord has in mind for your life and our faith family at Saint Mark's is beyond what we can measure? I wonder if our prayers, hopes, and dreams are too small. I wonder if our reach is too short? This is a question that I am asking during Lent season as we approach the Cross and the empty tomb. Why? Because what Jesus did on Good Friday and Resurrection Sunday was way beyond what we could have ever imagine.

Where was Jesus going? Our Savior left the throne room of Heaven for the Cross of Calvary. When Jesus died, He opened up Heaven for us. The walls that kept you and me from approaching the Father came tumbling down. We can now go as far as Jesus and His Holy Spirit will take us.

Prayer: *Jesus, where do you want to take me? Where do you want to take our faith family? We lay down our measuring tapes. Set the lines. Do more than we can ask or imagine. In Your glorious Name, Amen.*

Children's Corner



Karie Sue McCaleb

Spring is finally here and St. Mark's kids have several fun things "in bloom!" Last month we began a Lenten project for our Wednesday night students as we talk about many stories of Jesus' life and ministry. In this project our children are creating live Easter gardens as they reflect on new life in Christ. Our Easter Egg Hunt will be in the CLC on Saturday, April 19th from 10am-12pm. We hope your family joins us for some hunting fun, snacks, and games! *Plastic egg and wrapped candy donations are appreciated!

Also this month, a few of our St. Mark's crew will head to Atlanta, Georgia for the Orange Conference to

build community and learn more about this method of ministry for children, youth, and families. The "Orange" method takes yellow, which represents the church and the light of Christ, with red, which represents the warmth of home & families, and puts them together to make orange. This comes from the book by Reggie Joiner, *Think Orange*. We hope to return with new experiences and fresh ways to teach, lead, and minister as a whole community to our families at St. Mark's. Please be in prayer for our travelers and our time of learning and fellowship!

We are so very proud of our Cherub Choir as they performed March 16th.



Our leaders Cat Foster, Ashley May, and Keri Richardson are so wonderful to spend time teaching and playing with our Cherubs and we are thankful! (insert picture here)

As Easter approaches, keep in mind these activities for our children and families.

GOT SUMMER FEVER?
WE DO!
 SIGN UP FOR SUMMER CAMPS
 AT WESLEY PINES!
 FAMILY CAMPS
 & OVER NIGHTS FOR ELEMENTARY
AND UP.
 VISIT
 OUR WEBSITE FOR MORE INFO
 & REGISTRATION

Children's
 Choir
**Easter
 Musical**
 May 11th



**Wilderness
 ESCAPE**
 WHERE GOD GUIDES & PROVIDES

VBS 2014: June 15th ~ 19th
Registration is OPEN NOW
 Register your child & volunteer at
groupvbspro.com/vbs/hl/stmarks

MAUNDY THURSDAY
 SERVICE
APRIL 17TH

ST. MARK'S
KIDS
 EASTER EGG
 HUNT SAT.
 APRIL 19TH
 10-12 IN CLC
***EGG
 & CANDY
 DONATIONS
 NEEDED**

familyFUNnight

Mark your calendars!
Everyone is invited
Wednesday, May 14th
 For our LAST Wednesday night
 celebration of the season.

YOUTH News

merge

bringing students and god together



Dinner ~ Worship ~ Life Groups ~ Hang Time
SUNDAYS ~ 5:00 - 7:30 pm (programming ends @ 7)
For students in grades 6 - 12

APRIL Schedule

- 6 - Food Scavenger Hunt!
- 13 - Game Night: "Hang Man"
- 20 - Easter - NO Merge
- 27 - District Youth Rally in Clinton



Sun., April 17 ~ 5 pm
@ First UMC Clinton
Free!

Join us as we gather with youth from churches all over the East/West Jackson District for an evening of games, food & worship!
Watch for more information! Sign up required!
Drop off and pick up is at St. Mark's!

Confirmation Sunday

April 27
10:45 Service



FUEL

High octane for your soul midweek!
Wednesdays ~ 5:30 - 7:00 pm



Dive into God's Word in separate Bible studies for middle school and high school students!

Go M.A.D. with

Pearl River
Float & Clean up
Sat., April 26
Noon - 7 pm



Contact Jeanne for more info.

\$85 deposit is now past due. Contact Jeanne for availability.

Mission Fest - June 1- 5 ~ Jackson, MS

For all students 6 - 12th grades
Millsaps College ~ Cost: \$200 (before 4/1)

HS Beach Camp ~ Orange Beach, AL

For all students 9 - 12th grades
~ Cost: \$385 (before 4/1)

MS Student Life Camp ~ Birmingham, AL

For all students 6 - 8th grades
Samford University ~ Cost: \$300 (before 4/1)



Trip to Wholefoods and Bellingrath Gardens planned for Trendsetters



Tuesday-Wednesday
April 29-30
Cost:
\$225.00

Wednesday, April 16, shop, tour
and eat at Wholefoods.

Leave at 9:30 a.m., back at 1:30 p.m.

No cost and lunch on your own.

*Trip to Mobile includes
Bellingrath Gardens,
Dinner and Dolphin Cruise
and Palestine Gardens*

Tuesday: Leave at 7:00 a.m.

**Noon at Bellingrath for lunch, tour of the
home and gardens**

4:30 p.m. - Check in at Hampton Inn

6:00 p.m. - Dinner Cruise

9:00 p.m. - Return to Hotel

Wednesday: Leave at 9:00 a.m.

11:00 -Tour Palestine Gardens in Lucedale

12:30 - Lunch

5:00 p.m. - Back at Saint Mark's.

**Cost includes transportation, lodging,
tours and all meals.**

Easter Baskets For Seniors

Easter brings to the forefront of our busy lives how much our blessed Lord has given to us and the sacrifice he made for all of us. It is a pertinent time for us to live out our Christian beliefs and help those in need. A new local mission to provide Easter Baskets to low income senior adults is planned for this Easter season. The basket will be a bag full of staples (no refrigerated or frozen items) such as rice, macaroni and cheese, grits, oatmeal, sugar, flour, coffee, etc. We would like to place ten items in each basket and our goal is to do 60 baskets. The youth will be contributing to the mission by collecting food during a scavenger hunt for the baskets and assisting with the packing of the bags of food. The mission will need each member of the congregation to bring one staple item of their choice for the Easter bags starting March 23 and ending April 8. Each basket can contain different items so it is your choice on what to donate. Bring more items if you wish! Items can be placed in the bins located at the door entrances or placed in the Women With Faith Sunday School class. We plan to deliver the morning of April 12. Volunteers to deliver are also needed. Prayers for this mission and the seniors are requested. Please contact Lois Minchew at 601-992-8543 or lminchew@bellsouth.net if you can deliver or want to assist in this mission.



Come join us as St. Mark's United Methodist Women (UMW) presents its second Tablescapes Luncheon on April 26, 2014 in the Christian Life Center (CLC). The tables will be decorated by UMW members from St. Mark's three UMW circles who volunteer their time and talents. The doors will open at 10:30 a.m. for viewing the lovely tablescapes with the luncheon to follow at 11:00. Mississippi's First Lady Deborah Bryant, a longtime member of St. Mark's, will be our guest speaker.

Tickets are now on sale. Last year, over 120 women enjoyed this festive occasion. This year, we are expecting to sell 160 tickets raising money to be used to fund UMW projects throughout the year that support the needs of women, children, and youth both locally and around the world.

For additional information or to secure tickets, contact Rebecca Doyle 404-312-9201 or Hazel Townsend 601-992-9811.