

2014 Leadership

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Administrative Council

Co-chair – Rodney Meeks

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Finance Committee

Chairperson – Dana Stringer

Trustees Chairperson – Jan Smith

Staff-Parish Relations

Chairperson – Bobby Blake

Lay Leaders – Hewitt Pittman,

Ron Tisdale, Leslie McGinnis

Capital Stewardship – Dick Weatherholt

Financial Secretary – Martha Toombs

Membership Secretary – Becky Hall

Lay Members/Annual Conference – Larry Swales, Dana Grant, Christy Jones, Trey Curry

Administrative Council at-large members –

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Jo Hebert

An Encouraging Word From Jo Hebert

This month, I'd like to share with you an update on our DivorceCare ministry at St. Mark's, including the outcome of our first class and our plans for this year. I also invite you to pray for this ministry. (If you don't yet know what DivorceCare is...it is a 13-week class for those going through separation and divorce. Participants watch videos each week on topics pertaining to divorce and take part in small group discussion led by understanding leaders who have been divorced themselves. I help coordinate the class and welcome participants each week).

After having 22 people come to the initial orientation in August, we had 16 who came to most of the 13 DivorceCare classes. These participants, some separated and some divorced, split into small groups led by Merriam Smiley, Suzanne Gural, Jim Matheny, and Katherine Heard. We were delighted to see the participants go from being very shy around one another to interacting comfortably. (In fact, on their own, they planned a New Year's party after the group came to a close...we thought that was a good sign!) Their completed evaluation forms indicated that the class had been helpful, and two signed up to take it again.

We followed up the 13 regular DivorceCare classes with a Surviving the Holidays class, which was well attended by most of the regular participants plus six new faces. We are thankful to the Lord for a better first go at this than we could have hoped. Thanks also go out to those who prayed for DivorceCare, those who prepared snacks for our participants, and church administration for investing in this ministry (childcare, signs, curriculum, etc.).

We are now in the middle of our second series of classes, with plans to offer DivorceCare twice a year. We are meeting on Thursday evenings, averaging 12 participants each week, grateful for our new small group leader named Jonathan McKinnon, who was a participant in the fall.

If you know of someone separated or divorced, please tell them about this ministry. They can register online through the website or by calling or emailing me (601-259-1749, jhebertlpc@comcast.net). Participants are welcome to join anytime. If you would like to help with snacks or advertising, you can contact Merriam Smiley (303-903-0769).

And, we would especially like your prayers and consideration about a component we hope to add to DivorceCare when we offer it in the fall. Kid Care is a program that is designed for children with parents going through divorce. We already have the curriculum, and we are looking for someone with a desire and willingness to take the lead in organizing the class for children and/or teens, which will run at the same time as DivorceCare. If you have a heart for kids and the time to commit to starting up a vital ministry, we'd love to talk to you.

And that's what's happening with DivorceCare. We are grateful for your prayers and support, and thankful to be part of a church that offers the hope of Christ to those who are hurting.



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.

Upcoming Dates

March 1 - Disciple Now, Created by God

March 2 - Disciple Now, Blood Drive and Mission Fair

March 5 - Ash Wednesday

March 6 - Gospel Singing

March 9 - Daylight Savings time

March 10 -14 - Spring Break, Stewpot

March 12 - No Wednesday activities

March 21 - 30 hour famine

March 22 - Preschool Spring Bazaar, 30 hour famine

March 23 - Famine Sunday, Ad council

March 30 - Set up for youth garage sale begins



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

NONPROFIT
 ORGANIZATION
 U.S. POSTAGE
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Saint Mark's United Methodist Church
 Phone: 601-992-2131

Church Staff:

Rob Gill, Senior Pastor.....	x103
Jeff Nesbit, Teaching Pastor.....	x105
Sandra Thomas, Minister of Worship & Music.....	x104
Martha Hand, Director of Nurture/Outreach.....	x102
Karie Sue McCaleb, Pastor to Children & Families.....	x109
Jeanne Chapman, Youth Director.....	601-992-9554
Jim Readell, Church Facilities Manager.....	601-506-4714
Delores Seward, Administrative Assistant.....	x101
Martha Toombs, Business Office.....	x106
Corrine Carpenter, Preschool Office.....	x110
Darlene Baker.....	Pianist
Jason Boyd.....	Organist
Robert Ghoston.....	Custodian

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



Martha Hand

From the Director of Nurture and Outreach

On many national surveys, Mississippi always ranks near the top in hospitality. What a positive thing to be known for! Our goal at St. Mark's is to show the same kind of hospitality. Our enhanced greeter ministry is now being implemented at all services, which includes presenting first time visitors with a gift bag that includes a small gift, information about our church, and a campus map. We appreciate our designated entrance greeters who will try to identify first time visitors and present them with a gift bag at the door. If first time visitors are missed at the door, we appreciate the greeters who have agreed to be what we are calling "worship ambassadors". These are strategic greeters who are in charge of finding new faces in the area they usually sit in and offering them a gift bag at the end of the service if they did not receive one when they entered.

Even with the best schedules and assignments, our official greeters miss worship at times. That is why we are hoping that ALL of you are called to practice radical hospitality. If you are sitting next to someone in worship that you don't recognize, inquire if they worship here regularly. If they are first time visitors, offer them a warm welcome and a gift bag as they leave the service. These bags can be found in or under the pieces of furniture at all the exits.

Many of our Sunday School classes are viewing "The Power of We". In the last session, Bishop Swanson talks about discipleship and providing "contagious communities" in our churches. Let us all strive to do just that – make our visitors want to return because they experience the "contagious" love of Christ through all of us!



the
BEACON

Shining Christ's light into the community



SAINT MARK'S

March 2014 • Number 90



Jeff Nesbit

"Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends." Jesus in John 15:13

Anyone can be common. Anyone can be like everyone. Only those in Christ can be a John 15 someone.

There is nothing unique or special about a person or a church that conforms to the world's standards. There is nothing great about a selfish, prideful, or apathetic life. However, there is something inspirational and energetic about "someone" who lays down their life for the sake of another. The greatest of

the someone's is Jesus Christ and His very life is the "greater love".

Saint Mark's, Jesus Christ has the calling of "greatness" on our lives. He wants nothing less than great. Great by His standards, not ours. The month of March is going to prepare us for the "greatest" day in history that we will celebrate on April 20: Resurrection Sunday, or Easter Sunday.

In March, we enter into the season of Lent which will drive us to the Cross and Empty Tomb with a single minded passion. As we approach the celebration of the greatest day in history, we have the opportunity for the Holy Spirit to do the "greatest work" of love in us than we've ever known.

In John 15, Jesus is the Vine, His Father is the Vine Dresser, and we are the branches. I'm wondering during the season of Lent: in what ways we can break the mold of commonality and conformity and "branch out" demonstrating the "greater love" of Jesus? How can we be so connected to the Vine that we "branch out" in our relationship to Christ, asking, *"Lord, how can I lay my life, my time, my money, my energies down for You, my best of friends? We could ask this concerning our families, "How can I lay my life down for those closest to me? How can I lay my schedule down to spend more time with them? How can I plan a great day with them and do something out of the ordinary?"*

Maybe we could ask this in our Sunday school classes or mission ministry opportunities? As a local body, how can we "branch out" in faith, moving forward on our toes instead leaning back on our heels? One way that the 11th Hour community of Saint Mark's is beginning to "branch out" is by the formation of small groups. People are choosing to lay down their schedules and their lives to connect to Jesus Christ (the Vine) *together* each week in bible study, prayer, fellowship, and mission. We are calling them, *"Vine Groups."* On March 2nd, the Saint Mark's Mission Team is hosting a Mission's fair in the CLC to demonstrate how our Lord's greater love is "branching out" from 400 Grants Ferry Road to the neighborhoods and nations. The Spirit of God is raising up many "someones" from Saint Mark's who are allowing Christ to offer His greater love through them. You may just be one of those "someones!"

One question for all of us during the season of Lent is this: Lord, how can I "branch out"? Pray with me: *"Father, help me receive your greater love through Your Son, Jesus. I want to be so connected to Him as the Vine, that nothing common seeps out of my life. There is nothing common about You. There is no god like you. You are exalted above all of them because of Your greater love demonstrated in Christ. Let nothing but Heaven be produced in me and through me. Let nothing but Heaven branch out from Your church at Saint Mark's, for Your Name's sake: Jesus, Amen."*

Rob's Remarks



I have been a spectator this season as I have watched Cason's basketball team play several games. In the past I have coached elementary boys basketball teams. I was on the Vicksburg High Basketball Team for three years. This season has taught me some good lessons.

First, I have lots a work to do on patience with other adults who coach kids. Cason's coach feels the necessity to spend ten or more minutes after a game reflecting on the play of his team with their input. I confess to you that I became very irritated by this post game ritual, especially when the team got clobbered by their opponent and it was 9:00PM and we had to drive twenty five minutes back to our house, get showers and listen to a litany of reasons why the team could have won the game but didn't. I thought this coach was not respectful of MY TIME as a parent and didn't he know that MY SON needed ten hours of sleep? The nerve of some people so please note some of this is meant with sarcasm.

So last night I sat quietly as coach held his team meeting after the game. My behavior changed after enduring several retorts from my 11 year old and his Mother who think my patience and arrogance need some work in the prayer room of my faith.

Secondly, what I discovered was that this coach was a teacher and he really did want to teach these young boys about being a team. However, little boys (and their parents) like to win. So each time the team lost I wondered how coach would deal with these boys. There are only two boys on this team of ten who can walk and chew gum at the same time and neither of them is related to me. And yet I found myself very frustrated and even incensed when these boys would refuse to make a pass to a wide-open teammate but would "hog the ball" and miss baskets. It made matters worse when the one who is related to me failed to fulfill his impersonation of Ole Miss basketball player, Marshall Henderson, who is his hero, by scoring multiple three-point baskets. Fortunately he did score a basket in the next game and has contributed to the scoring since.

Finally I saw that the coach's persistence has paid off. Last night these boys became a team. The two boys who usually scored the most baskets scored their share of points. But something else happened too. Everyone played together. They shared the ball and passed it to open teammates, who actually made some baskets except for the Marshall Henderson Want To Be. He played great defense and made a couple steals to get the ball for his team and he hustled.

And there I sat alone in the bleachers. I went up to the coach and thanked him. I wanted to say more but the time will come when I can thank him for teaching me. Yes this season has been good for me too. My humility and patience have been tested and found wanting. Perhaps this is preparation for the 40 days of Lent, the next season on my calendar.

Peace,
Rob

Children's Corner



Karie Sue McCaleb

Are you ready for Spring? Spring brings new growth and refreshing times for us all, most especially as we look ahead to exciting things in our ministries with children at St. Mark's. Wednesday nights have been a great time of fun with our new time of programs and choir in the Asbury building from 6-7pm for our elementary kids. *Stay tuned! Our Methodist Melodies and Cherub Choir will be performing during worship soon to showcase their songs.*

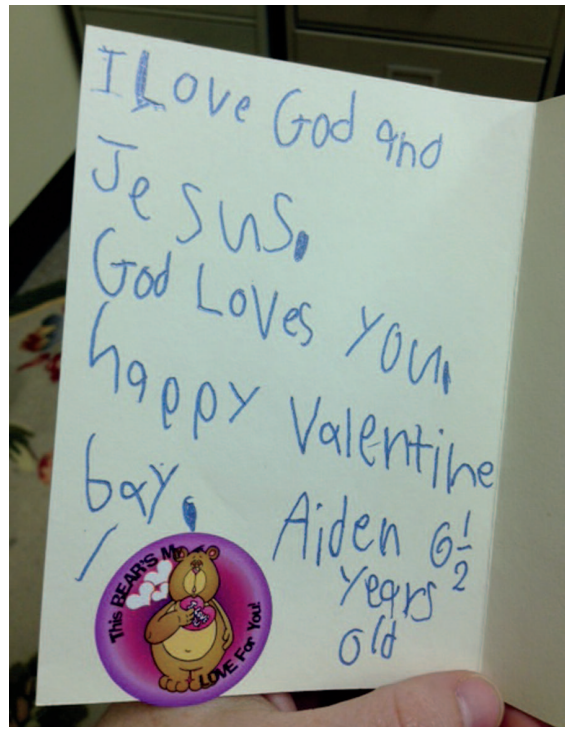
To celebrate Valentine's Day, our kids made special cards for our home-bound members of St. Mark's. The kids did a wonderful job and prayed for our members as we talked about God's love for us.

We are so very thankful for our volunteer parents who give their time on Wednesdays and Sundays to make our programs, Sunday school, and children's church so much fun for our kids. We are still in need of a Kindergarten Sunday school teacher to rotate every other month. Please contact me at kariesue@saintmarks.um.org for more information. Also for volunteers, we are taking a group to the **Orange Conference in Atlanta April 30th through May 2nd.** This year's theme is "YES: Just one word

can change everything" So say **YES** and join us on this life-family-ministry-changing retreat, please contact me soon! Registration deadline is March 20th for a discounted rate. (Some of your expenses will be covered!) Check out theorangeconference.com for more details.

There is also a wonderful opportunity February 28th and March 1st for our 5th and 6th graders. Created by God is a family focused weekend of learning about how we approach relationships and respect for ourselves and others from a Christian perspective. The parent preview night is Sunday, February 23rd in Wesley Hall at 5:00pm. Here, parents may meet the teachers who will be leading our kids in discussions and discern if you would like to attend. Our guest speaker is Dr. D'Ann Somerall, professor of nursing at UAB. She has experience in the medical field as well as expertise as she has taught the Created by God curriculum for 14 years in her local church. Registration sheets are in the front office.

Please remember that there will be no kids Wednesday night activities March 12th for spring break holiday! We will return to our regular schedule on March 19th. Blessings for your spring break.



Mark your calendars for these exciting things to come soon:

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

ORANGE
CONFERENCE
 APRIL
 30-MAY 2
 ATLANTA
REGISTER NOW

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

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

MARCH SCHEDULE

- 2 - D-Now/The Gathering
- 9 - Game Night/Movie Night
- 16 - Game Night: Perfection
- 23 - 30 Hour Famine
- 30 - Garage Sale Set up

5thth BLOCK



Wednesday's 3:30-5:00 @ the Hub

WORLD VISION'S 30 HOUR FAMINE

Friday, March 21 - Sunday, March 23
@ Mission First in Jackson

Cost: \$20

Competitions ~ Bible study ~ Service Projects ~
Fun ~ Team Building ~ Worship ~ Friends
Movie "God's Not Dead" ~ "Truth Booth" ~
SAVING KIDS' LIVES!

This year's FAMINE is going to be bigger and better than ever! Join us in a life changing weekend!
It's simple: sign up, grab a packet, get sponsors, go hungry, have a blast, save kids' lives!

Space is limited. Deadline to sign up is Sun., Mar. 16.



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!

Mission Fest - June 1- 5 ~ Jackson, MS

For all students 6 - 12th grades

Millsaps College ~ Cost: \$200 (before 4/1)

\$85 deposit is due March 31 to guarantee spot and early bird price.

HS Beach Camp ~ Orange Beach, AL

For all students 9 - 12th grades

~ Cost: \$385 (before 4/1)

\$85 deposit is due now! See Jeanne to register!

MS Student Life Camp ~ Birmingham, AL

For all students 6 - 8th grades

Samford University ~ Cost: \$300 (before 4/1)

\$85 deposit is due now! See Jeanne to register!



Trendsetters **Adults Over 50**



Sandra Thomas

During the last cold couple of months, the Trendsetters have been staying close to home enjoying meals and fellowship at the church. Spring is on the way and we are ready to get out and enjoy some warm weather. Upcoming in March are two opportunities to get out and about.

Wednesday, March 19 - History and Lunch

Millsaps College history professor, Stephanie Rolph will present a program "A Century of Voting in Mississippi" at the Old Capitol Museum. Following the presentation we will eat lunch at "The Manship" in Jackson. The bus will leave at 11:15am and we will return by 3:00pm \$4 for transportation plus lunch.

Thursday, March 27 - A Day in Vicksburg

Enjoy some Mississippi History in Vicksburg with tours of the Martha Vick House, The Coca-Cola Museum, the Old Depot Museum, the Lower Mississippi River Museum and the Riverfront Murals. We will enjoy lunch on the River at Rusty's Riverfront Grill. Cost is \$30 which includes entrance fees and transportation. Additional cost will be your choice from lunch menu. We will leave the church at 8am and return by 5pm.

St. Mark's Hosting Blood Drive

It's an experience that no words can define. When you donate blood you are giving someone a second chance. Blood contains many life-saving components that can help to treat different illnesses and injuries: from car accidents to heart surgeries to cancer treatments.

In Mississippi, hundreds of pints of blood are needed every day. That means: your friends, your spouse, your children, your children's friends, coworkers, fellow church members, teammates, even YOU, are a probable recipient of the blood resources of Mississippi Blood Services.

St. Mark's will be hosting a blood drive on Sunday, March 2, 8 a.m. until 1 p.m. Have a good breakfast and come to church early, or stay an extra half hour and donate!

You are a potential candidate to donate blood if you ... are 16 years of age or older, weigh at least 110 pounds and are in good health.

If 75 units are donated, every member of St. Mark's will be covered under the Donor Protection Policy. This means Mississippi Blood Services would pay for covered blood expenses not covered by insurance. What a great way to support each other in time of crisis.

*Sign up by calling or emailing Cat Foster,
cat39047@gmail.com or 601-717-3871.*

United Methodist Women (UMW) A Call to Action

An invitation to all women of St. Mark's: Prayerfully consider joining one of St. Mark's three active UMW circles. The organized unit of United Methodist Women is a community of women whose purpose is to know God and to experience freedom as whole persons through Jesus Christ, to develop a creative supportive fellowship, and to expand concepts of mission through participation in the global ministries of the church. UMW's vision is turning faith, hope, and love into action on behalf of women, children, and youth around the world.

We would love for you to join us at an upcoming meeting. Ruth Circle, St. Mark's only night-time circle, will meet on March 18 at 7:00 p.m. in the home of Becky Hall, 214 Stonington Drive in Paradise Point off Spillway Road. Contact Rebecca Doyle for more information (Cell: 404.312.9201)

If you prefer a daytime meeting, Abigail Circle meets the second Thursday of each month in the parlor of St. Mark's at 9:30 a.m. Contact: Donna Bishop at 601.829.1282. Tabitha Circle meets the third Tuesday of each month in the parlor of St. Mark's at 9:30 a.m. Contact: Sandra Bates 601.992.2815.



2nd Annual UMW Tablesapes Planned for April 26, 2014

Last year, St. Mark's United Methodist Women (UMW) circles sponsored its first Tablesapes Brunch. Over 120 women enjoyed viewing the exquisitely decorated tables, eating a delicious brunch, and having their souls refreshed/inspired by Rita Sweat's moving portrayal of the life of Ruth. Funds raised were used for missions that support women, children, and youth. A portion was sent to Moore United Methodist Church in Oklahoma following the devastating tornadoes.

UMC Circles are planning another Tablesapes Brunch to be held in the Christian Life Center (CLC) on April 26, 2014. The number of tables will be increased so that more women of the church and community will be able to attend. Our very own, First Lady Deborah Bryant, will be our keynote speaker. Make plans now to purchase your ticket when they go on sale. More details will be forthcoming in the April issue of the Beacon and the Sunday morning bulletins.