



Volume 67
 Issue 7
 July
 2020

St. Mark Connection

St. Mark Presbyterian Church
 9999 Ferguson Road Dallas, TX 75238 214-321-6437
office@saintmarkchurch.org • www.saintmarkchurch.org



You may recall a television advertisement from a cellular phone service provider that ran for several years. The tag line was “Can you hear me now?”. This question was repeated several times as the spokesman tried to find the best location that provided the optimum quality for audio recaption.

That advertisement has been on my mind for a few months now regarding the Covid19 pandemic leading to quarantine around the world. Theologically, it is as if God is asking the question, “Do I have your attention?” My answer is in the affirmative. Yes. Message received loud and clear.

Old Testament scholar, Walter Brueggemann, encourages us to face up to the reality of this pandemic in his newest book, “Virus as a Summons to Faith: Biblical Reflections in a Time of Loss, Grief, and Anxiety”. Brueggemann’s book title captures some of the thoughts and feelings many Christians are considering during our new reality of restrictions and risks because of a coronavirus. Along with the Apostle Paul, Brueggemann utilizes the word “groan” as the discomfort not only of creation but humans experience during a time of change when God is doing a new work in our midst. “Can you hear me now? Do I have your undivided attention?” Brueggemann:

“The twin habits of *denial* that refuses to groan of acknowledgement of a failed creation and *despair* that groans but entertains no prospect of newness after the groan are practices that preclude newness; for without a groan there is no birth of newness; without hope there is no move out of groan.”

I believe God is doing a new thing in our midst. Our permission was not granted for God’s instrument of change to be Covid19. Our reactions now, how we live going forward into God’s Sovereign Plan are the precious keys to enter God’s Kingdom being built. No denial. No despair. We will look back one day in the future and realize who God has claimed and redeemed us to be. We’re only looking through a glass darkly now. But we shall see clearly that three things remain: faith, hope, and love. You already know what the greatest of these gifts is. Let’s share more of that.

Blessings, *Pastor Rick*

this issue			reminders
UPCOMING EVENTS RANDALL’S PEN & SESSION HIGHLIGHTS	P. 2 P. 3		July 4 – Independence Day

Upcoming Events

Sunday Sermons, Scriptures and Events

July 5 – “Gimme a Break”
Romans 7:15-25a; Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30
Celebration of the Lord’s Supper

July 12 – “Gardening Gift”
Romans 8:1-11; Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

July 19 - “Wheat and Weeds”
Romans 8:12-25; Matthew 13:24-30; 36-43

July 26 - “Small Packages”
Romans 8:28-39; Matthew 13:31-33; 44-52



God Bless You on Your Birthday

July 8 Ella Arthur	July 18 Linda Youmans
July 12 Lacey Stephen Zuretti	July 19 Allison Curry
July 15 Willetta Jones	July 31 Trevor Crawley



Annual Congregational Meeting

The Annual Meeting of the Congregation will meet later this year. Reverend Brooks’ Terms of Call, and the election of 3 members of the congregation to serve on the Nominating Committee will be on the agenda for that meeting. The Annual Reports will also be presented at that time.



At its June 15th Stated meeting, the Session voted to cancel all in-person gatherings through July 31st. If this changes, you will be notified immediately.

Welcome New Elders and Trustee

Due to closings because of COVID19, several “church business” items that require the congregation to meet in-person are being done virtually. This month an email ballot was sent to SMPC members regarding the election of new officers for the Class of 2023. A ballot was mailed to members without email capability.

The clerk of session declares a quorum number of affirmative replies has been received and the following have been elected elders, Class of 2023: Marilyn Jackson, Bruce Huckaba, Dee Huckaba, Cathy Schingle, and trustee Alan Aulenbach. These newly elected elders will be ordained and/or installed at a later date.



Thank you for your service Class of 2020: Elders, Dick Arthur, Bill Grayson, Charles Miller, Becky Page, and trustee Alan Aulenbach.

Treasurer's Report

11 MONTHS THROUGH 5-31-2020



Operating Fund income YTD was \$17,500 below budget and expenses were \$11,100 below budget, for a net \$6,400 below budget. However, this is an improvement of \$700 over April YTD.

Fund Balances – Total fund balances are up \$400 from the previous month and down \$18,400 from the beginning of the fiscal year. This is primarily due to continuing projects undertaken by the Property Committee totaling \$50,600.

St. Mark Presbyterian Church exists to know Jesus and to make Him known.



The Fourth of July is almost here. Just like every other holiday since early March things will be different this year. Our fun neighborhood parade has been canceled. We'll practice social distancing as much as possible over the long holiday weekend.

But as Independence Day approaches, I am pondering how dependent I am on other people. I depend on lots of other people every week. I'll give you one example. I had my teeth cleaned last week. Appointments had been postponed as our dentist office had been closed. While they were closed some folks figured out what they hope is the best way to care for both patients and staff in as safe an environment as possible. I won't give you all the details about my visit, but I will note that the hygienist wore an extra gown and face shield along with the mask and gloves that dental professionals have been using for years. In spite of all the extra stuff she was calm and pleasant just like on my previous visits. I am so thankful that she and her colleagues took all of those extra steps just so I could keep my teeth healthy. It is one less thing to worry about in a stressful time.



So as the Fourth approaches I'd like to encourage you to think of some of the folks that you depend on each week. You might even want to make a list. Perhaps you might pause for a moment and give thanks for them. And you might even add them to your prayer list.

SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

Stated Meeting of the Session, May 18, 2020.

- Motion passed to cancel all church in-person gatherings through June 30, 2020, with the exception of online worship service recording and property maintenance crews. *(This has been extended through July 31st)*
- Motion passed to explore the use of Zoom for Worship services and Session meetings, with the intention to begin use on June 14, 2020, and to continue to record the service.
- Motion passed to have each member of the Session assigned a group of St. Mark members to contact. This action taken in an effort to check on the well-being of all St. Mark members during this time of closure.
- Motion passed to order Camp-In-A-Box for 14 children and 1 for Rev. Brooks, in lieu of Vacation Bible School and Summer Camps this year.
- Motion passed to extend the current 2019-20 budget for one month, beginning July 1, 2020. Future extensions to be considered on a month-to-month basis.



Our deepest sympathy to: the family of Michael Wayne Allen, son-in-law of Arthur and Willetta Jones. Michael was promoted to Glory on May 13;

the family of Alaina Higgins, former member of St. Mark. Alaina was promoted to Glory on June 18. A service in celebration of her life was held on June 24 at First Christian Church in King City, Missouri; and the family of Mike Pinnell, brother of Dee Huckaba. Mike was promoted to Glory on June 29. Memorial services are pending.



St. Mark friends and members,

Arthur and I would like to thank you all for your prayers, phone calls, and thoughts.

We are getting along slowly but well. Not back in our home yet. Hope to be next week. We miss everyone.
Arthur and Willetta Jones

St. Mark Presbyterian Church exists to know Jesus and to make Him known.

zoom

You are invited to join your church family and friends for worship this Sunday beginning at 10:00 a.m. via Zoom video conferencing. We will gather at 10:00 a.m. for fellowship and conversation. The worship service will be ready for viewing, via YouTube, at 10:30 a.m. Instructions for participation each Sunday will be emailed to you the Thursday prior.



*Lord, Almighty, heaven is your throne and earth your footstool.
Our country is in pain.*

*Extend to us your peace like a river
and restore to us health from this consuming pandemic,
love, and reconciliation with all your beloved children.*

*As a mother comforts her children, so comfort us
that our hearts may rejoice,
and that we may flourish like a garden tended by your hand.
Lord, in your mercy hear us.*

