



# Messenger

St. Mark's  
United Methodist Church

1902 Vance Jackson San Antonio, TX 78213  
210-344-8393

## Regular Weekly

### Activities:

† We are now meeting in-person for worship every Sunday in the sanctuary.

#### **NOTE:**

Beginning in 2021, the newsletter will be distributed every quarter (on a trial basis).



*Dear Lillian and St. Mark's Friends,*

*Happy New Year to everyone and may the rest of the year bring us more peace, civility, stability in all walks of our lives, as well as in our government. These things I pray for every night.*

*I hear that things in the life of St. Mark's are progressing much better, and that is good news. I still consider St. Mark's as my church, too, but my mobility is so limited now that I can't make a visit, as much as I would like to.*

*It is really great that Coker UMC is helping out with sermons.*

*I'm enclosing a check for January budget and another for Upper Room expenses. You are so kind to forward these devotionals to me.*

*Take care!  
Love, Virginia*

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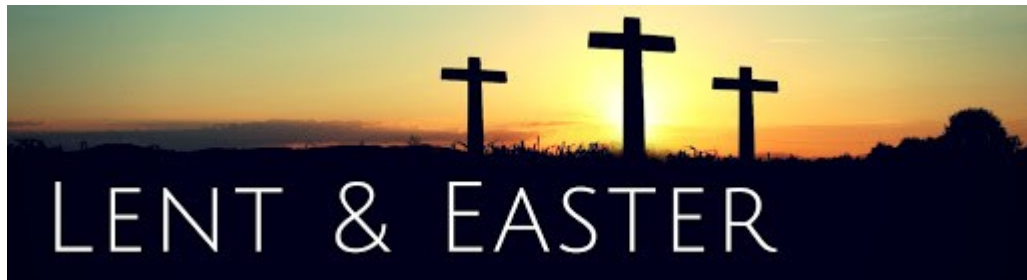
From the time I began working as church secretary, I noticed that Mrs. Barlow always mails her tithes in a card with a special handwritten prayer for the church. Most of the cards are now taped to the Prayer Board in the church office. The cards and prayers are a beautiful reminder that we can be part of the church and serve in different ways. Many members are no longer able to participate as actively as they once did, like Mrs. Barlow, but they remain faithful in their prayers, in their giving, and in their encouragement. The history of St. Mark's shows Mr. & Mrs. James E. & Virginia Barlow as original charter members. A big thanks to all who have supported in the past and continue to support St. Mark's United Methodist Church.

**You are and always will be a blessing!**

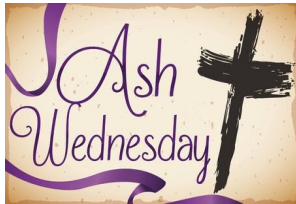
*Lillian Herrera*



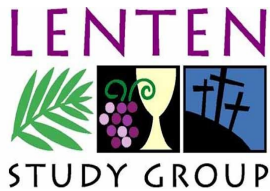
Follow us on Facebook! <http://www.facebook.com/pages/St-Marks-United-Methodist-Church/217072428313881?ref=hl>



**February 17 (6:00 - 8:00 pm)**



There will NOT be an in-person service at St. Mark's. This year an alternative is being offered due to COVID-19 safety. Coker UMC is having an on-line Ash Wednesday Service--via streaming video. It will be a time of learning, lament, repentance, and closing in prayer. Register at <https://coker.org/event/ash-wednesday-online-service/> and a livestream link along with in-home worship element instructions will be emailed to you.



**February 21**

(every Sunday in Lent)

9:15 am Church-wide Lenten Study  
(Fellowship Hall)

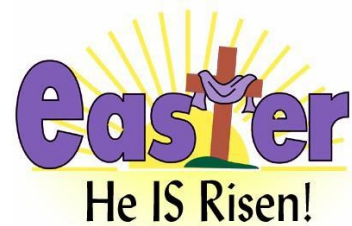
**April 2**

6:30 pm Good Friday Service  
(Sanctuary)



**April 4**

Easter Sunday Service  
(Sanctuary - time to be announced)



**PASTOR: Rev. Jose David Mercado 816-752-2476**  
Pastor Email: [jmercado@riotx.org](mailto:jmercado@riotx.org)

SECRETARY: Lillian Herrera

CUSTODIAN: Johnny Mendoza

WESLEY NURSE: Rose Miranda

Monday - Thursday Closed Friday

EMAIL: [stmarksumc@grandecom.net](mailto:stmarksumc@grandecom.net)

WEBSITE: [www.stmarksumcsa.com](http://www.stmarksumcsa.com)

**PLEASE NOTE: SCHEDULE HOURS MAY VARY DUE TO COVID-19 PRECAUTIONS.**



# With Your Help The United Methodist Church is Making a Difference

## SCHOLARSHIP SUPPORTS FUTURE UNITED METHODIST PASTOR

"I was anti-Christian growing up just because that's the kind of the attitude that my dad always had. I didn't like Christians because everything that was taught to me about them was from people who weren't Christians. No one in my family went to church before I started going in 9th grade," recalls Tyler Hungate. But he continued to attend the 4:12 youth group at Marion UMC in Marion, Iowa with his friends every Wednesday night, but only as a way to appease them.

"I wasn't a Christian; going on Wednesday night became my routine. I would go and hang out on Wednesday nights but I never really paid attention to the sermons or applied anything that I learned at the church to my life," explained Hungate.

As time went on the pastor invited Hungate to summer camp. Hungate did not want to attend but felt obligated to participate because the church paid the camp fees for him to attend. During the summer camp, Hungate accepted Christ as his savior. "This experience changed my life completely," says Hungate. "Many of my most meaningful relationships come from church and they continue to be a support system for myself and my family. "There were times when our family struggled financially. My father

struggled at times with his health and my brother battles depression, Marion UMC was a safe place during the difficult times," said Hungate. Since I accepted Christ my sister and mother have followed suit. My mom is now the nursery director at our church."

As Hungate prepared to attend college, his pastor recommended that he apply for the United Methodist Student Day Sunday Gift of Hope scholarship. "The scholarship helped relieve a lot of the financial stress on my life as I entered college," remarked Hungate. "After I finish my studies at the University of Iowa, I plan to attend seminary to pursue my goal of becoming a United Methodist pastor. In June 2020 Hungate became Youth Pastor at Center Point UMC in Center Point IA. He has a passion for leading students to accept Jesus and to become disciples.

"I'm trying to live like Christ on a college campus which can be difficult due to the culture on most college campuses. I plan to make my faith the central pillar of my life and career as I help others to grow in Christ," Hungate said.

*One of six churchwide Special Sundays with offerings of The UMC, United Methodist Student Day calls the church to support students as they prepare for life in uniting faith with knowledge. The special offering provides scholarships for qualified United Methodist applicants. [umcgiving.org](http://umcgiving.org)*



Apportionments

## ST. MARK'S FINANCIAL OVERVIEW FOR MONTH OF DECEMBER - 2020

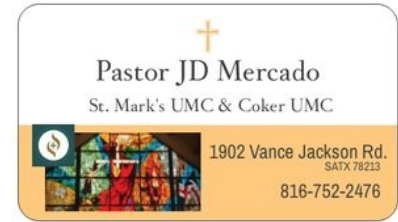
Operating Cash Balance on November 30, 2020	1,686
Non-Designated Contributions - December	43,819
Operating Expenses	27,851
Other Income/(Expense)	4,410
Operating Cash Balance on December 31, 2020	22,064

December receipts were higher than budgeted. December contributions were positive as a result of Carolyn Hahn's estate donating \$25,000 and her family donating an additional \$5,000. Without these contributions, December would have been close to budget.

December operating expenses were higher than budgeted. Trustee expenses were favorable due to lower utilities. For the month Mission Giving was \$7,577 higher than budgeted as a result of making our final apportionment payment for 2020.

Thank you for your financial support in 2020. We anticipate 2021 to be a difficult year financially and we ask you to support St. Mark's as much as possible.

The Finance Committee thanks you for your support to St. Mark's. God Bless you all.



## Overcoming The Trials

<sup>2</sup>Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, <sup>3</sup>because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. <sup>4</sup>Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. <sup>5</sup>If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. **James 1:2-5 NIV**

This past year 2020 we have experienced one of the most difficult years in human history, and it seems that this new year 2021 is not going to be much different. The trials that we have experienced are not surprising, since we know that Scripture warns us of them, but also gives us the direction on how to overcome them and obtain victory.

This leads me to ask: **What have we learned from 2020 that will help us get through 2021?**

The apostle James begins by saying about the trials, "<sup>2</sup>Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds" The first thing to make clear is that trials will continue and will not stop. Therefore, our eyes should not be on the trials we face, but on the result. Nor does it mean that we do not need to pay attention to what is happening, because as in all tests, we can fail. Now when the apostle mentions *pure joy*, he is talking about our emotional and spiritual state.

Therefore, the emotional and spiritual state is directly affected no matter how much faith you and I have, but for those of us who have fully trusted God, trials become an opportunity to grow in character and give us strength to move forward in life.

The apostle James also announces the result of the test given to us when he says: "<sup>3</sup>because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance." Then he adds: "<sup>4</sup>And perseverance must bring the work to a successful conclusion, so that they may be perfect and whole, lacking nothing." Beloved, the endurance with hope and the endurance that we acquire through trial makes us mature in character without missing anything. This past year has strengthened us because we have remained steadfast in our faith. And for those who are still processing the situation we are experiencing, the apostle advises us that, "<sup>5</sup>If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you." This is advice that we must take into consideration, as there are many people who do not understand why humanity is being tested. Tests are necessary in people's lives. There is no one who has reached the top without proof. There is no way to recognize the blessing without experiencing a moment of suffering.

Resistance is not a consequence of circumstances, but is a consequence of trust in God, no matter what is happening around us. What is happening around us may change, but God never changes, just as our faith grows with trials.

Trials do not take us away from God, on the contrary, they bring us closer to God as our faith strengthened. The year 2021 will be full of trials, but those of us who have faith in the Lord will not be defeated because we trust in His promise.

*I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world."* **John 16:33 NLT**

### Pruebas: Como Poder Sobrellevarlas

Este pasado año 2020 hemos experimentado uno de los años más difíciles en la historia humana, y parece ser que este nuevo año 2021 no va a ser muy diferente. Las pruebas que hemos pasado no son de extrañar, ya que sabemos que la Escritura nos advierte de ellas, pero también nos da la dirección en como poder sobrellevarlas y obtener la victoria.

Esto me lleva a preguntar: **¿Que hemos aprendido de este año 2020 que nos ayudará a sobrellevar el 2021?**

El apóstol Santiago comienza diciendo acerca de las pruebas, *“2 Hermanos míos, considérense muy dichosos cuando tengan que enfrentarse con diversas pruebas”* Lo primero que hay que dejar claro, es que las pruebas continuarán y no se detendrán. Por lo tanto, nuestros ojos no deben de estar puestos en la prueba, sino en el resultado. Tampoco significa que no prestemos atención a lo que está sucediendo, porque como en toda prueba podemos reprobamos. Ahora, cuando el apóstol menciona de *considerarnos dichosos*, nos está hablando de nuestro estado emocional y espiritual.

Por lo tanto, el estado emocional y espiritual es afectado directamente no importando cuanta fe usted y yo tengamos, pero para los que hemos confiado en Dios plenamente las pruebas se convierten en una oportunidad para crecer en carácter y firmeza para seguir adelante en la vida.

También el apóstol Santiago nos anuncia el resultado de la prueba, dice: *3pues ya saben que la prueba de su fe produce constancia*. Luego dice: *4Y la constancia debe llevar a feliz término la obra, para que sean perfectos e íntegros, sin que les falte nada*. Amados, el aguante con esperanza y la resistencia que adquirimos a través de la prueba hace que maduremos en carácter sin que nada nos falte. Este año que pasó, nos ha fortalecido porque hemos permanecido firme en nuestra fe. Y para aquellos que todavía están procesando la situación que estamos viviendo, el apóstol nos aconseja que, *5Si a alguno de ustedes le falta sabiduría, pídasela a Dios, y él se la dará, pues Dios da a todos generosamente sin menospreciar a nadie*. Este es un consejo que tenemos que tomar a consideración, ya que hay muchas personas que no entienden porque está a prueba la humanidad. Las pruebas son necesarias en la vida de las personas. No hay nadie que haya llegado a la cima sin pruebas. No hay manera de reconocer la bendición sin experimentar un momento de sufrimiento.

**La resistencia no es consecuencia de las circunstancias, sino es consecuencia de la confianza en Dios, no importando lo que está sucediendo a nuestro alrededor.** Lo que está pasando a nuestro alrededor puede cambiar, pero Dios nunca cambia, así como nuestra fe va en crecimiento con las pruebas.

Las pruebas no nos alejan de Dios, todo lo contrario, nos acercan más a Dios y nuestra fe se fortalece aún más. El año 2021 estará lleno de pruebas, pero los que tenemos la fe puesta en el Señor no seremos derrotados, porque confiamos en Su promesa.

**Juan 16:33 NTV** *33Les he dicho todo lo anterior para que en mí tengan paz. Aquí en el mundo tendrán muchas pruebas y tristezas; pero animense, porque yo he vencido al mundo.*

*Pastor Jose David Mercado*



## COVID-19 Vaccine Q&A

When we embody God's healing to others, we join in God's healing activity. The Scriptures call us to the possibility of transforming the health of people or communities. Providing straightforward answers to common questions about COVID-19 vaccines in order to encourage people to receive a vaccine is one practical way to do this.

### **Q. How were the vaccines developed so fast?**

A. The first vaccines were "messenger RNA," or mRNA vaccines. These used research that had been in process for many years for other viruses. With extra funding and focused research by scientists to solve the final steps, they went into trials quickly. Since the virus was prevalent, many infected people were available to study in trials and provide the needed data quickly. (Source: CDC, NIH)

### **Q. Is this vaccine still considered experimental?**

A. No. It is offered under the FDA's "emergency use authorization" to facilitate availability during a public health crisis. It is not experimental because it has cleared all safety standards, which have not been lowered in any way for this vaccine. (Source: Mayo, FDA, CDC, New England Journal of Medicine)

### **Q. Do I need a vaccine if I already had COVID-19?**

A. Yes. About 10 percent who recover from COVID-19 have weak antibodies that wear off, so they may be reinfected. We don't know who will be in this 10 percent, so the guideline is for everyone to receive the vaccine. (Source: biorxiv.org)

### **Q. What happens if I only get one dose?**

A. After about two weeks, your immunity to COVID-19 will reach about 50 percent. Without a second dose, it will remain at that level rather than go up to 95 percent. (Source: Pfizer data)

### **Q. How long does it take for me to be immune to COVID-19?**

A. After about two weeks, your immunity to COVID-19 will reach about 50 percent. Then after another 21 or 28 days you will get a second dose. Two weeks after the second dose is when you reach 95 percent immunity. So plan on a process of five to six weeks. (Source: Pfizer data)

### **Q. If I get vaccinated, why do I still need to wear a mask and social distance?**

A. It takes a few weeks for your body to build up protection. Also, we do not know if vaccines keep you from getting infected (we hope so!) or just keep you from getting sick if you are infected and you might still infect others who are not vaccinated (we hope not). This is still under study. (Source: Pfizer and Moderna trial data)

### **Q. Can I still get COVID-19 if I get the vaccine?**

A. Yes. The vaccines available now are about 95 percent effective if you receive both doses. That's not 100 percent, so that means some vaccinated people might still get sick if infected. However, the vaccine will reduce the risk of severe symptoms or hospitalization. (Source: CDC, Mayo)

### **Q. Will the vaccines protect against new variants?**

A. Yes. The new variants that turned up in the UK (B.1.1.7) and South Africa (501.V2) are similar enough that if you are vaccinated, your body will recognize them and respond to fight them. (Source: Pfizer data)

## Mental Health and Coping with the COVID Pandemic

Life has been quite different over the last 12 months with lifestyles changing drastically. Mental and emotion health and wellness is critical as we approach this new year 2021. Humans are social beings who need regular engagement opportunities. If social isolation occurs, then anxiety and panic may result. Being aware and mindful of the best ways to combat anxiety triggers is the first step in learning how to cope during this Pandemic.

To learn more from the Centers of Disease Control & Prevention, visit at <https://bit.ly/38Jnjc8>

Thank you,  
Peace & Blessings!  
Rose Miranda

### UNITED COMMUNITY PANTRIES FUNDRAISER Saturday, February 13, 2021 (Parking Lot in front of Project Transformation building)

United Community Pantries has partnered up with River City Produce to bring affordable produce to our community. They have developed a produce bundle for \$6.00 along with all special pricing on their produce. Along with that we would like to give the opportunity to 20 local neighborhood vendors to sell their items. 100% of the vendor fees will come back to the pantries. All permits will be included with vendor fees.

Masks will be required for this event and all vendor spots will be 6 feet apart. We will be abiding by all CDC guidelines. Volunteers will be directing traffic providing security and helping run the event. Questions or concerns can be directed to Lupita Gutierrez (956-229-0622).

### Drive-Thru Produce Giveaway

Texas Medicare Solutions will be giving produce bags to the first 100 Seniors to arrive **TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2021 from 11:00 am** until supplies last. Location: Cano Health, 2925 West Ave. For more information, call 210-838-6081 (a licensed agent from Texas Medicare Solutions will assist).

*No obligation to purchase or enroll. Not connected with or endorsed by the U.S. Government or the federal Medicare Program.*



Got a question about altar flowers? Maybe you have a question about Easter lilies? Well, our good friend, Joanne Green has answers for you.

# PRAYERS & PRAISE



Bob Ailerson  
 Jill Anderson  
 Kennedee Bailey  
 Kylee Brown  
 Bucky Coley  
 Esdras Cuervo  
 Alice Logan  
 Michael Mendoza  
 Eric Miletti

Will Schuetze  
 St. Mark's Shut-ins &  
 homebound friends  
 Family of Carolyn  
 Martin  
 Family of Mr.&Mrs.  
 Larry Pena  
 Karen Diaz

Ginger Mann  
 Roland Canales  
 Hector Munoz  
 Peace & well-being of  
 our nation  
 Those suffering from  
 COVID-19 & who  
 have lost a loved one  
 Pray for each other



*The Mahaffey Family on the passing of  
 MARY SUE HARVEY, December 27, 2020 at the age of 97.*



JAN 1 Diane Haag  
 JAN 4 Reynaldo Rodriguez  
 JAN 5 Abraham Cruz  
 JAN 9 Patti Austin  
 JAN 9 Carl Swatzell  
 JAN 16 Bob Bailly  
 JAN 17 Mikayla Mendez  
 JAN 18 Mary Jo Price  
 JAN 19 Daniel Wilke  
 JAN 24 Henry Ramirez  
 JAN 27 Zoe Cruz  
 JAN 29 Mary-Kathryn Schmidt  
 JAN 31 John Williams

FEB 11 Sonia Aguirre  
 FEB 13 Mary Bailly  
 FEB 18 Zach Wilke  
 FEB 26 Patricia Barnes  
 MAR 1 Lillian Herrera  
 MAR 12 Ima Roselle  
 MAR 16 Donald Piñedo  
 MAR 22 Nita Perdue  
 MAR 22 Sherry Wilke



January 23 - Tom & Kathy Jack  
 March 14 - Daniel & Sherry Wilke  
 March 15 - Mario & Letty Mercado  
 March 29 - Bill & Fran McMahon

May the Lord show you  
 the greatness of his  
 goodness,  
 that you overflow with  
 thanks every day.

*Happy Birthday!*  
 &  
*Happy Anniversary!*