

ST MARK'S UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



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Family of St. Mark's,

With the Season of Epiphany, the time of imagining, of dreaming, and of revealing where the Christchild is in your life, it is time for a new season: Lent. No, not the stuff you find in your pockets, but deriving from the Old English word, "lencen," meaning, "spring season." Out of all of the seasons of the church, it may be my actual favorite, and let me give you a few reasons why:

The Tradition Is Ancient: As it should be believed, Easter was celebrated much earlier than Christmas, with references to the resurrection dating back to the early 2nd century. The first Easter homily we have on record is from Melito of Sardis during the 150s AD! It was not until the Council of Nicea in 325 that the official date for Easter was solidified, along with a Lenten fast to prepare for Easter.

Fasting is Integral to Discipleship: Whether it is the Mosaic laws, the fasting of Daniel, Elijah, Esther, Moses, King David, Jesus, Paul the Apostle, alongside many others, the Bible shows that willingly resisting temptation for the sake of devotion to God is evident. In some of the earliest church writings, such as the *Didache*, early Christians fasted multiple times a week to remove distractions and temptations and to live a more holy life. In our modern world, particularly in the West, we can struggle with the concept of removing pleasures. After all, one of the most profitable medical sectors, if not the most lucrative, is pain relief. Living in a consumeristic world makes us believe that anything we can want should be ours, when the Gospel reminds us to take care of our neighbors as we would take care of ourselves. In reducing the grip that the world has on us, the better and more responsive we can be to what God is calling us to do in our daily lives.

Its History is Redemption: Throughout Christian history, the season of Lent has been a time to prepare new disciples and to reconcile with those who have fallen astray. This is partly the history of Ash Wednesday, when believers who were unable to participate in the church community would willingly wear a cross of ash on their foreheads to symbolize their desire to atone and repent. Over the forty-day season, they would receive encouragement and support from their congregations, and, Lord willing, receive Holy Communion again on Easter Sunday.

I understand that this factoid isn't Biblical on its own, but it speaks to the redemptive and uplifting nature of Christ and of the church we are called to be. If you decide to celebrate Lent in a new way with a new fast, or perhaps take a new action in your daily life, don't be discouraged. We are all here to support you on this journey!

In His Service,
Rev. Samuel R. Plymale

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LAITY

CORNER

I urge each one of us to dedicate time to the act of prayer; keeping in mind that prayer is not only talking, but more importantly listening. Prayer is our sacred time with God. Prayer takes many forms and is unique for each us. If you wish, you can start by meditating over this prayer written by St. Augustine. Peace be to each one of you, Ashley Battaile.

O Lord our God, we believe in you, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Insofar as we can, insofar as you have given us the power, we have sought you. We became weary and we labored. O Lord our God, our sole hope, help us to believe and never cease seeking you. Grant that we may always and ardently seek out your countenance. Give us the strength to seek you, for you help us to find you and you have more and more given us the hope of finding you. Here we are before you with our firmness and our infirmity. Preserve the first and heal the second. Here we are before you with our strength and our ignorance. Where you have opened the door to us, welcome us at the entrance; where you have closed the door to us, open to our cry; enable us to remember you, to understand you, and to love you. Amen
(St. Augustine)

PRAYER CHAIN

Did you know that we have prayer warriors behind the scenes praying for our church family and their friends and family. We also pray for ministries and situations. This is done via e-mail. If you would like to be one of our prayer warriors or need to submit a prayer request, contact Susan Wagner at susanbwagner59@gmail.com.

PRAYER CONCERNS

Jill Walker, Pastor Samuel and his family, Norman & Nancy Craft, Lois and John Bittner, Len Miller, Bettie Miller, Pat Roberts, Suzi Kessler, Lewis Bourne, Hiawatha Nicely, Boris & Linda Koloda, Tom Flinchum, Dan Rose, Art Caffee, Helene DeVries, Dave & Nancy Hamblin, Marjory Sue Watson, Phyllis Simmons, Joyce McCall, Mary Falls, Lorraine Eisner, Irene Davis, Eleanor Sink, the family of Ed Noell, and the participants of GriefShare. Please let us know of anyone else to add to this list.

ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL

The Administrative Council will meet on Monday, February 2nd at 6:30 pm in the Fellowship Hall. All are invited to attend. Only Ad. Council Members get a vote if voting is done.

HELP US CARE FOR OUR CHURCH HOME

Just as we care for our own homes, we are called to care for God's house. The Trustees have prepared a Facilities and Maintenance survey to help us understand how members of our congregation might be willing to assist with maintaining our church buildings and grounds. This is **not a sign-up sheet**, but simply a way for us to learn about the gifts and talents within our church family. Even small acts of service can make a meaningful difference when shared among many. Please take a moment to complete the survey and bring it with you to church or submit it via e-mail. Copies are also available in the pew sign-in folders and at the back of the church. Thank you for your prayers, your presence, your gifts, and your service.

IMPORTANT MEETING FOR CHURCH SAFETY PLAN

There will be an important meeting for those who would like to help with the installation of wiring to implement our church safety measures. If you are interested in volunteering, please come to this meeting to find out more about this project and how you can help. Volunteers will be needed on Saturdays and some Sunday afternoons. Volunteers will meet with Dwight Gay on Thursday, February 5th at 6 pm in the Conference room.

AN INVITATION TO THE CONGREGATION

The youth would like to extend an invitation to the congregation to join us for several activities in February. First, we will be serving dinner at the Rescue Mission on February 1. Then we will attend a Railyard Dawgs game together; like last year we have a link for reserved seats and parking passes for February 7th. Finally, we will be hosting the Shrove Tuesday Pancake dinner on February 17th from 5-7pm. All you can eat pancakes, sausage, and fruit. We will be raising money for our mission trip to Nashville, TN in June.

YOUTH FUNDRAISER

This Valentine's Day, we're going to be doing an envelope fundraiser! The process is simple. There will be a board in the narthex with numerous envelopes. Pick up a Valentine's envelope, place your donation inside, and return it to the box beside the board. Each envelope helps fund youth activities, service projects, and upcoming events -- while spreading a little love along the way. Every gift, big or small, makes a difference and is greatly appreciated!

PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY

The prayer shawl group will meet in the Fellowship Hall on February 26, 2026 at 1pm.

WOMEN'S LENTEN STUDY

There will be a Women's Bible Study during Lent. It will meet on Tuesdays at 10:00 from March 10-31. If you would like to be a part of this study, let Susan Wagner know Susanbwagner59@gmail.com

TAME SOUPER BOWL

TAME will sponsor a soup luncheon on Sunday, March 8 in the Family Life Center after Sunday School. Come enjoy the soup and give a donation to TAME.

WELCOMING MINISTRY

You are challenged to invite someone to church every Sunday for the month of February. Personal invitations from someone you have a relationship with are the most effective way to bring someone to Christ.

JOYFUL JOURNEYS

All Joyful Journey Travels for 2026 are on the church website stmarksmethodist.com and also flyers and registration forms are on the bulletin board at the church. . The trips are:

- Baltimore & Annapolis, MD April 13-16, \$505 per person, double occupancy \$664 per person single occupancy
- Sights & Sounds of Lancaster PA, June 15-17 , \$585 per person, double occupancy \$784 per person single occupancy, featuring "Joshua" at the Sight & Sound Theater. White Star has reserved 45 seats for Julia Greer's group as the show has sold out for 2026. The first 45 people who register and pay in full will be guaranteed a seat. After that you may request to be put on a waiting list.
- Wheeling, West Virginia Festival of Lights Nov. 9 -11 \$554 per person double occupancy, \$743 per person single occupancy

All details are on the flyers on the church website and the Joyful Journey Travels bulletin board at the church. The church is only open Monday, Wednesday, & Thursday from 9:00 am -noon. Call the church office before going 540-992- 3030 . You may also call Julia Greer at 540-330-7933 (no texts please). If I do not answer please leave your name and phone number and I will call you back. We are hoping you will take a JOYFUL JOURNEY with us in 2026. These trips are an outreach ministry of St. Mark's UMC in Daleville, Va. to provide safe, affordable, and fun overnight trips geared to older adults but any age is welcome.

GRIEFSHARE MINISTRY

We are happy to announce that Courtney Canterbury Ashby has joined the Leadership of our GriefShare team. We will begin our spring session on February 12 with a group meeting at 10:00 am and another at 6:30 pm. Early registration can be found on the St. Mark's website and brochures can be found in the information rack in our narthex to hand out to anyone you know who might benefit from this ministry.

RED CROSS BLOOD DRIVE

The next blood drive will be Saturday, February 28, 8 AM to 1 PM @ St. Mark's For an appointment, please visit redcrossblood.org Or call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767).

UWF NEWS



United
Women
in Faith

On January 5, 2026, we celebrated with each other at our Christmas Party at Bellacino's. We enjoyed a great lunch and followed it with our Annual White Elephant Exchange. We "stole" gifts from each other -- but all went home with something nice, well sort-of.



LOOKING TO MONDAY, FEBRUARY 9 at 11 am -- Fellowship Hall

In the Virginia Conference of the United Methodist Church, February is Heart Havens Month. At our meeting on February 9, we will welcome a speaker to share the message of Heart Havens. It is a non-profit organization that empowers adults with developmental disabilities to live independently and thrive in their communities through residential support, including group homes and sponsored residential programs. They provide services like 24-hour support, training and assistance with daily activities. Heart Havens was established by the Virginia United Methodist Conference and relies on donations to supplement Medicaid funding for activities and services not covered by Medicaid, ensuring residents can participate fully in community life.

We will begin with our program at 11 am, followed by lunch (bring your own) and time to catch-up. We will conclude with our business meeting and prayer concerns.

ALL Ladies are invited to join us!



DOWN AT THE POND

Children's Ministries

FROGS and Tadpoles will meet on February 8th and 22nd from 4-6 pm! In February, we will be making Valentines for our Shepherding Ministry and learning about the Baptism of Jesus. Please join us and bring a friend!! Please continue to collect the tab tops from cans for the Ronald McDonald House. If you need to pick up your child early on February 8 th, due to the Super Bowl, please let Lee Ann know when you drop him/her off that day.

As we begin another semester of FROGs and Tadpoles, we want to thank our volunteers who make this program possible: Autumn Norris, Bonnie Norris, Barbara Wiley, Deborah Wiley, Ashley Battaile, Linda Blankenship, Courtney Ashby and Blake Critz. We LOVE our volunteers and greatly appreciate their dedication to the children of this church and our community!! Please thank them when you see them!

ST. MARK'S SAFER SANCTUARIES TRAINING EVENT

Safer Sanctuaries Training will be held on Sunday, February 8th at 12 noon in the Fellowship Hall. Please come and learn more about our new Child, Youth and At-Risk Adult Protection Policy. This training is important to keep everyone safe at church, including all our volunteers.

Anyone who works with children, youth and our elderly or shut-ins and has not received this training in the past three years is required to attend! If you plan to attend or have questions, please contact Lee Ann at 540-580-3905 or by email: leeanncritz@yahoo.com

Vacation Bible School Planning Meeting

There will be a Vacation Bible School meeting for all adults interested in being involved on Sunday, February 22nd after Sunday School is over. The dates, times, and curriculum will be discussed, as well as what role each person would like to have. This will be a very important meeting to attend! Please let Lee Ann know if you will be there, or if you are not able to attend, but would like to be a part of VBS by email to: leeanncritz@yahoo.com or by call or text to 540-580-3905.

Winter/Spring 2026 FROG; Tadpole Schedule

** Intergenerational fun and fellowship activities for the entire family!

February 8: FROGs/Tadpoles 4-6 pm

February 22: FROGs/Tadpoles 4-6 pm (FROG Store OPEN at 6 pm)

March 8: FROGs/Tadpoles 4-6 pm

March 22: FROGs/Tadpoles 4-6 pm (FROG Store OPEN at 6 pm)

April 4: ** Breakfast with the Bunny 9 am, followed by Egg Hunt 10:30 am**

April 12: FROGs/Tadpoles 4-6 pm

April 26: FROGs/Tadpoles 4-6 pm (FROG Store OPEN at 6 pm)



Our spring Bible Study will be based on the book What Does God Want? by Dr. Michael Heiser. In the book we learn that God wants us! But when? why? how? and how is that related to everything else He created? We will dive into these questions throughout the book this semester.

This Valentine's Day, we're going to be doing an envelope fundraiser! The process is simple. There will be a board in the narthex with numerous envelopes. Pick up a Valentine's envelope, place your donation inside, and return it to the box beside the board. Each envelope helps fund youth activities, service projects, and upcoming events -- while spreading a little love along the way. Every gift, big or small, makes a difference and is greatly appreciated!

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Lastly, if you are interested in joining the youth for a district retreat hosted by the Wesley Foundation (similar to Wesley Weekend that we have attended in the past) we still need 2 women to chaperone. If you are interested or have questions contact Jessica ASAP so we can determine if we will be able to attend this faith-filled event.

Sun. 2/1: Rescue Mission Dinner Service 4:15-6:15 - we will leave church at 3:45 or you can meet us there if that is closer.

Sat. 2/7: Railyard Dawgs 7:05pm - a ticket link will be sent out this week.

Sun. 2/8: Youth 4-6

Tue. 2/17: Shrove Tuesday Pancake Dinner (fundraiser for the mission trip)

Fri. 2/20 - Sun. 2/22: Youth Retreat at VT Wesley Foundation (**IF** we can get two women to chaperone!)



TO ALL WHO CELEBRATE THIS MONTH

Newsletter Deadline is 9 am the 20th of each month **E-mail:** Rev. Samuel Plymale: samuelplymale@vaumc.org

Bulletin Deadline: Thurs. 9 AM

St. Mark's United Methodist Church

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Office Hours: Amanda is in the office Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays 9:00-12:00.

Lee Ann is usually in her office on Wednesdays and Thursdays beginning at 9 am.

Pastor Samuel is in office Tuesdays . He is also regularly available by text (434-218-2688) and email (samuelplymale@vaumc.org)

February 2026



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>1</p> <p>Worship 10 am Sunday Classes 11 am</p> <p>Youth to Rescue Mission 3:45pm</p> <p>4th Sunday after the Epiphany</p>	<p>2</p> <p>Pickleball 5pm - 7 pm Admin. Council 6:30 pm NarAnon 6:30 pm AA 7 pm AI Anon 7pm</p>	<p>3</p> <p>Women's Bible Study 10 am Pack 211 6:30pm Boy Scouts 7pm</p>	<p>4</p> <p>Pastor's Bible Study 11am</p> <p>AA Meeting 3 pm Choir Practice 6:30pm Boy Scouts 7pm Women's Hope AA 7 pm AA Meeting 7 pm</p>	<p>5</p>	<p>6</p>	<p>7</p> <p>AI-Anon 1pm</p> <p>Railyard Dawgs Game 7:05</p>
<p>8</p> <p>Worship 10 am Sunday Classes 11 am</p> <p>Safer Sanctuaries Training 12pm</p> <p>FROGs/Tadpoles 4-6 Youth 4-6</p>	<p>9</p> <p>Pickleball 10 am - 12 pm UWF 11:30 NarAnon 6:30 pm AA 7 pm AI Anon 7pm St. Mark's Men 7pm</p>	<p>10</p> <p>Women's Bible Study 10 am Pack 211 6:30pm Boy Scouts 7pm</p>	<p>11</p> <p>Pastor's Bible Study 11am</p> <p>AA Meeting 3 pm Choir Practice 6:30pm Women's Hope AA 7 pm Boy Scouts 7pm AA Meeting 7 pm</p>	<p>12</p> <p>GriefShare 10 am Grief Share 6:30pm</p> <p>Trustees 6:30pm</p>	<p>13</p>	<p>14</p> <p>AI-Anon 1 pm</p>
<p>15</p> <p>Worship 10 am Sunday Classes 11 am</p> <p>Transfiguration Sunday</p>	<p>16</p> <p>Pickleball 10 am - 12 pm NarAnon 6:30 pm Finance Mtg 6:30pm AA 7 pm AI Anon 7 pm</p>	<p>17</p> <p>Women's Bible Study 10 am Pack 211 6:30pm Boy Scouts 7pm</p> <p>Shrove Tuesday Pancake Dinner 5-7</p>	<p>18</p> <p>Pastor's Bible Study 11am</p> <p>AA Meeting 3 pm Choir Practice 6:30pm Boy Scouts 7pm Women's Hope AA 7 pm AA Meeting 7 pm</p> <p>Ash Wednesday</p>	<p>19</p> <p>GriefShare 10 am Grief Share 6:30pm</p>	<p>20</p>	<p>21</p> <p>AI-Anon 1 pm</p>
<p>22</p> <p>Worship 10 am Sunday Classes 11 am</p> <p>VBS Meeting 12pm</p> <p>FROGs/Tadpoles 4-6</p> <p>First Sunday in Lent</p>	<p>23</p> <p>Pickleball 10 am - 12 pm NarAnon 6:30 pm AA 7 pm AI Anon 7 pm</p>	<p>24</p> <p>Women's Bible Study 10 am Pack 211 6:30pm Boy Scouts 7pm</p>	<p>25</p> <p>Pastor's Bible Study 11am</p> <p>AA Meeting 3 pm Choir Practice 6:30pm Women's Hope AA 7 pm AA Meeting 7 pm</p>	<p>26</p> <p>GriefShare 10 am Prayer Shawl 1pm Grief Share 6:30pm</p>	<p>27</p>	<p>28</p> <p>Red Cross Blood Drive 8-1 AI-Anon 1 pm</p>