



ST. MARKS

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

MISSION:

**Our mission is to
Make followers of Jesus who
Love God,
Love others
And change the world**

VISION:

**Reaching and nurturing those
Who don't know Jesus.**



January 2026

A Message From Our Pastor



Dear church family,

As we step into a new year, many people make resolutions. We make plans to be healthier, happier, or more disciplined. Those can be good things. But as followers of Jesus, we begin the year not merely with resolutions, but with prayerful surrender. The Christian life is not primarily about self-improvement; it is about deeper trust, deeper obedience, and deeper love for God and love for our neighbor.

That's why prayer is so vital right now. Prayer grounds us. Prayer reminds us Who is truly in charge. Prayer shapes our hearts so that our lives might reflect the heart of Christ in the world. This isn't just private spirituality. It fuels our faithfulness in our community, our compassion for those who struggle, our willingness to serve, and our openness to be used by God however God chooses.

In the Wesleyan tradition, many churches begin the year by praying together the Wesley Covenant Prayer, just like we did the first Sunday of January. This prayer is bold and dangerous. It is not sentimental. It is a prayer of surrender, trust, and availability to God's purposes in the world. As we pray it, we remember that our lives are not our own—we belong to God.

Take time to pray these words slowly and thoughtfully:

The Wesley Covenant Prayer

I am no longer my own, but yours. Put me to what you will, rank me with whom you will; put me to doing, put me to suffering; let me be employed for you, or laid aside for you, exalted for you, or brought low for you; let me be full, let me be empty, let me have all things, let me have nothing. I freely and wholeheartedly yield all things to your pleasure and disposal. And now, glorious and blessed God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, you are mine and I am yours. So be it. And the covenant now made on earth, let it be ratified in Heaven. Amen.

When we pray these words, we also commit ourselves to live them. We commit ourselves to love our neighbors in real and tangible ways. We commit ourselves to be the hands and feet of Christ in Findlay and beyond. We look for those who are hurting, lonely, hungry, overwhelmed, or forgotten and we refuse to ignore them. We listen for God's nudges to serve, to give, to encourage, to show kindness, and to embody grace.

My prayer is that this year is not simply "another year," but a year where our church family grows deeper in prayer and wider in love. May we be a praying church. May we be a caring church. And may we trust God enough to say, "Here we are, Lord. Use us."

Blessings,

Pastor Dan

St Marks Sermon Schedule

Talking With God

January 18
Sharing Your Faith
Philemon 1:4-6

January 25
Unity
Romans 15:5-7,
John 17:20-23

February 1
How Do I Know What's Best
Philippians 1:9-10

Lesser Know Holy Days

February 8
Baptism of the Lord
Matthew 3:13-17

February 15
Transfiguration Sunday
Matthew 17:1-13

The 2026 St Marks Leadership Team

**Meetings are the fourth Tuesday
of the month, 7:00 p.m.**

Rev. Dan Metzger
Leadership Team Chair – Laura Rhodes
SPRC – Kaitlin Peraino
SPRC - Val Milum
Trustee Team – Matt Fix
Trustee Team – Mike Lee
Trustee Team – Joe Stoner
Trustee Team – Don Snyder
Finance Team – Jeremy Theiss
Finance Team – Becky Iten
Member - Dylan Burkholder
Member – Denise Claflin
Member – Lyndsay Hite

At-large Member Endowment Fund
Committee—Scott Rhodes

Lay Member to Annual Conference
– Erma Metzger

A Memorial
in Honor of

**Bill & Carol Litten,
Trent & Ingrid Litten
&
Dawn Litten Bennett**

From
The Robert & Sandra
Smith, Family Trust

American Red Cross Blood Drive at St Marks

Thursday, January 29, 2026

It will take place in the DOCK from
11:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

**There is an urgent shortage. If you are able,
please sign up to donate.**



Go to redcrossblood.org to register.

Ready to take your next step in your walk with Jesus?

At St. Marks, we believe following Jesus is a lifelong journey - and no matter where you are, there's a next step for you. Our **Discipleship Pathway** helps you see where you are spiritually and discover meaningful ways to grow. It's not a rigid checklist, but a **fluid pathway** because we know faith doesn't always move in a straight line. After you read through the pathway, please let Mandy Stevens (Director of Discipleship) or Pastor Dan know if we can help you with your next step!

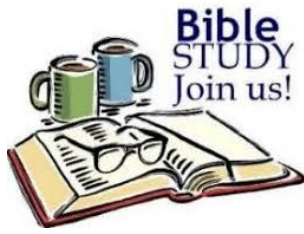
DISCIPLESHIP PATHWAY

AT ST. MARKS CHURCH

The Discipleship Pathway is fluid because a person's relationship with Jesus isn't going to be perfectly linear. The path below is the pattern we most often see people living out their faith journey at St. Marks Church.



<p>Characteristics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attends worship 1-2 times per month• Exploring ways to connect with others at St. Marks <p>Next Steps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attend Starting Point• Make a decision to follow Jesus• Get baptized• Become a member of St. Marks	<p>Characteristics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attends worship 3-4 times per month• Prays multiple times per week• Serves at church occasionally• Gives their time & resources regularly• Is in a Small Group, studying Scripture with other followers of Jesus <p>Next Steps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Participate in the Faith 5• Join a Small Group• Join a Serving Team	<p>Characteristics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attends worship almost every Sunday• Prayer is a daily habit• Serves the church & community often• Gives sacrificially• Is in a Small Group, studying Scripture with other followers of Jesus <p>Next Steps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Invite someone to worship with you• Share your faith & knowledge of Jesus with others
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Chapter by Chapter

The Book of Mark

Pastor Dan will begin a new class on Wednesday nights starting January 28. It will be a chapter-by-chapter study of the book of Mark. If you are interested in attending, please email Dan at dmetzger@stmarksfindlay.org

Here at St Marks we have several opportunities for Small group Bible Study.

Every Sunday morning between the two services, adults meet in Fellowship Hall. 10:00 AM Newcomers are always welcome. Come check it out!

There are also small groups that meet every other week in the chapel on Sunday evening.



Monday Women's Bible Study

will start back on

Monday, January 12 at 1:30 PM

in the chapel.

They will be studying, A Woman who doesn't Quit from the book of Ruth by Nicki Koziarz

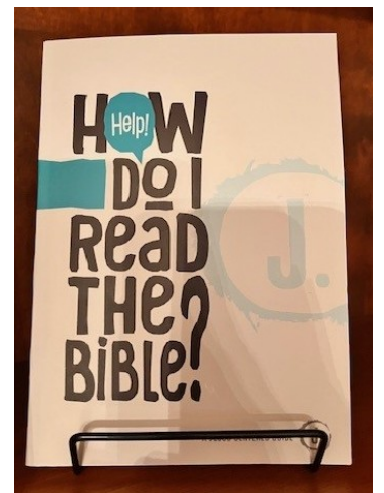
If you have any questions or would like to join this group, see Sherri Frantz or Leslie Shufelt

St Marks Library Read. Reflect. Grow.

Have you checked out the church library recently? We also have a library cart in the Dock with additional books and resources that you can check out!

January's Book of the Month

Help! How Do I Read the Bible? Go from reading the Bible because you should... to reading it because you *want* to. Help! How Do I Read the Bible? is a Bible reading guide that strips away complicated study lessons and theological lingo common in Bible-reading guides and reveals a simpler truth: reading the Bible is about discovering God's heart. When we know *why* we're reading and *who* we're reading about, the *how* falls naturally into place.



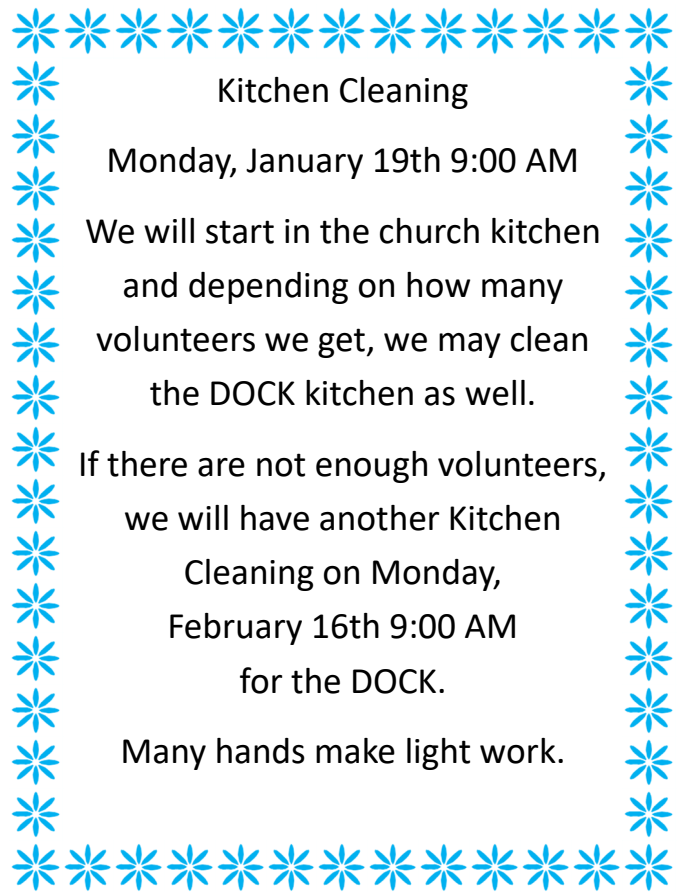
Check it out from the church library in the main building!



Color & Calm – A Women's Night of Rest

On Monday, January 26 from 6:30-8:00, all women 18+ are invited to join us in the fellowship hall in the church for a cozy winter evening designed to slow us down and create space for rest. We'll enjoy coloring, warm drinks, desserts, and a short devotional focused on stillness and renewal. Come as you are and enjoy a peaceful night of fellowship, conversation and reflection.

Please sign up on the Events tab on our website (stmarksfindlay.org) so we know how many to plan for.



Kitchen Cleaning

Monday, January 19th 9:00 AM

We will start in the church kitchen and depending on how many volunteers we get, we may clean the DOCK kitchen as well.

If there are not enough volunteers, we will have another Kitchen Cleaning on Monday, February 16th 9:00 AM for the DOCK.

Many hands make light work.



Ready to grow in your faith and knowledge of God's Word?

Join us in the Faith 5 each day, along with a new addition this year : **the S.O.A.P. Journal!**

S.O.A.P. is a method for reading and studying the Bible on your own. It stands for S – Scripture, O – Observation, A – Application, and P – Prayer.

The S.O.A.P. Journal has enough pages for every day of the year for you to write down each day's Faith 5 verse as well as your observations about the verse, your thoughts on how it applies to your life, and a simple prayer you come up with that stems from the day's verse.

We will continue to include the Faith 5 in every Sunday's bulletin. The S.O.A.P. Journal can be purchased for \$17 on our website or by talking with Mandy Stevens.

S.O.A.P. Bible Study	
Today is: _____	
S CRPTURE	Write the Bible passage

O BSERVATION	What is it saying?

A PPLICATION	How does this apply to my life?

P RAYER	Write our prayer

NIGHT *to Shine*

SPONSORED BY THE **TIM TEBOW**
FOUNDATION™

The 2026 Night to Shine which will be held February 13, 2026.

Registration is open on our St Marks website! You can get your loved one an invitation and/or become a volunteer. And we NEED volunteers so we can make sure this party can include every special guest who wishes to attend.

The party out-grew the DOCK so this dance will be held at the University of Findlay's Alumni Memorial Union (AMU).

Of course, donations are being accepted to purchase food and fabulous decorations.

If you wish to contribute, checks can be made out to St Marks United Methodist, but please attach a note or put it in an envelope clearly marked that the money is to go to Night to Shine.

SPARK KIDS! and St Marks Youth Group

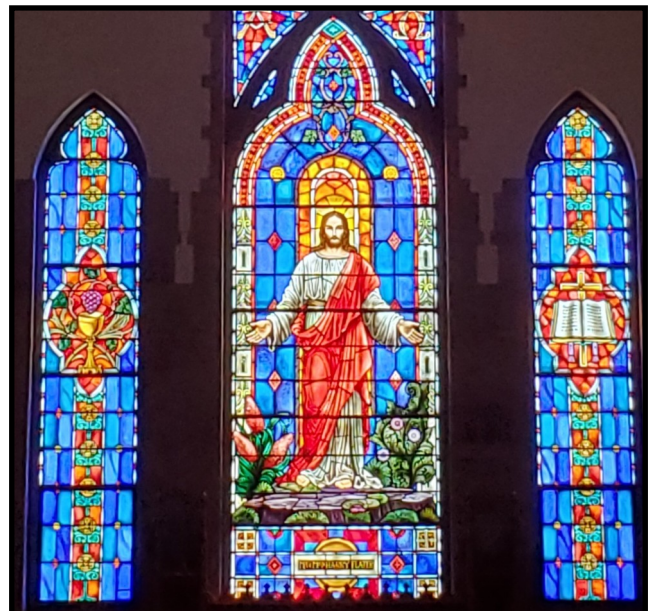
Wednesdays - 6:30 - 8 PM



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Give-a-Crock is a St Marks Ministry committed to helping to feed people in need. They provide a crock pot and recipes in the hopes of teaching a cost-effective way of providing a family a hardy and healthy meal. Once a month, Give a Crock gives 27 families a grocery bag full of the ingredients to make a delicious crock of food. Donations are an important way this ministry keeps going. A donation box is in the lobby. If you, or someone you know, would benefit from this, please talk to one of the staff or to Tina Miller.



The recipe for January is Beef & Noodles Donations are needed by January 16th. Items needed are: cans of green beans, peas, and cream of mushroom soup, 16 oz. bags of egg noodles and beef bouillon pow-

ST ANDREWS FREE LAUNDRY NEEDS VOLUNTEERS

Laundry supplies are provided for patrons to do their own laundry.

**TUESDAYS &
THURSDAYS
9 AM - 3 PM**

**THERE IS AN
EMPLOYEE ON-SITE
AT ALL TIMES**

Volunteers are needed to just be a friendly face, someone to talk with, to admire their children, and to listen.

St Marks UMC is



January donation requests for the big black barrel

Ketchup
Mustard
Mayo

Salsa
Tabasco
Salad Dressings

Lunch: 11:30 am —12:30 pm

Served 365 days/year

Dinner: 4:30 pm—5:30 pm Served 365 days/year

Perishable food items are provided following dinner when available. Easter, Thanksgiving and Christmas food boxes available. Hats & gloves distributed through the winter. Bottled water is distributed during high temperatures.

Transformations Thrift Store is open and operating!! 330 Walnut Street, Findlay.

Thanks to the community support, the thrift store has been able to be open Monday—Thursday 9-5, Friday 9-6, and Saturday 9-2.

Donations are accepted Monday—Friday between 1-4 PM.

Just in Time for Valentines Day
The United Women in Faith's
Everything Chocolate Fundraiser & Silent Auction

In addition to the chocolate cookies, cakes, and hot cocoa mix, this year there will be a silent auction of these 6 recycled jewelry pieces created by Terri Coldwell.



Terri has gathered broken necklaces, single earrings, watch parts, beads, charms, chains and gemstones—objects that once held personal meaning—and reassembled them into entirely new forms. An unforgettable valentine gift for a romantic who loves sparkle and glamor. **Sunday, February 8, 2026 between church services.**



The next 13 week session of GriefShare begins Wednesday, February 25—May 20, 2026. The class is offered at 10:00 AM and 6:30 PM. The content is the same both times, so choose the one that works best for you.

No matter what the circumstances, grief is a painful, confusing process. At this 13 week support group program, you'll learn what to expect in the days ahead and what's "normal" with grief.

Share this information with a friend or family member who may benefit from the class. Class members do not need to be St Marks members. This is a unique outreach program offered by St Marks.

Register or get more information by calling the church office at 419-422-4236 Pre-registration is suggested so that adequate materials can be ordered, but it is not required.



United
Women
in Faith

We are a part of something SO much bigger!

The actions and fundraising of our small group of women at St Marks are making a difference. The contributions raised by us and all of the other UWF groups in the world help to fund more than \$5 million in grants each year to programs helping women, children, and youth across the United States and around the world.

Even though we mostly focus on our own church and community, our work directly fuels the global impact. Here's how:

1. Financial Support for Global Missions

Local units raise funds through pledges, special offerings, and fundraisers.

These funds support:

- International mission projects (Micro-loans to women who have an idea for a small business.)
- National Mission Institutions (We have 3 UMC education and childcare missions in Ohio.)
- Programs for women, children, and youth worldwide

2. Participation in Global Ministries of the Church

Local groups “expand concepts of mission through participation in the global ministries of the church”. This means:

- Supporting global justice initiatives
- Contributing to international relief and development efforts (6K Walk for Water, Samaritan's Purse, UMCOR)
- Engaging in worldwide spiritual formation and leadership development

3. Education & Advocacy That Reaches Beyond the Local Level

Local UWF circles study global issues—poverty, climate justice, racial equity, women's rights—and advocate for change. This aligns with UWF's broader values of empowerment, anti-racism, inclusion, and sustainability.

4. Developing Leaders Who Influence Wider Mission Work

Local members often move into district, conference, and national leadership roles, shaping mission priorities that affect global programs. (We have 3 members who are on the board at the district level: Anita Heintzelman, Jeanne McCaffrey and Miriam Kuhn.)

5. Being Part of a Connected Sisterhood

Local units are the grassroots of a worldwide network. Our collective actions—prayer, giving, service, advocacy—scale up to global impact because the UWF is structured to connect at every level of the organization.

Looking ahead:

February 18—First Day of Lent

April 2—Maundy Thursday

April 3—Good Friday

April 5—Easter Sunday



ST. MARKS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH 2025 FINANCIAL UPDATE AS OF 12/31/2025

1. 2025 ACTUAL GENERAL GIVING VERSUS 2025 GENERAL ACTUAL EXPENSES

	Year To <u>12/31/2025</u>
Actual General Giving Received through 12/31/2025	\$661,464
Actual General Expenses Paid through 12/31/2025	<u>(\$600,190)</u>
Subtotal YTD Actual General Giving More Than Actual General Expenses Paid through	\$61,274
Yearend Adjustment-Transfer from General Fund to BI/MM Fund Due to Excess in General Fund. This Transfer was AFTER St. Marks UMC Paid 100% of our 2025 West Ohio Conference Apportionments.	<u>(\$61,274)</u>
YTD Actual General Giving More than Actual General Expenses Paid through 12/31/2025	<u>\$0</u>

Total 2025 General Operating Budget was \$612,900. \$11,787 was needed weekly to cover operating expenses.

The average weekly General giving through 12/31/2025 was \$12,720. This was over by \$933 as of 12/31/2025.

*** Total 2025 West Ohio Conference & Maumee River District Apportionments Commitments at 100% was \$58,299. We paid 100% of the \$58,299 towards our West Ohio Conference & Maumee River District Apportionments (\$32,799 from General Fund & \$25,500 from Missions Fund. Total Paid \$58,299), so our unpaid Apportionment balances as of 12/31/2025 was \$0.**

2. 2025 ACTUAL MISSION GIVING VERSUS 2025 MISSION BUDGET NEEDS

	Year To <u>12/31/2025</u>
Actual Mission Giving Received through 12/31/2025	\$38,392
Mission Giving Required for 2025 Mission Budget Needs through 12/31/2025	<u>\$27,976</u>
YTD Actual Mission Giving More Than 2025 Mission Budget Needs	<u>\$10,416</u>

Total 2025 Mission Budget was \$28,000. \$538 was needed weekly and \$7,000 was needed per quarter.

Payments: Q1 \$8,000, Q2 \$8,800, Q3 \$9,200, Q4 \$12,391.50. Total Paid Year to Date: