

St. Mark's Messenger

October 6, 2020

3502 CLAIREMONT DRIVE, SAN DIEGO, CA 92117

Vol. 47 Issue 40



Rev. Jeri Newell-Davis
Associate Pastor



Blessing of the Animals
Sunday, October 11, 2020

9:30 a.m. Streaming at
vimeo.com/stmarkssandiego
and on our
Facebook page.



Keeping In Touch

Dear friends,

The other evening as Tom and I were out walking Jake I noticed a difference in the night sky since we have moved from summer to autumn. There is a more amber glow in the evening, a change from the brighter light we experienced just a few weeks ago.

I love autumn and all the sights and smells it brings – leaves changing color, pumpkin spice flavored everything, and the anticipation of wearing a cozy sweater as the days will become cooler. I know sweater season will happen, but as the saying goes, wait for it...

Having a seasonal calendar helps me stay grounded in God's order of life, particularly during these days of unpredictability. Are we going to open more businesses, or will we need to hunker down again? What will happen in the next few weeks as we vote? Will the holidays be holly jolly or be home for Christmas only in our dreams? So many questions left to answer this year, but there is one thing I know for certain – God is present in all the seasons and uncertainties of our lives, and for that we can rejoice and give thanks.

Two events that are happening this coming week, for which I give thanks include people and pets. On Saturday, Oct. 10 at 9 a.m. I will be joining the San Diego Humane Society as they offer their first Blessing of the Animals. We are doing it virtually this year, but already planning for 2021's drive thru. And, as you know, on Sunday, Oct. 11, Rev. Tom and I will be doing St. Mark's Blessing the Animals as they come through our parking lot between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m.. We are excited to see people and pets in this annual event. Plus, according to the Weather Channel it looks like it will be cooler so I might get to wear a sweater as well as a mask!

I know that some people won't be able to join us for the Blessing of the Animals so if this is the case, please call the church office and let us know. We will do virtual blessings for you and your pets. Our hope is that everyone feels God's blessings during this season.

Whatever may come in the days ahead, I pray you will feel the peace of God with you as we continue to live in this season of our life. May it be so.

Jeri

Sixth Annual *Blessing of the Animals*

Sunday, October 11, 2020
Virtual Worship at 9:30 a.m.
Drive-by Blessings
from 11:00 a.m. through 1:00 p.m.

All people and pets are welcome for a drive-by blessing (humans masked, please). These ceremonies are typically celebrated near the October 3 birthday of Italian Catholic friar, St. Francis of Assisi. Enjoy the words of this prayer, which, more often than not, have been attributed to St. Francis as author.

But this is not so. The prayer has never been found among his papers, nor had it ever appeared before 1912, when the anonymous text was published in a French clerical magazine called *La Clochette*. Still, a beautiful sentiment for us to follow.



Prayer of St. Francis
*(English translation from
the French
original)*

Lord, make me an
instrument of your peace.
Where there is
hatred, let me bring love.

Where there is offence, let me bring pardon.
Where there is discord, let me bring union.
Where there is error, let me bring truth.
Where there is doubt, let me bring faith.
Where there is despair, let me bring hope.
Where there is darkness, let me bring your light.
Where there is sadness, let me bring joy.
O Master, let me not seek as much
to be consoled as to console,
to be understood as to understand,
to be loved as to love,
for it is in giving that one receives,
it is in self-forgetting that one finds,
it is in pardoning that one is pardoned,
it is in dying that one is raised to eternal life.

Place Your Orders!

The UMW is having a virtual bake sale.

Please place your orders with Pat Comer (858-279-3011) or Sandi Johnson (858-278-8833) by **October 10.**

- **Brownies, frosted or not - 1/2 dozen for \$3**
- **All cookies \$4 a dozen (chocolate chip, peanut butter, snickerdoodles, shortbread w/ choc. chips)**
- **1/2 lb. peanut brittle—\$4**
- **Banana bread with nuts—\$4 for a medium loaf; \$6 for a large loaf**
- **Pumpkin nut bread-\$6 for a large loaf**
- **Cranberry nut bread-\$6 for a large loaf**

Orders will be delivered Saturday, October 17.
Thank you for your support of UMW missions.

An Update from Pastor Darin

Dear friends and family of St. Mark's,

I want to first extend my sincerest thanks for the many ways you have, over the past three months, welcomed me into your community, offered your supportive prayers, and embraced me as a new leader among you. In the midst of all the uncertainties we face, you have become for me a source of joy and life, and I look forward with great hope to many seasons of ministry together with you.

You have been patient and gracious, not only with the pastoral transition, but also in navigating through the many changes to our regular church life due to the COVID-19 pandemic. While we continue to take our cues from state and county officials in response to the dynamic rates of infection and community spread, I would like to share with you some of the steps we have been taking behind the scenes to prepare for the slow transition out of quarantine.

As you are likely aware, we have been in the process of acquiring more video equipment that has allowed us to stream worship services from our sanctuary each Sunday. Already, a new tech booth has been installed near the northeast corner of the sanctuary to accommodate the controls and monitors for the new cameras. We, now, await the installation of the new equipment, and the running of Ethernet cables that will allow us to continue recording, streaming, and eventually live-streaming our services. *It is our intention to continue to provide access to Sunday worship online for the foreseeable future.*

As we have also previously shared, a task-force was formed at the instruction of our Bishop, to assemble a “plan for reopening” to be approved by our District Superintendent prior to welcoming groups back to campus for in-person gatherings. The names of the team members, both of this task-force and the AV task-force, are listed at the end of this letter, and I pray you will offer these persons your gratitude for their diligent and generous efforts to prepare us for the ministries ahead.

The “plan,” itself, was intended to serve as both a checklist for necessary preparations of the campus (signage, traffic patterns, cleaning measures, check-in and PPE stations, etc.), as well as a guideline for our use in following appropriate procedures and protocol for gatherings of different kinds throughout our campus. The “plan” was not prescriptive for programs or group activities, but will guide the use of the campus, as well as interpersonal interactions (physical distancing, designated entrances and exits, provisions for contact tracing, etc.), upon return. Our plan was completed, approved by Church Council, and submitted to our District Office last month. We await confirmation that it has been approved.

Beyond these practical preparations, your staff and leaders and I have been engaged in long discernment as to our most faithful path forward regarding our ministries. We trust that God guides us in our decision-making, and that what may be the best course for the St. Mark’s community may not be the same as for other congregations, or even other secular or non-profit institutions. As a church, we are compelled to take into consideration our congregation’s particular demographics and needs, the capacity and demands of our staff and volunteers, the capacity of our budget and current infrastructure, as well as the mission and purpose of our community of faith. We take seriously our call as disciples to proclaim by our words and deeds that God’s love is inclusive; that God cares for and values the most vulnerable in our midst; and that God’s power and presence are with us, even in this wilderness.

The grief and pain of our absence from one another is real. And, the risk of our gathering in person, regardless of our diligence in precaution, is real. Our priority must continue to be supporting the health and well-being of each member of this body and our community at large.

Therefore, we will continue to gather inclusively for Sunday worship online until health officials declare it is safe for large gatherings to resume, which will likely coincide with an effective vaccine or herd immunity. This will allow us to continue to welcome all persons into our gathering without division or substantial risk to participants, volunteers, or leadership. We will seek every opportunity to rebuild our music program, to expand our leadership, and enrich our worship through this medium.

While Sunday worship will continue online, we intend to gather and grow small-groups for other ministry opportunities on campus as soon as our “plan” is approved. We also intend to continue to provide opportunities to celebrate our life together, employing alternative formats as necessary, but still marking significant occasions and honoring our traditions as best as we are able. We will honor our saints on November first; light our trees at the beginning of Advent; involve our children in telling the Nativity story; fill our chancel with poinsettias for Christmas Eve; and more.

I will admit, none of this is what I want, and I imagine it will come as a disappointment to you, also. I welcome your questions and feed-back; your reflections and concerns. We are charting new territory and are likely to take a wrong turn or two. But I pray that together we might help one another, in grace and love, to navigate the many demands, griefs, uncertainties, and opportunities of this season. I am certain that God is with us, that we are not alone, and that with patience and faith we will be led to unexpected sources of peace and joy even in this wilderness, and eventually to a new and hopeful future together.

With gratitude for you and for this family of faith, and ever in hope,

Pastor Darin

Reopening Task Force: Chair, Diana Starnes, Rev. Darin Arntson, Rev. Jeri Newell-Davis, Carol Brown, Brad Cannon, Dave & Judy Edelblute, Liz Froman, Stan Watson

AV Task Force: Chair, Diana Starnes, Rev. Darin Arntson, Rev. Jeri Newell-Davis, Ghadir AlAbdallah, Charles Ballinger, Jack Carpenter, Andy Guevara, Bob Hout, Stan Watson, Frank Williams

Pastor's Bible School Wednesdays @ 1 p.m.

Join Rev. Jeri on this Wednesday at 1 p.m. via Zoom as we explore the Lectionary Passages of the week. A Zoom link will be sent by email each Wednesday morning. Here are the passages for

Wednesday, October 14, 2020

- Exodus 33:12-23
- Psalm 99
- 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10
- Matthew 22:15-22

In Our Prayers

Please keep all those in prayer who are experiencing grief, chronic illness, addiction, loss of direction and disenfranchisement. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Our military personnel:

- ♡ Brook Bossen, Coast Guard
- ♡ Kris Brendal, Army
- ♡ Robert S. Chisholm, Navy
- ♡ Craig Clemans, Marines
- ♡ Paul Clemans, Air Force
- ♡ Blake Cross, Navy
- ♡ Nathan Streeter, Navy
- ♡ Lenny Hezelett, Navy
- ♡ Henry Hoadley, Navy
- ♡ Milo Riegle, Marines
- ♡ Robert Tarango, Navy
- ♡ Dylan Weitzman, Army

You are invited to participate in the St. Mark's prayer chain via email. Prayer requests will be sent to you via an email account you provide; you will not be asked to do anything other than offer your private prayers for requests you receive. **To participate, please email Carol Brown at carol.brown@cst.edu.**

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Additional Bible Study Wednesdays at 4:00 p.m.

If you would like to be added to Bill Galante's Wednesday late afternoon Bible Study, please contact Charles Ballinger who arranges the Zoom link (619-275-2245 or cballin1@san.rr.com).

Zoom Communion Update for October

The next communion service will be Monday, October 19 at 7:00 p.m. with Pastor Darin.

Next Week @ A Glance

Wednesday, October 7, 2020

9:00AM Rev. Jeri's Preschool Chapel/Facebook
1:00PM Bible Study w/ Rev. Jeri/Zoom

Thursday, October 8, 2020

3:30PM Cherub Hallelujah Choir/Zoom

Sunday, October 11, 2020

Blessing of the Animals
9:30AM Worship broadcast from St. Mark's
11:00AM Drive-by Animal Blessings till 1 PM
11:00AM Youth Group/Zoom

Tuesday, October 13, 2020

6:30PM Preschool Board Meeting/Zoom

Wednesday, October 14, 2020

1:00PM Bible School w/ Rev. Darin/Zoom
4:00PM Bible Study with Bill Galante/Zoom

Thursday, October 15, 2020

3:30PM Cherub Hallelujah Choir/Zoom

Sunday, October 18, 2020

Seeds of Hope Stewardship Season Starts
9:30AM Worship broadcast from St. Mark's
11:00AM Sunday School/Zoom

Presidential General Election FYI

All 36 San Diego Public Library locations serve as official Mail Ballot Drop-Off location for the 2020 Presidential General Election from Tues, Oct 6 through Tues, Nov 3, Mon through Fri 10:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.

On Election Day, Tues, Nov 3, hours for dropping off voted mail ballots will be 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Your ballot must be **signed, sealed and dated**. Questions regarding the Mail Ballot Drop-Off program should be directed to the County of San Diego Registrar of Voters (858) 565-5800.