





We celebrate the **GOOD NEWS**
of **GREAT JOY** for **ALL PEOPLE**
that St. Mark's is bringing to
the Corridor and beyond.

*Behold! I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all people.
— Luke 2:10b*

GOOD NEWS • GREAT JOY • ALL PEOPLE

Some of the things God does in ministry are pretty easy to measure: number of people in worship, baptisms, dollars, etc. But other things, like a movement of the Spirit, can be a little harder to quantify! While I know you will be amazed at some of the awesome statistics in the following pages, what I hope you realize is that behind every story and every statistic is something really cool: the Holy Spirit is on the move at St. Mark's!

When I read these pages I am reminded of what the angel said to Mary in Luke 1:37 - "No word from God will ever fail." This was spoken in response to Mary wondering how she would ever become pregnant with the Son of God considering she was a virgin. After the angel gives her the details of the incarnation, her response is impressive in verse 38: "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May your word to me be fulfilled."

I believe God has a word for us at St. Mark's, actually, two: "**keep going!**" If there is anything this past year has shown us, it's that when we follow Jesus in connecting our faith and life, we see the Holy Spirit move in incredible ways. I am joyously overwhelmed with the number of people engaged and growing at St. Mark's. We're not in a pandemic world anymore ... a new thing has started!

I am also amazed at the enormous generosity on behalf of everyone at St. Mark's. We give financially, we give in our community, we give internationally, we give of our time, we give of our abilities, **we give, we give, we give.** A giving congregation accomplishes a lot for the Lord because it puts the best of what it has at His feet for service.

Because of the work of the Spirit, we continue to experience new opportunities as well. There are doors opening all around us from new ministry events to new mission starts. One particular area that we worked on this year and look forward to seeing more movement next year is our idea to start up a second location through a multi-site ministry. Who knows what God has in store for us through this endeavor?

All of what you read about in this Year In Review document are simply a reminder to respond the way Mary did to the word of the Lord: "I am the Lord's servant," or in our case, "**We are your church Lord, may your word be fulfilled in us.**" The Holy Spirit is on the move here at St. Mark's! I hope you respond like Mary and are inspired to join this movement as you read more.

Paul Hennings, Lead Pastor

Since every page shares
some kind of statistic,
here are a few of my own ...

25+

NUMBER OF TIMES I HAD COFFEE
WITH SOMEONE: *THE MORE THE
MERRIER (OR JITTERY)*

100+

NUMBER OF TIMES I SURPRISED
THE STAFF WITH SOMETHING
I SAID (*ARE YOU SURPRISED?!*)

365

DAYS I WOKE UP EXCITED
ABOUT BEING YOUR PASTOR

...

NUMBER OF EMAILS I AM BEHIND
ON ... *LET'S NOT GO THERE!*





1998
PARTNERS



62
NEW MEMBERS

45
WELCOME
CLASS
PARTICIPANTS

Good News!



In 2023, St. Mark's continued to grow spiritually and relationally as we connected faith and life.

God is on the move at our Marion, Iowa address as we share the **GOOD NEWS** of the gospel, experience the **GREAT JOY** of growing in community, and carry the hope of Jesus to **ALL PEOPLE** in our community and around the world.

25
BAPTISMS



Good News!

ENGAGING OUR COMMUNITY
ON-SITE, ONLINE, AND ON DEMAND



53.4%
AVERAGE
ECONNECTIONS
OPEN RATE

275
CHURCH CENTER
APP USERS IN
THE LAST 90 DAYS

66,500
FACEBOOK
REACH

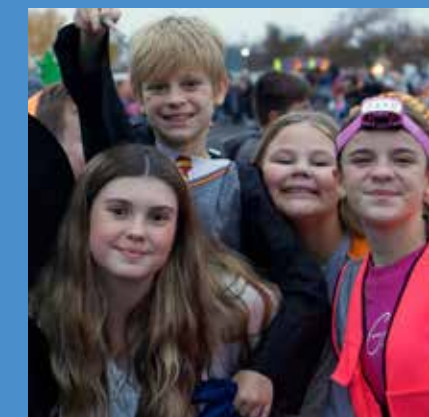
51,000
WEBSITE
VISITORS

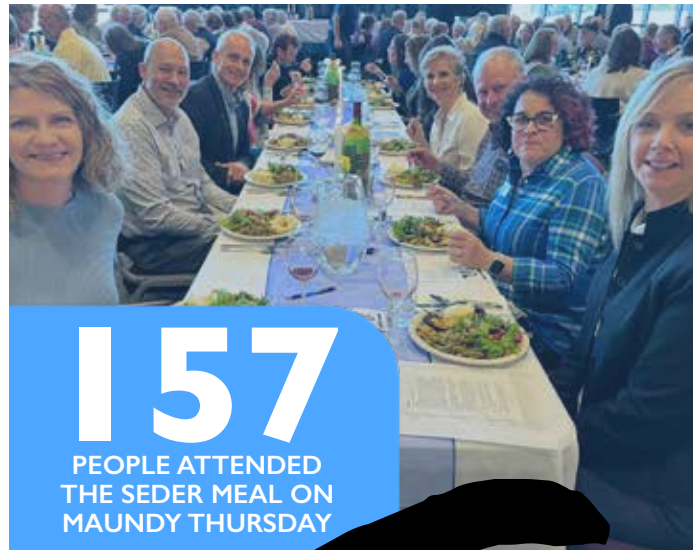
14,647
YOUTUBE
VIEWS



"We came to St. Mark's in hopes of finding a new church, what the Lord had in store for us was so much more than a sermon on Sundays.

We experienced a spark of faith that reignited in our family as we returned each week. The sermons connected with us and the ways to weave faith into our daily life have been exactly what we needed." - JEN





157

PEOPLE ATTENDED
THE SEDER MEAL ON
MAUNDY THURSDAY



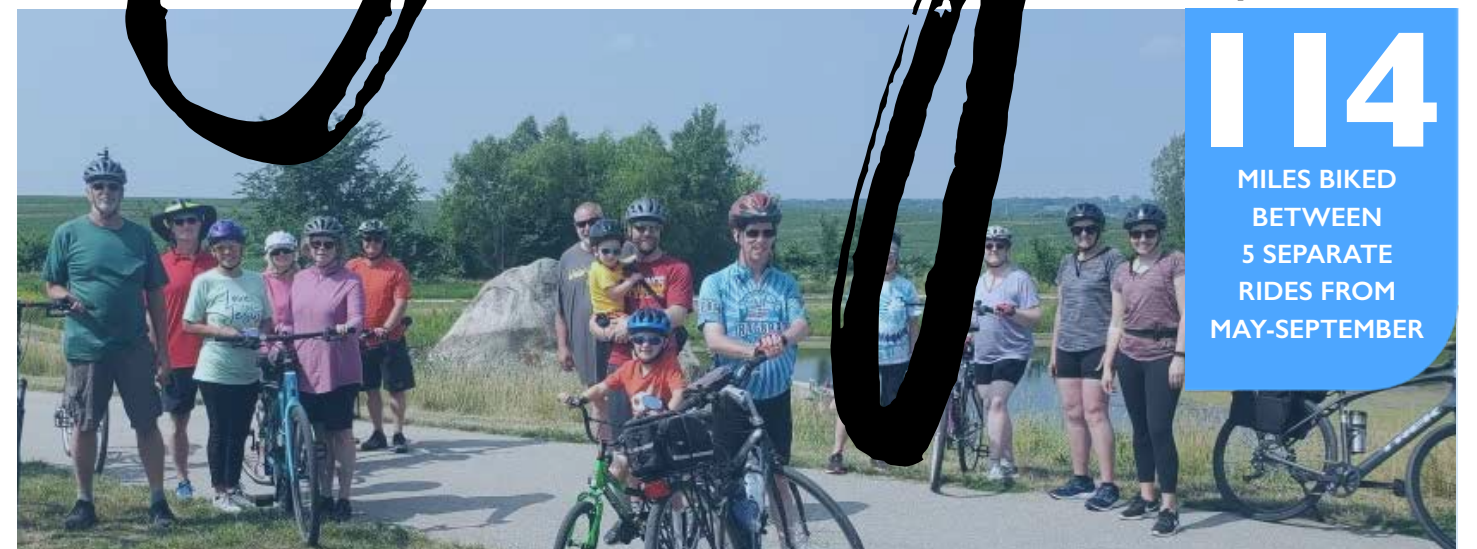
Great Out!

It is a joy to celebrate the lives being transformed by God's grace throughout all our ministry areas!



47

PEOPLE PARTICIPATED
IN DINNER FOR 8



114

MILES BIKED
BETWEEN
5 SEPARATE
RIDES FROM
MAY-SEPTEMBER

Great Joy

FAMILY MINISTRY

7

AVERAGE NUMBER OF KIDDOS
IN THE NURSERY EACH SUNDAY

16

NEW FAMILIES CONNECTING FAITH + LIFE

22

CONFIRMATION STUDENTS

27

MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS ATTENDED
RIVERSIDE SUMMER CAMP

28

PARENTS PARTICIPATED IN A 4-WEEK
SPIRITUAL PARENTING COURSE

52

2ND & 5TH GRADERS RECEIVED BIBLES

66

VOLUNTEERS ON
WEDNESDAYS AND SUNDAYS

288

STUDENTS REGISTERED FOR
FAMILY MINISTRY PROGRAMS

1522

MILES DRIVEN (ROUND-TRIP) TO JACKSON, MS
FOR HIGH SCHOOL MISSION TRIP



"The middle school worship band is where I met one of my good friends. It's been really fun and without it, I wouldn't have all these opportunities for doing what I love to do, growing in my friendship, and most importantly, growing in God. I always love going to church because I just feel safe when I'm there and feel like I can connect more to God."

- CONFIRMATION FAITH STATEMENT



"Through handing out food, praying over people, hearing testimonies, leading worship, making crafts, and cleaning up sidewalks, I felt connected to God in a whole new way. I learned how to take my faith into my own hands and it was made clear to me that through God anything and everything is possible. My faith, life, and soul are forever changed."

- MISSION TRIP STUDENT

VBS
RECAP

4

BIBLE VERSES MEMORIZED

86

ADULT AND STUDENT VOLUNTEERS

155

SNACKS & SUPPLIES DONATED
BY THE CONGREGATION

174

STUDENTS REGISTERED

ON THE
CASE



We want every student to have an opportunity to learn about the power of God's love in a grace-centered, Bible-based, fun, and safe atmosphere.

**THAT'S WHY WE GO
ALL OUT FOR VBS!**



Great Joy

ADULT MINISTRIES



33
PARTICIPANTS ON
GREECE TRIP



83

PEOPLE PARTICIPATED IN
THE CHOSEN SEASON 3

"The Chosen has deepened my faith by being able to watch and listen to the story and to share it with other people. I have gotten into conversations with others when I've worn a Chosen t-shirt. I love hearing that the show has brought many people to faith around the world and strengthened those who are already believers."

- GINGER

22

IF: GATHERING
PARTICIPANTS

258

FAITHLIFE GROUP
MEMBERS
45 LEADERS
28 DIFFERENT
GROUPS

129

ATTENDED WOMEN'S
CHRISTMAS DINNER

352

INDIVIDUALS HAVE
TAKEN THEIR
CLIFTON STRENGTHS
ASSESSMENT

Great Joy

GROWING OUR FAITH

We love seeing people chase after Jesus, wanting to know Him more, and wanting to be more like Him. By growing our faith through Bible studies, classes, FaithLife Groups, service, and worship opportunities, community is formed. We were built for community by a Creator who delights when we run after Him!

As we look to 2024, we're excited to see how God will invite us into even deeper community. Whether that's through classes, Bible studies, mentorships, or breaking bread together, it all brings Him joy. We're excited to be on this journey with all of you!



Bible Studies

The best way we have for knowing who God is and what God does is through the Bible! St. Mark's offered a variety of studies in 2023.

16

CROSSWAYS
PARTICIPANTS
MET 30 TIMES IN 2023

25

PARTICIPATED IN
"WINNING THE WAR IN
YOUR MIND" STUDY

94

PARTICIPANTS IN THE
10 COMMANDMENTS
RIGHTNOW MEDIA
STUDY

129

ATTENDED GENESIS
STUDY WITH
PASTOR PAUL



Seminary

Our Pastoral Interns (John, Michele, and Alice) are nearing the end of a six-year journey to become pastors! Mark your calendars for **June 9, 2024** when they are ordained.

11

SEMINARY CLASSES
ACROSS 12 MONTHS

19

SEMINARY BOOKS
READ

29

PAPERS WRITTEN

133.5

HOURS OF LECTURE

Great Joy

WORSHIP

Sundays are for worship - through songs, prayers, messages, baptisms, communion, and fellowship. Hundreds of volunteers also give of their time and talent to welcome guests, care for students, help facilitate worship and teaching, and so much more.

We may be biased, but we think Sundays might just be the best day of the week. Whether on-site or online, our prayer is that everyone experiences God through our services each Sunday.



MODERN MUSIC

Our worship is band-led and we seek to provide excellent music with a relevant sound to facilitate our times of worship.

- **8** new band members
- **16** student band volunteers
- **24** band volunteers
- **69** individual modern songs performed in 2023
- **90** dba - volume level!

TRADITIONAL ROOTS

St. Mark's values its roots in the Lutheran church tradition. We seek to meaningfully incorporate hymns, sacraments, prayers, and creeds into our worship services.

- **11** Chancel Bell ringers, **1** director, and **6** substitutes
- **32** Chancel Choir members
- **38** special musicians



38
SERMONS
PREACHED BY
PASTOR PAUL

AVERAGE WEEKLY WORSHIP ATTENDANCE

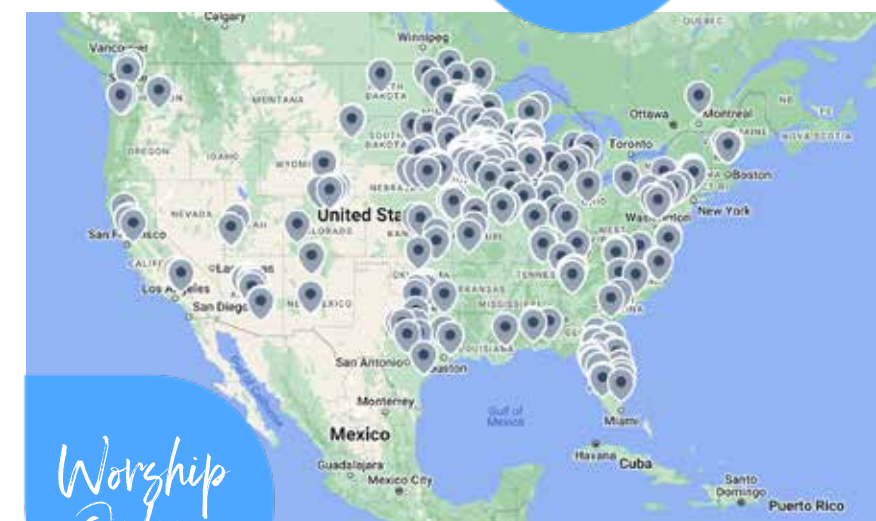
492 ON-SITE
123 ONLINE

EASTER SUNDAY - APRIL 9

1,624
On-site and online
across 7 services

CHRISTMAS EVE

2,091
On-site and online
across 5 services



Worship
Online

6,191
UNIQUE VIEWERS

4,930
HOURS VIEWED

Our team of **25** staff and volunteers who serve on our Livestream Team have the honor and opportunity to share the good news outside the boundaries of our walls. God is on the move!



121

HONORED
GUESTS AT
NIGHT TO
SHINE



353

POUNDS OF CHRISTMAS
GIFTS SENT TO HAITIAN
STUDENTS



109

BEAUTIFUL WEEK
VOLUNTEERS



2nd

YEAR OUR
STUDENTS
PARTICIPATED
IN UNITED
INVITE AT
NEWBO
MARKET

All People!



10

STUDENT
SERVE
SUNDAYS
WITH 46
FAMILIES
INVOLVED

Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms.
— 1 Peter 4:10

The community of our volunteers is consistent, devoted, and passionate about bringing our best to the Lord. Our partners are passionate about different things and have found ways to connect at St. Mark's through service.

2

IMPACT NIGHTS:
A NEW WAY TO
THANK VOLUNTEERS

777

VOLUNTEERS SERVING AROUND
THE BUILDING, DURING EVENTS,
OR PARTICIPATING IN
FAMILY MINISTRY PROGRAMS

Care & Hospitality

We want all people who come to St. Mark's to feel seen, received, and welcomed because we all matter to God. Whether it is eye contact, a handshake, a hug, or a smile, we believe Jesus is actively involved with each encounter. When we think about Jesus, let's be in awe of how much hospitality meant to him. It is an honor to serve alongside others that want to meet people, love people, and be with people.

64

hospital visits

191

in-home
communion
visits

376

community
events in our
building (up
150% from 2022!)

613

homemade
cards sent to
senior and
homebound
partners

The Living Story

SHARING THE GOSPEL WITH OUR COMMUNITY



"We volunteered and loved talking with the people at the end of the route. We got so many compliments on everything - the costumes, the lights, the message! There were new people who came through and there were repeat people who come every year! It was fun seeing their happy faces." - **PAM**

170
VOLUNTEERS

731
VEHICLES

\$3,871.99
DONATED TO
WILLIS DADY
HOMELESS SERVICES



All People

LOCAL MINISTRY PARTNERS

2023 MINISTRY PARTNERS

- Catherine McAuley Center
- Days for Girls
- Eight Days of Hope
- FLY
- His Hands Free Medical Clinic
- Hope CDA
- Marion Cares
- Mission of Hope
- Night to Shine
- Prison Fellowship
- Salvation Army
- Sleep in Heavenly Peace
- Wellington Heights Community Church

2023 OUTREACH EVENTS

- Back to School Backpacks
- Beautiful Week
- Night to Shine
- Poverty Simulation
- Salvation Army Bell Ringing
- Sleep in Heavenly Peace Bed Build
- Souper Saturday
- The Living Story
- Trunk or Treat
- Wellington Heights Community Church Christmas Store

223

POUNDS OF PRODUCE
FROM OUR
GARDEN OF GIVING
DONATED TO
LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS



588

GIFTS PROVIDED FOR
CHILDREN, VETERANS,
AND FAMILIES IN OUR
COMMUNITY THROUGH
OUR GIVING TREE
CAMPAIGN



Work Day at FaithLife Home - Summer 2023



FaithLife Homes, LLC

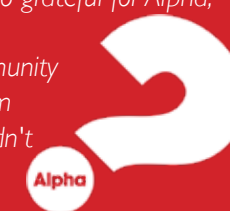
We purchased our first
"low-cost rental" home on May 1, 2023.

The renovation is in process and through the generosity
of contractors, we are able to give the home a
complete makeover with a new roof, siding, windows, kitchen, bath, and flooring!

We will be interviewing possible tenants alongside our partner,
Wellington Heights Community Church, in February 2024 with an occupancy set for June 2024.

Alpha

"We took the Alpha course to Mission of Hope this year for the first time, not knowing what to expect. We were totally blown away, not by the number of people who attended, but by their response to Alpha. They were so grateful for Alpha, for the messages of the videos, for the acceptance they felt, and for the community built between themselves and our team in the 11 weeks of the course. They didn't want Alpha to end!" - **SARAH**



All People

CARRYING THE GOSPEL TO ALL NATIONS

1
CANCELLED TRIP TO
PANAMA, WITH
PLANS TO RETURN
IN MARCH 2024

4
MISSIONARY
FAMILIES
WHO VISITED
ST. MARK'S IN 2023

10
SUPPORTED
MISSIONARIES
(LOCAL, NATIONAL,
AND GLOBAL)

83
UCI-HAITI STUDENT
SPONSORSHIPS



Haiti FaithLife Trip Highlights

- Returning to Haiti! Our first trip back since 2018.
- Making a difference for so many girls and women through the Days for Girls program. We visited six churches during our week and blessed the girls and women of the community with over 1,000 personal hygiene kits.
- The difference a cement floor can make! We visited a widow who lives with five other people (in a two-room home!) During the rainy season, the floor of the rock-walled home turned to mud. She praised God for the gift of a cement floor.



MAY 2023



Our 2023 **Lenten Project** raised \$8,999.36 so that a full-size basketball court could be constructed at Las Perlas School in Panama. The school will use the court as a way to connect with their community.

The gift of water is the gift of life for a community in Haiti. Our goal of \$5,000 was quadrupled and we raised \$20,882 with our **Walk for Water Fundraiser!** After two months of drilling, a very productive water well was found. From Pastor Jean Jean of UCI, "St. Mark's has changed the lives of a whole community."

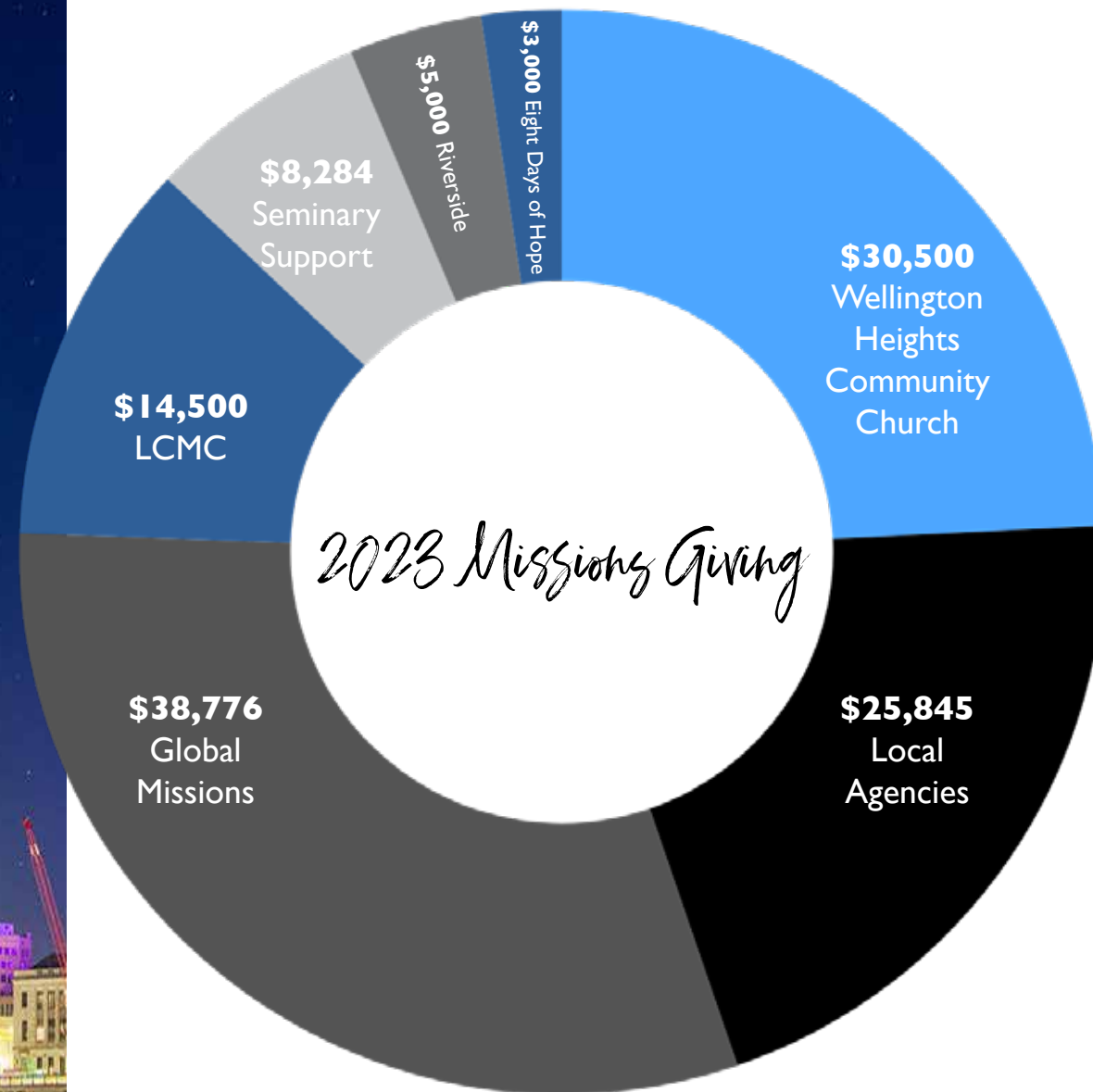


BECAUSE YOU

GAVE

God has brought incredible growth and life change through St. Mark's in 2023!

You are part of a bigger story, and your generosity is carrying the good news and great joy of Jesus to the people of Cedar Rapids and beyond.



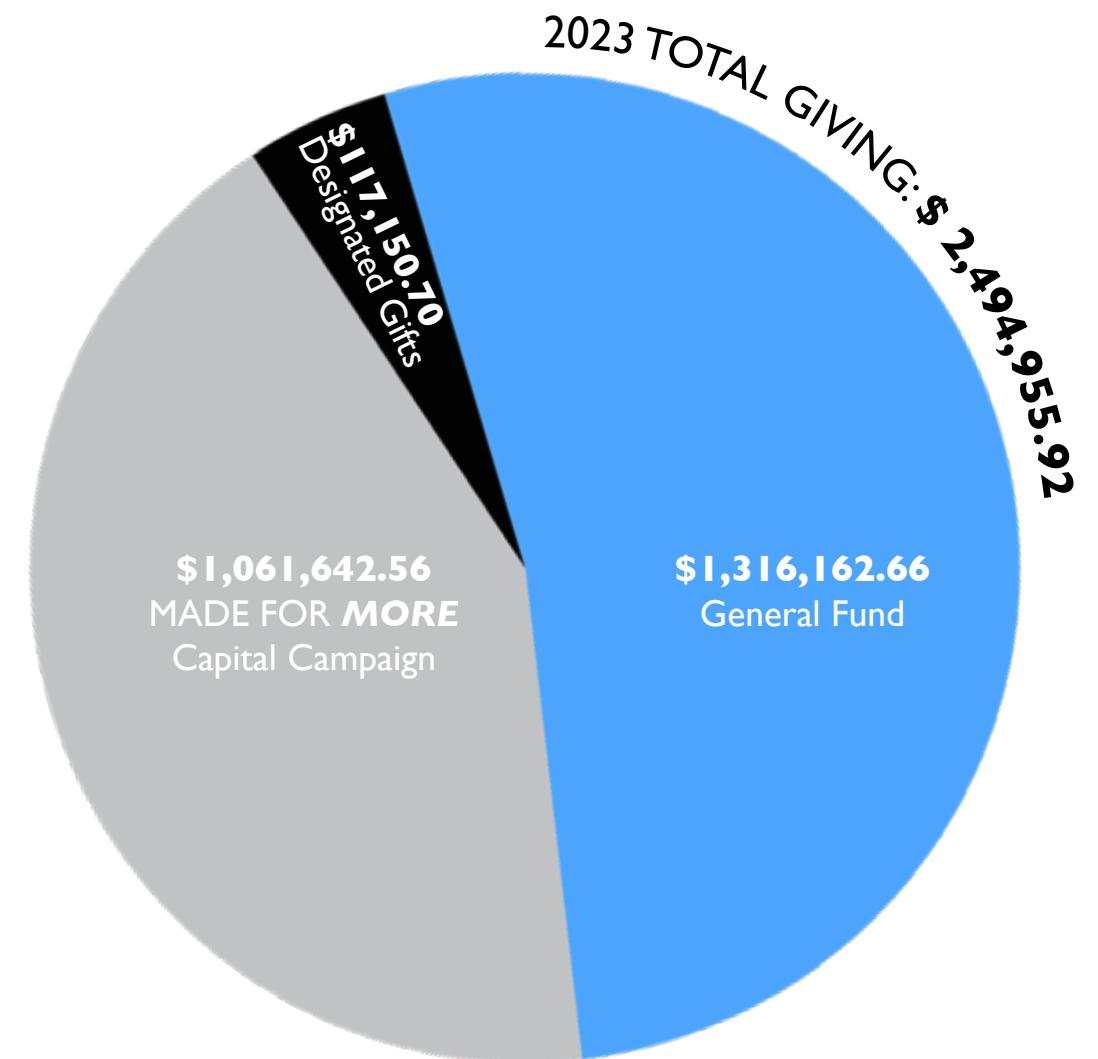
God is so incredibly good! We could not do any of our ministries without the generosity shown by St. Mark's givers. THANK YOU for being faithful.

We love the generosity of St. Mark's and can't help but feel moved by the many hearts that give so freely and joyfully.

Did You Know

20.74%

(on average) of all General Fund gifts are received in December each year?



Made For More Highlights

\$ 3,743,948.54

AMOUNT PLEDGED TO DATE (12/31/23)

\$ 2,840,331.99

TOTAL CASH RECEIVED TO DATE (12/31/23)

We remain committed to our three focus areas (debt reduction, missions, and campus improvements). In 2023 we were able to apply funds to our mortgage, use funds to begin FaithLife Homes, LLC (page 19), and purchase a new LED screen for Faith Worship Center.

2

BIG FAT CHECKS WRITTEN

\$1,599,108

DOLLARS APPLIED TO PRINCIPAL PAYMENT AND MONTHLY MORTGAGE

284

HOUSEHOLDS COMMITTED TO MADE FOR MORE (34% OF CONGREGATION)

Can't Forget About These 2023 Facts...

3

STAFF MEMBERS HAD
BABIES (CONGRATS BAILEY,
JAMES, AND KELLY)

7

COUPLES
PARTICIPATED IN
THE MARRIAGE COURSE

9

50+ POTLUCKS

13

DAYS LATE
PASTOR PAUL WAS
GETTING
HIS LETTER (PAGE 3)
WRITTEN

27

CHRISTMAS TREES
AROUND
THE BUILDING
IN DECEMBER

44

DOZEN DONUT HOLES
ORDERED
EACH SUNDAY
- THAT'S 528!



connect faith + life

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stmarkscr.org

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