



LOS TIEMPOS

January 2026

Our Purpose

Jesus Christ calls us to be a joyful community that celebrates God's love, transforms lives, and is a force for justice in the world.

We Welcome All

St. Mark's is a community of believers and seekers committed to being queer-affirming and anti-racist, reflecting the love and justice of Jesus Christ. We are a place where people of all ages, sexual orientations, gender identities, and abilities are welcomed, celebrated for their gifts, and invited to share in God's embrace.

Office Hours

Monday – Thursday | 9am–12pm

Office closed and staff observe Sabbath on Fridays



Find @StMarksAZ on social media!



IF WE MAKE IT THROUGH

“**IF WE MAKE IT THROUGH DECEMBER,**

Everything's gonna be alright I know.

It's the coldest time of winter... if we make it through December, we'll be fine.”

These are lyrics from the [Merle Haggard and the Strangers](#) song “If We Make It Through December” originally released in 1974. A cover was recorded by [Phoebe Bridgers](#) about 5 years ago, the last winter I spent in Chicago. The hardest part of living in what I call “the cold place” was not the cold, but the grey, and the lack of sunshine.

As we come out of the darkest part of the year, I realize I am now the longest serving staff member at St. Mark's. I continue to reflect on how our holiday season at St. Mark's was quietly shadowed by the sudden losses of our Church Administrator Gianina Scavone and our Elder on Session Lynne Davies, in addition to other children of God in the St. Mark's family who joined them for final rest.

These song lyrics are a reminder that the cycles of life always continue. Right now, perhaps like me, you are feeling a heavy sense of endlessness of more shadows than light. Life can feel like a sense of perpetual transition. Attempts to move on, or get a new home, or get a new job, or retire, or move into a calmer or more peaceful routine keep getting interrupted by unexpected events -- the human condition. Having to keep going every day doing all the tasks without certainty of stability in the future beyond faith in Creator's Good Road can simply be exhausting.

“If we make it through” is not to disregarding the present, but a reminder that the light always returns. And when it does, we want to be ready. We take our rest when we can, and do our little tasks when we can. We hold tightly to the little twinkly lights of winter, gather more kindling. As the winter rains of Tucson remind us, sometimes the beautiful blooms of spring are only possible because of dreary grey skies from months past. We made it through December. The New Year brings a focus on planning for how we can grow flowers again soon.



Elaina Richards
Director of Communications
elaina@stmarksaz.org

Kindly,

Elaina

Cover photo:

A new mural by Joe Pagac at Desert Drifter coffee

A FAREWELL FROM DR. JARED ARAGÓN

Dearest friends of St. Mark's,

As I sit at my desk typing this letter after my final day at St. Mark's, so many memories come to mind from my past ten years serving as organist, pianist, and director of handbells. I've been blessed beyond measure to have had the opportunity to serve this community of people for all this time. I know I've told this story to several people and please forgive me if you are hearing it again.



Dr. Jared Aragón
Organist, Handbell Director

It was 2015 and I was set to pursue my Doctor of Musical Arts in music composition at the University of Arizona. I had decided to move to Tucson several weeks before the start of the fall semester; I wanted to have the time to get to know the city and the university at my own pace before all the hustle and bustle of the first days of school. I was on the road to Tucson when I received a phone call from my mom: she had found a listing for a church looking for an organist and she thought it sounded like a place where I might possibly fit in. She texted me a link to the listing and I pulled into a rest area outside of Deming, New Mexico. I typed up a quick letter of interest, found my CV plus whatever other application materials the listing asked for, and emailed everything to St. Mark's from my cell phone. Soon, a response came back and I was asked to play for a Sunday service that would serve as my audition.

Not very long after that Sunday service, I was informed that I had won the audition and was offered the position of organist and pianist at St. Mark's. At that time, Mike Scionti was serving as choir director and Cathi Swanson was director of handbells. Cathi and I collaborated quite a lot and I can still remember vividly her ability to improvise solo lines to hymns with a handful of handbells. After a few weeks, Cathi let me know she was going to retire and move back to her hometown; I inquired about the possibility of taking over her position as handbell director listing out my previous handbell experience and was then trusted to take over the program.

A FAREWELL FROM DR. JARED ARAGÓN

And my goodness what a journey it has been! The handbell choir has grown so much as an ensemble over these past ten years and within the past two years has increased considerably in both size and skill. This is definitely not the group I started out with!

What a gift St. Mark's has in all of its musicians, both in the choir and the handbells. Handbells in particular, have all been incredibly hard working and willing to allow me to push their capabilities. Not every handbell anthem has been a success over the years, but I value the trust they have put in me in trying to expand their repertoire and their skill sets. We've been able to ring a wide assortment of works from traditional handbell literature to experimental soundscapes, from arrangements of Renaissance motets to one specially commissioned work by a composer from the UK. With the choir, I can remember fondly our Social Justice Choir Concerts we used to do with other choirs from around Tucson joining us. And of course the performances of Robert Ray's Gospel Magnificat we put on in more recent years!

I truly treasure my time at St. Mark's and all the opportunities this community has provided to me: the multitude of musicians I've had the chance to collaborate with, the folks I've become friends with, and just how much I, as a person, have had the chance to grow. This church has definitely had its impact on me and I do not take lightly the chance to have served this community for as long as I have.

So, while I am very excited to learn a new aspect of church music making, know that I will miss you all dearly and will think fondly of my time at St. Mark's Presbyterian. These past ten years have been an absolute joy, privilege, and a blessing.

Musically,

Jared Isaac Aragón

PERSONNEL UPDATES



After many years of relative stability in staffing at St. Mark's, we now find ourselves looking to fill a handful of open positions. Currently, the Personnel Committee is working to fill the following positions:

[Office Administrator](#)

[Handyperson/Facilities Coordinator](#)

[Organist/Pianist](#)

A few items to note:

- The tasks and responsibilities of the Communication Director are being folded into the Office Administrator job description.
- Hiring for a Handbell Choir Director is temporarily on hold pending the selection of a new Organist/Pianist. Gail Griffin has graciously stepped up to assist in the interim. (*Many, many thanks, Gail!*)

Lori Block is filling in three days a week in the Office Administrator role. Her willingness to share her unique experience and expertise at this moment is greatly appreciated!

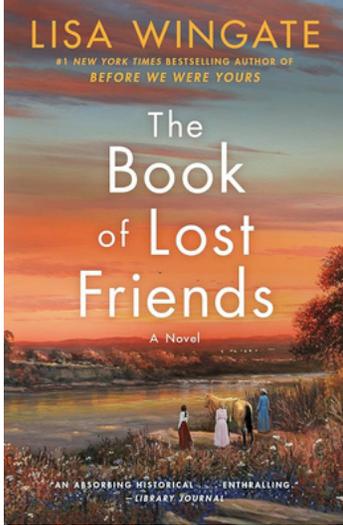
Lori can be reached at: churchadmin@stmarksaz.org

Keep the Personnel Committee in your prayers as they search to fill these positions. If you know of anyone who may be interested in these opportunities, pass along the information.

Interested applicants may send their resumes/CVs along with a letter of interest to either Beth Carroll (beth.carroll1428@gmail.com) or Becky Cook (rebeck.cook@gmail.com).

OPPORTUNITIES

Book Club - Jan 22



The Book Club will meet again on Thursday, January 22nd at 11:00AM in Calvin Hall.

They will be continuing **The Book of Lost Friends by Lisa Wingate.**

If you would like to attend, suggest a book, or have any questions, please contact [Pat Williams](#)

Annual Meeting - Jan 25

Church Session invites all to stay **after worship service on Sunday, January 25th** for the **Annual Meeting.**

We will review the budget, and reports from Ministry Teams/Committees about the previous year, as well as plans for 2026, and new church leaders.

The Pastor Nominating Committee is excited to share that they are actively in **Phase 5, Interviewing Candidates! Stay tuned for the notice of a Congregational Meeting.**



NEW FOOD PANTRY PARTNERSHIP



What could be better than a 3-way partnership to meet food needs in our community? Beginning in early January, St. Mark's, [Kaleidoscope Humanitarian Aid \(KHAid\)](#), and [Iskashitaa Refugee Network \(IRN\)](#) will be working together to better address food insecurity.

As grocery and rent prices soar, St. Mark's Food Pantry has received an increasing number of requests for help. Fortunately, we have a very generous base of donors from our church members and friends along with some budgeted funds. We have also been able to assist Iskashitaa in collecting and providing basic cooking items for their families who no longer receive SNAP benefits. Sadly, we do expect the need to grow during the coming year as federal resources continue to be unavailable.

In December, the KHAid board and the St. Mark's Session agreed to partner and include Iskashitaa in our joint efforts to better meet the need for shelf stable food. Kaleidoscope has been providing clothing to many non-profits throughout the borderlands since Casa Alitas was dissolved. They have continued to use rooms at St. Mark's for their collection, sorting and distribution site. A growing concern about the food crisis many refugee families and others are facing due to drastic cuts in federal funding led them to ask how they could best help. They offered to let their vast network of supporters know how to donate food in addition to clothing and also have made space for storing and organizing food donations. Volunteers from their network will pack food bags requested by St. Mark's Food Pantry organizers (Chris Maddux and office volunteers) and will have these available for distribution. Iskashitaa families will be a priority with their staff and volunteers facilitating food requests and distribution on Wednesday mornings at their regular gardening and art gatherings.

If you would like to learn more and/or volunteer to help with this vital ministry, please reach out to Martha Osborne (martha.r.osborne@gmail.com) or Chris Maddux (chrismx115@gmail.com).

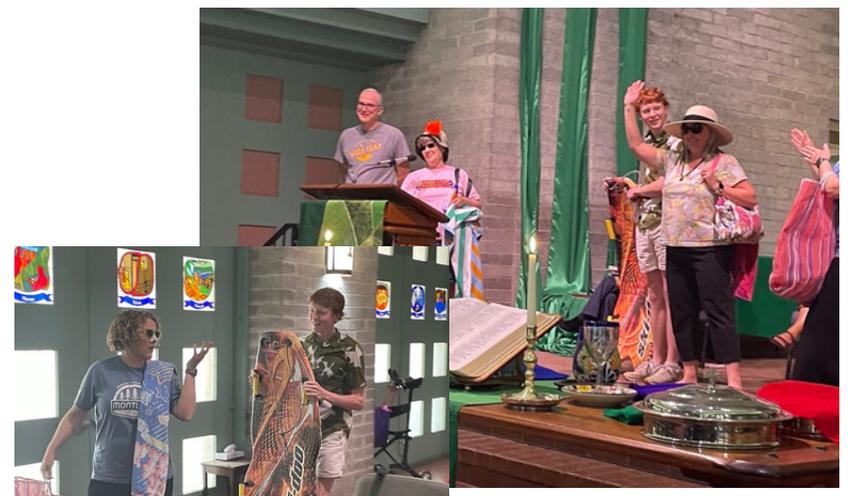
2025 IN REVIEW

2025 Grants Awarded from St. Mark's "For Others Fund"

Our church has always been blessed with faithful, generous and forward-thinking leaders. Some years ago, a fund was established to provide financial assistance for unbudgeted community needs. With Session approval, grants are made to community organizations. This year we were glad to be able to make the following grants:

- **Josefina Ahumada Dayworker Center at Southside Presbyterian Church** – \$5200
- **UNAM USA/UNAM Tucson** – supporting 2 nursing students from Mexico with \$4800 for their semester's living expenses enabling them to stay in Tucson to complete their professional internships through the UA School of Nursing.

(To learn more about St. Mark's "For Others Fund", please contact Treasurer Irvin Richards treasurer@stmarksaz.org)



2025 IN REVIEW



UPCOMING EVENTS

Jan 11| During Worship

Installation of Officers to Session and Committees

Jan 11| During Worship

Children's Church. Children In K-6 are welcome to join for a Bible story and craft!

Jan 12| 10:00-11:00AM

Administration Committee. Office Conference Room. All are welcome to attend.

Jan 12| 5:00-6:00PM

Faith Formation Committee. Office Conference Room. All are welcome to attend.

Jan 13| 11:00AM-12:00PM

Personnel Committee. Office Conference Room. All are welcome to attend.

Jan 13| 1:00-3:00PM

Bridge group. Calvin Hall.

Jan 13| 4:00-5:00PM

Community & Global Engagement Committee. Office Conference Room. All are welcome to attend.

Jan 14| 8:00-11:00AM

Refugee Garden Art Program (RGAP). Join Iskashitaa in their garden for this weekly activity, no experience necessary.

Jan 14| 8:30-9:30AM

Join us for **Midweek Manna**, a gathering for prayer and Bible study on the upcoming Sunday's preaching text, held in the office conference room (2nd Street side). All are welcome.

Jan 14| 6:00-8:00PM

Contemplative Community of Tucson. Weekly prayer group in Calvin Hall to provide strength and support for anyone working for peace and justice by cultivating a contemplative understanding of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Jan 14| 6:45-7:45PM

Restorative Yoga. All are welcome to stretch and connect with your body every Wednesday in Room F (2nd Street side).

Jan 20| 1:00-3:00PM

Bridge group. Calvin Hall.

Jan 20| 7:00-9:00PM

St. Mark's Session Meeting. Office Conference Room.

Jan 21| 8:00-11:00AM

Refugee Garden Art Program (RGAP).

Jan 21| 8:30-9:30AM

Midweek Manna.

Jan 21| 6:00-8:00PM

Contemplative Community of Tucson. Calvin Hall

Jan 21| 6:45-7:45PM

Restorative Yoga. Room F (2nd Street side).

Jan 22| 11AM-12:30PM

Book Club. Calvin Hall. Currently Reading: The Book of Lost Friends, by Lisa Wingate

Jan 25| During Worship

Children's Church. Children In K-6 are welcome to join for a Bible story and craft!

Jan 25| After Worship

Annual Meeting. Join for an update on church administration, finances, and annual goals.

Jan 27| 1:00-3:00PM

Bridge group. Calvin Hall.

Jan 27| 2:00-3:00PM

Congregational Care Committee. Office Conference Room. All are welcome to attend.

Jan 28| 8:00-11:00AM

RGAP.

Jan 28| 8:30-9:30AM

Midweek Manna.

Jan 21| 6:00-8:00PM

Contemplative Community of Tucson. Calvin Hall

Jan 28| 6:45-7:45PM

Restorative Yoga.

CONTACT INFO

Ministry Teams

Administration

Charles Ambrose – fragglero2@msn.com

Congregational Care

Jim Cullum – jcullum@jcams.com

Cathy Lurvey – deaconmindset@gmail.com

Faith Formation

Rachael Eggebeen – edsrachael@gmail.com

Community & Global Engagement

Martha Osborne – martha.r.osborne@gmail.com

Jan Prinz – janeth60@gmail.com

Worship

Gwyn Roske – groske1@gmail.com

Kevin Hainline – kevinhainline@gmail.com

Robin Staples – robin.staples@cox.net

Personnel – personnel@stmarksaz.org

Beth Carroll

Becky Cook

Clerk of Session

Margaret Wilkie – wilkie.m.l.tuc@gmail.com

Staff

Transition Pastor

Tracy Daub – tracy@stmarksaz.org

Director of Music

David Braceross-Hamm – david@stmarksaz.org

Church Administrator

Lori Block (temporary) –

churchadmin@stmarksaz.org

Director of Communications

Elaina Richards – elaina@stmarksaz.org





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Sunday Schedule

In-Person Worship: 10:30am **Livestream:**
www.YouTube.com/StMarksAZ

Find Us Online!

www.stmarksaz.org
Facebook.com/StMarksAZ
Instagram.com/StMarksAZ
Twitter.com/StMarksAZ