

St. Mark United Methodist Church
550 Hwy. 72 By-Pass NW
Greenwood, SC 29649
<http://www.stmarkgreenwood.com>
Church Phone: 864.229.5416
Kids' World Phone: 864.227.2776

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The Witness



Bypass Campus (BPC)



Rivers Street Campus (RSC)

St. Mark United Methodist Church

www.stmarkgreenwood.com
Volume 19 Issue 12
January 2026



ST. MARK CARES AND SHARES
This January, we are collecting new or gently used cold weather items - blankets, scarves, hats, coats, etc. - to be distributed to those in need by Greater Greenwood United Ministries.

**Cares and Shares
St. Mark**

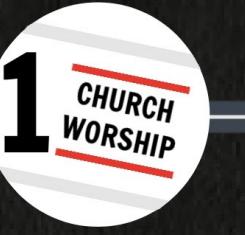
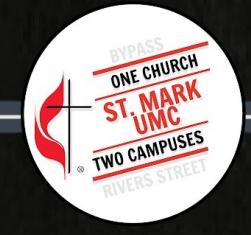
SUNDAY, JANUARY 4 • RIVERS STREET CAMPUS

"ONE CHURCH WORSHIP"

1 CHURCH • 2 CAMPUSES
ST. MARK UMC
ST. MARK HAS A PLACE FOR YOU

SUNDAY SCHOOL AT 9:15
10:30 am WORSHIP

Fellowship Lunch to follow!
Everyone is invited to bring a pot of chili to share!





Jason's Journal

"The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it."

John 1:5

This is a picture I took in 2023 while in South Dakota pheasant hunting with my family. I was able to capture this beautiful sunrise one morning before breakfast. As soon as I saw this beautiful display of God's handiwork I thought of this one verse from John's Gospel, *The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it*. I remember that morning being in awe and reminded of this truth found in John's Gospel. While there were still dark clouds on the horizon, there was light still shining across the plains, dawning a new day with new beginnings and new opportunities.

St. Mark UMC, as we begin the new year together God's light is still shining upon us and through us. God is offering to God's church new beginnings and new opportunities this year to go and proclaim the Good News of Jesus to all the world. In the month of January, we will enter a sermon series entitled, *New Beginnings*. Robby and I both believe God has tremendous things in store for St. Mark as we continue to reach out in ministry and mission into the dark world around us. While we may watch the news or look out into our communities, homes, and places of work it can seem at times that the darkness of evil is overpowering the light of Christ. It is our hope that when we find ourselves in dark times and places of this life, we will remember these words from John's Gospel; words of encouragement and empowerment that darkness and evil have been eternally defeated by the love and sacrifice of Jesus Christ our Lord.

As I consider these words from John, the power of God's light, and this image I am reminded of another scripture, Genesis 1. *In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. Then God said, 'Let there be light.'* The first words of God recorded in the scriptures is God speaking forth light into and over the darkness. That same God is still speaking forth light into the darkness of our lives and this world and the darkness will not overcome it. St. Mark UMC that is good news!

Worship Attendance Year to Date Average	
As of December 28, 2025	
8:45 AM - BPC	83
8:45 AM - RSC	57
11:00 AM - BPC	86
11:15 AM - RSC	86
8:45 Stream - BPC	54
11:15 Stream - RSC	38
10:30 AM - One Church	274
10:30 Stream - One Church	102
Worship Attendance	393
Sunday School Attendance	52

KREW and EPIC Attendance School Year Average	
As of November 16, 2025	
KREW	58
EPIC	75
HSX	12

The next copy of *The Witness*, the church's monthly newsletter, will be emailed out Thursday, January 29th. **Deadline to submit information to the church office for the newsletter is Monday, January 19th.**

Copies of the January Birthdays list, January Anniversaries list, and Upper Rooms for January/February are located at the narthex/welcome area at each campus.

**Friday, January 30
6:30am
Rivers Street Campus
of St. Mark UMC**



**Our guest speaker
this month
is Jim Petty, Jr.**




January Church Meetings



All meetings are at the BPC

Growth January 11, at 12:45 PM in room 104

Finance January 11, at 2:00 PM in room 105/107

Trustees January 25, at 12:45 PM in room 104

Forward Focus January 25, at 2:00 PM in room 105/107



An all-new podcast coming January 7 from Pastor Jason and Pastor Robby!

Ideas for an episode? Let us know!



Hello St. Mark Family!

It's hard to believe it's already 2026. It feels like just yesterday we were saying the same thing about 2025. Time has a way of moving faster than we expect, and the turn of a new year often brings a mix of emotions. There is excitement for what lies ahead, reflection on what has been, and sometimes a quiet awareness of how quickly seasons pass. A new year invites us to pause, to take stock, and to ask again who God is calling us to be.

As United Methodists, our mission is clear and deeply rooted in Scripture, **to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world**. Those words are familiar to many of us, but the beginning of a new year is a good time to ask what they actually mean for our lives right now, not in theory, but in practice.

Jesus' final words to His disciples still echo across generations, **"Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."** (Matthew 28:19-20)

Making disciples is not a program we run or a box we check. It is a way of life. It begins with our own relationship with Jesus; how we listen to Him, follow Him, and allow Him to shape our hearts. Discipleship is formed in worship, in prayer, in Scripture, and in community. It grows when we choose faithfulness in ordinary moments, when we forgive instead of holding grudges, when we show grace instead of judgment, and when we live with hope in a world that often feels overwhelming.

Transformation does not always happen in loud or dramatic ways. Paul reminds us, **"Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds"** (Romans 12:2). Transformation begins within us before it ever flows through us. As God renews our hearts and minds, our lives begin to reflect Christ in ways that touch others. In 2026, making disciples will look much like it always has, loving God and loving our neighbors. It looks like showing up for worship, even when life is busy. It looks like serving when it would be easier to sit back. It looks like teaching our children what it means to follow Jesus, not just with our words but with our actions. It looks like caring for one another, especially in times of grief, uncertainty, and change.

Jesus tells His followers, **"You are the light of the world... let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven"** (Matthew 5:14-16). The world does not need more noise; it needs faithful, loving witnesses who reflect the light of Christ. When we live out our faith in tangible ways, we participate in God's work of transformation. As we step into this new year together, my prayer is that we would recommit ourselves to the call Christ has placed before us. That we would remain rooted in worship, grounded in Scripture, and open to the movement of the Holy Spirit. That we would see every interaction, every relationship, and every opportunity as a chance to point others toward Jesus.

The year ahead will bring joys and challenges we cannot yet see. But we do not walk into 2026 alone. God goes before us, walks beside us, and calls us forward with purpose and hope. May we be faithful disciples, living out our calling so that lives, communities, and the world around us might be transformed by the love of Jesus Christ.

I pray 2026 brings you joy, renewal, and a stronger, deeper faith. I look forward to seeing YOU at CHURCH! BRING A FRIEND!

Robby

JANUARY PREACHING SCHEDULE AND SCRIPTURE

Happy New Year! For the month of January we will be in a sermon series entitled, New Beginnings, as this New Year is a new beginning for the church to continue in ministry and mission to the world. As we begin the New Year together, we will be having a One Church worship service on Sunday January 4th. Robby and I believe worshipping together as one on the first Sunday of the year is a great opportunity to create the rhythm of continued unity of One Church, Two Campuses. We look forward to seeing you in January!

January 4 - John 1:1-10—One Church Worship Service

- Rev. Jason Wilson and Rev. Robby Lybrand at the Rivers Street Campus at 10:30 AM.

January 11 - Matthew 3:13-17

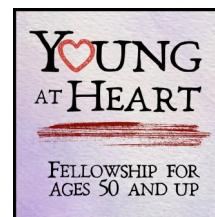
- Rev. Jason Wilson at the Bypass Campus 8:45 AM and 11:00 AM.
- Rev. Robby Lybrand at the Rivers Street Campus 8:45 AM and 11:15 AM.

January 18 - John 1:29-42

- Rev. Jason Wilson at the Bypass Campus 8:45 AM and 11:00 AM.
- Mr. Glenn Perrin at the Rivers Street Campus 8:45 AM and 11:15 AM.

January 25 - Matthew 4:12-23

- Rev. Jason Wilson at the Bypass Campus 8:45 AM and 11:00 AM.
- Rev. Robby Lybrand at the Rivers Street Campus at 8:45 AM and 11:15 AM.



- Young at Heart will not meet in January.

Staff Parish Relations Committee 2026:

Class of 2026: Jennifer Goldman and Amy Latham
Class of 2027: Lara Hudson, Todd Philcox, and Church Strawn (Chair)
Class of 2028: Jennifer Creswell, Emily Garrett, and April Walden
Ex officio:

Lay Leaders: Jonathan Creswell and Christine Philcox
Lay Member to Annual Conference: Jonathan Creswell
Pastors

Board of Trustees for 2026:

Class of 2026: Tammy Marshall and Glenn Perrin
Class of 2027: Brad Chiles, Holly Mock and David Weathers
Class of 2028: Caroline Furman, Tommy Miller, and Ronnie Joe Polatty
Trustees elect their chairperson

Nominations and Lay Leadership Committee for 2026:

Class of 2026: JoAnn Babb, Dubie Brown, and Rick Henderson
Class of 2027: Alyson Perrin, Ronnie Joe Polatty, and Kim Sparks
Class of 2028: Leslie Cheshire, Joy Edwards, and Teresa Roy
Lay Leaders: Jonathan Creswell and Christine Philcox
Pastors
Senior Pastor is the Chairperson of the committee

Finance Team for 2026:

Class of 2026: Miriam Bickerton, April Prince, John Sparks, and David Tompkins
Class of 2027: Jason Arnold, Patrick Hobson (Chair), and Bob Roy
Class of 2028: Amy Ashley, Will Valentine, and Wilson Bruce
Lay Leaders: Jonathan Creswell and Christine Philcox
Lay Member to Annual Conference: Bill Lybrand
Chairperson Church Council: Todd Dalton
SPRC Representative: Chosen by SPRC
Trustee Representative: Chosen by Trustee
Financial Secretary: Paige Holley (without vote)
Church Treasurer: Erin Layland (without a vote)
Assistant Church Treasurer: Jim Brown (without a vote)
Pastors
Meeting dates and times for Finance - all in room 105/107 at BPC
January 11th, at 2:00 PM
March 15th, at 12:45 PM
May 3rd, at 12:45 PM
July 12th, at 12:45 PM
September 20th, at 12:45 PM
November 15th, at 12:45 PM



If you can sew, volunteer to help make the quilts. If you can't sew, donations are always needed. If you hear of someone who might need a quilt, please make sure they want it, and then contact Kay Gregory at 864-554-4740 or Patricia Rickenbaker at 864-980-4293 or email Stmarkprayerquilts@gmail.com.



SEEKING A LEADER FOR WOMEN'S MINISTRIES

The Instruct Committee is prayerfully searching for a woman of St. Mark who feels called to lead our **Women's Ministries**. This rewarding role includes coordinating activities throughout the year, working with church staff to send updates and emails to the women of the congregation, and providing information for announcement slides.

Women's Ministries is a vital part of our church family – helping women connect, grow in faith, and serve together in love. If you have a heart for encouraging others and organizing meaningful opportunities for fellowship, we invite you to consider this important ministry.

For more information, please contact info@stmarkgreenwood.com.



Preparations are underway for the 2026 Tinsel and Treasures Sale!

Take a look at your Tinsel & Treasures, and see what you might like to donate for our sale! We are accepting all holiday and vintage items, small and large!



Call or text to arrange drop off:
Fran Brown: (864)341-4092
Cyndi Cioffi: (404)683-0222



Why should I take my child to Sunday School?

Sunday School plays a vital role in the spiritual growth of our children and youth. It is in these small-group settings that they gain a strong foundation of basic Bible knowledge—learning the stories, teachings, and truths of Scripture that shape their understanding of who God is and how

He calls us to live. As they grow, this Biblical foundation helps them move beyond simply knowing God's Word to applying it in their daily lives, guiding them toward Godly choices, compassion for others, and a growing faith of their own. Just as importantly, Sunday School is where meaningful, faith-centered relationships are formed and nurtured. These consistent connections with peers and caring leaders create a supportive community where children and youth feel known, valued, and encouraged as they grow together in faith.

We invite all children and youth to be part of Sunday School, where faith is nurtured, friendships are built, and God's Word comes alive each week. Our age-appropriate classes are designed to meet kids right where they are and help them grow in their understanding of the Bible while learning how to live out their faith. Younger Spark meets in Room 3 for K2–1st grade, Older Spark meets in Room 8 for 2nd–5th grade, and Ignite meets in Room 105 for Grades 6–12. There is a place for every child to belong, learn, and grow—we would love for your family to join us this Sunday!



SUNDAY
SCHOOL



JOIN US JANUARY 11 FOR OUR SUNDAY NIGHT KICKOFF!



KREW IS FOR CHILDREN
AGED 2 THROUGH
5TH GRADE.

www.stmarkbridgekids.com

PRIZES
SOUP
BINGO

6:30-8:00
Sunday, Jan. 11



EPIC IS FOR
6TH-12TH
GRADE STUDENTS.

www.stmarkepic.com

Church Council

Chairperson: Todd Dalton
 Recording Secretary: Paige Holley
 Lay Leader for Bypass Campus: Christine Philcox

Lay Leader for Rivers Street Campus: Jonathan Creswell

Finance Chairperson: Patrick Hobson

Trustee Chairperson: Trustees will elect

Staff Parish Chairperson: Chuck Strawn

Church Treasurer: Erin Layland

Assistant Church Treasurer: Jim Brown

Nominations/Lay Leadership Committee Representative: Joy Edwards

Lay Members to Annual Conference: Martha Alewine, Jonathan Creswell, Joy Edwards, Frankie Elgin, Ralph Layland, Bill Lybrand, and Matthew Miller

Alternate Lay Members to AC: Erin Layland and Tommy Miller

Worship Chairpersons: Frankie Elgin and Matthew Miller

Instruct Chairperson: Kayla Beale

Nurture Chairpersons: Holley Coyle and Kim Sparks

Growth Chairperson: Casey Tompkins

Sending Forth Chairperson: Kevin Farren (without a vote)

Native American Coordinator: Russell Holley

Kids' World Chairperson: Alyson Perrin

Women's Ministry President: committee

UMM President: TBD

EPIC President: Jake Moore (term expires May 31, 2026)

Historians: Julie McLaughlin and Paige Holley

Young at Heart: Fran Brown

Servants of St. Mark Chairs: Jean Brown and Margaret Kennerly

Senior Pastor: Rev. Jason Wilson

Associate Pastor: Rev. Robby Lybrand

Church Staff: Ex Officio:

Julie McLaughlin—Minister of Children and Youth and Communication Director

Paige Holley - Administrative Assistant, Financial Secretary, and Membership Secretary

Jennifer Lybrand - Assistant to the Minister of Children and Youth

Carol Jones - Ministry of Music

Matthew Miller - Pianist/Organist

Amanda Wideman - Director of Kids' World (without a vote)

Fred Engler - Worship Leader for the Rivers Street Campus (without a vote)

Church Council Members at Large:

Class of 2026: Connie Cook, Leslie Farren, and Roberta Weathers

Class of 2027: Mary Lou Chiles, Caren Larate, and Dayne Pruitt

Class of 2028: Elizabeth Arnold, Mark Cook, and Dan Crawford

**Prayers of the Church**

Prayer requests will remain on this list for three weeks unless we are notified differently.

RESIDENTIAL LIVING

Ansley Glen
 (1408 Parkway, Greenwood, SC)
 Faye Adams

Magnolia Bridge
 (1056 TPC Blvd, Unit 155, Murrells Inlet, SC 29576)
 Susan Hood

Wesley Commons
 (1110 Marshall Road, Greenwood, SC)

Ruth Clark
 Jim and Dodie Conley
 George and Betty Crane
 Skip Heintzelman
 Betty Moss McGuirt
 Lorene Waldrep
 Gene Zittrouer

Shut-In/Homebound
 Mary Ellen Anderson
 (864.223.5275)
 1830 Alexander Road W
 Greenwood, SC 29649

Jean Bedenbaugh
 Lexington Medical Center Extended Care
 815 Old Cherokee Road
 Lexington, SC 29072
 Tom and Beth Dowtin
 122 Hemlock Ct
 Greenwood, SC 29649

Mary Anna Evans
 5800 Old Providence Road
 Apt 4310
 Charlotte, NC 28226

Evelyn Fennell
 308 Marietta Drive
 Greenwood, SC 29646
 Charlie Helms (704.535.7848)
 c/o Teena Williams
 4600 Crofton Ct.
 Charlotte, NC 28205

Miriam Laswell
 122 Leslie Drive
 Greenwood, SC 29649
 Bob and Jean Lax
 801 Musgrove St
 Unit 84
 Clinton, SC 29325

Shut-In/Homebound Cont'd

Julie McCaffrey
 101 Wendover Road
 Greenwood, SC 29649

Wilma McCall
 106 Cessna Avenue
 Greenwood, SC 29646
 Jackie Menaker
 104 Hunters Village Drive
 Greenwood, SC 29649

MEMBERS AND REGULAR ATTENDEES

Harold Johnson
 Kenny Walden
 Ed Hood
 Jim Conley
 Dodie Conley
 Betty Moss McGuirt

MEMBERS' FAMILY
 Meghan Philcox
 The Parents of Nicole Rousey
 Alyssa Fender
 Whitney Stennett

MEMBERS' FRIENDS

Kristen
 Dee Dee Setzler
 Gracy Justice
 Kim Jones
 Gail Rumfelt
 Mark Davis Family
 Will Coleman
 Rebecca Hall
 Valerie Hazlett

MILITARY

Sgt. Jack Boyd - Army
 Christian Furman - Army
 Audrey Garver - Army
 Ethan Garver - Army
 Randall Geddings
 Joshua Goff - Marines
 Kos Kerhoulas - Navy
 Mackenzie Latham - Air Force
 Will Peeler - Army National Guard
 Banner Peksa - Army

COLLEGE STUDENTS

Anderson University:
 Luke Godwin and Eric Philcox
 Chowan University:
 Cameron Addis
 Citadel:
 Olivia Murray and Owen Whittington

COLLEGE STUDENTS Cont'd

Clemson:
 Adam Prince, Bentley Setzler, Brady Wilson, Caroline Addis, Charlee Layland, Chloe Ison, Dawson Hudson, Emma Arnold, Jackson Hamm, Josh Godwin, Julia Creswell, Lexi Layland, Liam Tompkins, Lily Lambert, Liza Justesen, Matthew Dalton, Noah Perrin, and Thomas Goff

Erskine College:
 Hampton Ashley

Guilford College:
 Jillian Mapes

Kenneth Shuler:
 Rylee McManus

Lander:
 Jordan Mapes, Kylie Camp, and Rhianna Philcox

MUSC Charleston:
 Wyatt Prince

Mississippi State University:
 Walker Self

North Georgia Technical College:
 Thomas Hudson

Piedmont Technical College:
 McCutchen Geoly and Savannah Mallon

Presbyterian College:
 Beatty Murray

Tri County Technical College:
 Luke Hannah

University of Georgia:
 Haley McLaughlin

University of North Carolina - Charlotte:
 Zach Robinson

University of South Carolina:
 Caroline Bell, Grace Lollis, and Meg McGovern

Wofford College:
 Hannah Crooks and Mary Peden Light



St. Mark gratefully acknowledges the following gifts:

- To *The General Fund* in loving memory of **Fred Latham** by Rotary Club of Greenwood.
- To *The Children and Youth Fund* in loving honor of **Tom McLaughlin** by Margaret, Sam, and Hannah Crooks.
- To *The General Fund* in loving memory of **Sam Zittrouer** by Bob and Gail Propester.

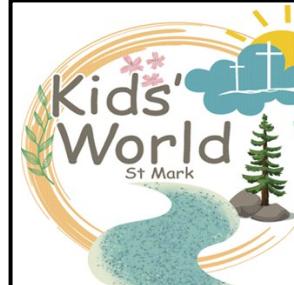


The church office will close at noon for New Year's Eve and will be closed all day on New Year's Day.



Healthy snacks (granola bars, nuts, dried fruit).

Items needed at the Food Bank:
 Canned tuna, chicken, or salmon, Peanut butter and jelly, Meals in a can (chunky soups, stew, chili), Canned fruits in its own juice or water, Canned food with pop-top lids, Dried beans (pinto, blackeyed, kidney, lima, etc), Pasta (including whole grain), Rice (brown, white, yellow), Low-sugar whole grain cereals, Grits and Oatmeal (bag or box), Powder or shelf-stable milk, Bottled water and fruit drinks,



Holiday Competitions Winners

The winners for the door contest were:

1. Twas the Night Before Christmas
2. Snowflake Wonderland
3. Was a tie: Toy Story Christmas & Gingerbread House

The winners for the cookie contest:

1. Butter Cookies
2. Fruity Pebble Cookie
3. Red Velvet Cookies

Thank you to everyone who voted in our contest and for always supporting Kids' World! We are so thankful for the village that God has given us! Happy New Year and may God bless you!

Amanda Wideman and Sydney McElroy

I AM NO LONGER MY OWN, BUT THINE
 PUT ME TO WHAT THOU WILT, RANK ME WITH WHOM THOU WILT.
PUT ME TO DOING, PUT ME TO SUFFERING.
 LET ME BE EMPLOYED FOR THEE OR LAID ASIDE FOR THEE.
 LET ME HAVE ALL THINGS, LET ME HAVE NOTHING.
I FREELY AND HEARTILY YIELD ALL THINGS
TO THY PLEASURE AND DISPOSAL.
AND NOW, O GLORIOUS AND BLESSED GOD,
FATHER, SON, AND HOLY SPIRIT,
THOU ART MINE AND I AM THINE.

SO BE IT.
 AND THE COVENANT WHICH I HAVE MADE ON EARTH,
LET IT BE RATIFIED IN HEAVEN.
AMEN.

-JOHN WESLEY

January 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Worship Services are: Bypass Campus:8:45 am & 11:00 am Rivers Street Campus: 8:45 am & 11:15 am Sunday School 10:00 am				1 Church Offices and Kids' World are closed 5:30 Al-Anon Meeting 5:30 West Side AA	2	3
4 9:15 Sunday School 10:30 One Church Worship Undecorating RSC following fellowship meal 4:00 Undecorating BPC	5 5:30 Teen Journey 5:30 West Side AA	6 5:00 Volleyball in WGH 6:00 Women on My Journey AA	7 6:30 Men's Bible Study 5:00 Volleyball in WGH 6:30 Blend Band Rehearsal 6:30 Chancel Choir Practice	8 9:30 Founders Hall in use 5:30 Al-Anon Meeting 5:30 West Side AA	9	10 Kairos training at RSC 12:00 Founders Hall in use
11 12:45 Growth committee meeting 2:00 Finance committee meeting 4:30 KREW 6:30 EPIC 8:00 HSX	12 5:30 Teen Journey 5:30 West Side AA	13 5:00 Volleyball in WGH 6:00 Women on My Journey AA	14 6:30 Men's Bible Study 5:00 Volleyball in WGH 6:30 Blend Band Rehearsal 6:30 Chancel Choir Practice	15 5:15 Daisy Troop 5:30 Al-Anon Meeting 5:30 West Side AA 6:30 Cadette Troop	16	17 8:30 Kairos training at RSC
18	19 Information due for the church newsletter Kids' World is closed 5:30 Teen Journey 5:30 West Side AA	20 5:00 Volleyball in WGH 5:30 Worship Center is in use 6:00 Women on My Journey AA	21 6:30 Men's Bible Study 5:00 Volleyball in WGH 6:30 Blend Band Rehearsal 6:30 Chancel Choir Practice	22 5:30 Al-Anon Meeting 5:30 West Side AA	23	24
25 12:45 Trustees meeting 2:00 Forward Focus meeting 4:30 KREW 6:15 EPIC 8:00 HSX	26 5:30 Teen Journey 5:30 West Side AA	27 9:30 Puppet Theater in use 5:00 Volleyball in WGH 6:00 Women on My Journey AA	28 6:30 Men's Bible Study 5:00 Volleyball in WGH 6:30 Blend Band Rehearsal 6:30 Chancel Choir Practice	29 5:30 Al-Anon Meeting 5:30 West Side AA	30 6:30 Men's Prayer Breakfast	31