



Sunday Worship Services 9:00 AM, 11:00 AM | Sunday School 10:00 AM

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THE BLESSED STRUGGLES OF EARLY PARENTING

By Laura Buchanan, UMC.ORG

Perhaps more than any other experience, parenting brings a myriad of conflicting emotions. Exhaustion and expectation. Fear and excitement. Frustration and happiness. Tears and laughter.

These dichotomies are hard to describe or understand while you're living them because there is rarely a free moment to consider such things. It's nearly impossible to process profound life lessons when you're holding a screaming newborn, starting your fourth load of laundry, and catching a scent of an impending diaper change – only to realize that in fact, it's you that needs some attention because you haven't showered or changed your clothes in a very long time.

A feeling like no other

It might seem trite to say, but parents really are superheroes. By giving life to another, we give up a little of ourselves. Whether we're ready to or not, we say goodbye to some of our individual freedoms in order to fully commit to this precious bundle of joy that God has given us. As soon as we hold that tiny human, our hearts expand, our view of the world shifts, and our life path is redirected. It's a feeling like no other.

But as we settle into the daily rigors of parenthood, elation often mixes with despair, especially for those of us who battle anxiety. "Is it normal for them to cry all night long?" "Why won't she eat anything but carbs?" "Why does he feel the need to jump off of every tall object in sight?" "Why won't they wear pants!?"

I've often heard it said that parenting is the "hardest, yet most rewarding experience," which is often accompanied by the classic piece of advice, "the days are long, but the years are short." Both are true, but I found no solace in these idioms when I was sleep-deprived and trying to find my first-time parent confidence. Solace came via the milestones that marked progress – gurgling laughter, tentative steps, new words and abilities, and a clearer look at who this little person actually is. When I saw these signs of growth, I realized that maybe I was doing something right after all.



No more, "No, Mama!"

As my daughter became a school-aged child, peaceful reflection slowly found a foothold in my life. As spit-up stains were replaced by grass stains and the resounding, "No, Mama!" was replaced by the alphabet song, I could finally grapple with the deeper experience of motherhood.

In the still, quiet snippets of time, I could rest long enough to consider the journey I'd traveled, a relatively short beginning to the long road ahead. I realized that my prayers had evolved from, "Lord, get us through this hour" to, "Lord, thank you for this season," and that my faith had carried me through each day. No parent has all of the answers. Every parent has had tough moments and questioned their abilities as they tried to excel in their new identity as a mother, father, or caretaker. As I look back, I can see that in every challenge, there was learning. In every shadowy day when I wondered if I could be a great mother, the light of God's love was surrounding me, often in the form of meals delivered by members of our church, a smile from my baby, and the help of family members.

Take comfort in the Comforter

When our days are full, when self-doubt stirs within us, our ever-faithful God is patiently beside us, holding our hand, encouraging us and cheering us on. We see it in our sleeping (finally!) baby's cherubic face, feel it in a sticky-handed hug, hear it in the first mumbled, "Wuv you too."

Maybe there are days when we struggle to believe it, but our Comforter and Creator has brought us to each moment because we can do it, we can be the parent our child needs – we already are, because we're loving, nurturing, and dedicating ourselves to this amazing child God entrusted to our care.

Laura Buchanan works for UMC.org at United Methodist Communications. She, her husband, and her 8-year-old daughter live in Nashville, Tennessee. Contact her by email.

This content was published on January 25, 2022.



St. Mark's Newest Member

CONGRATULATIONS
TO THE FAMILY OF KATY ESCONTRIAS &
MANDO DURAN
ON THE BAPTISM OF



Olivia Duran

Love & Blessings,
St. Marks Children's Ministry



TO GIVE TODAY COPY AND PASTE LINK INTO YOUR
BROWSER <https://give.idonate.com/st-marks-united-methodist-church/end-of-year-giving-2021>
OR SCAN THE QR CODE

Sermon Theme
"By grace, I am what I am"
Message By: Rev. Layloni Drake

To prepare Read:
1 Corinthians 15:1-11



Mom and dad: Katy Escontrias & Mando Duran
Sister: Natalie Duran, Uncle Javier Gomes III,
Aunt: Sarah Pulver

Rev. Steve McElroy Officiating
Rev. Doug Mills Assisting



Year End Giving Statements



2021 Contribution Statements were emailed on

Monday, January 24. If you have questions or didn't receive yours, please contact Laura

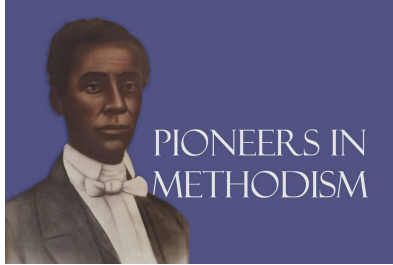
Ronald. She is in the church office on Mondays

and Wednesdays from 9:00 to 4:00. Her email is admin@loveroad.org.

Thank you for your generosity to St. Marks. Your support enables our church to spread God's love and blessings.

Ask The UMC: Francis Burns, first Black bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church

The Rev. Francis Burns was the first Black bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Elected in 1858, he served as a missionary bishop in



Liberia. His early life was spent in Greene County, NY. His family was poor, and at the age of four he was indentured to a farmer. At age eight, he was indentured to the Atwood family. Mrs. Atwood was a Methodist class leader. She permitted Francis to attend school with her children during the winter season.

Francis joined the Methodist Episcopal Church at age fifteen and at seventeen showed interest in preaching. However, the term of his indenture prevented him from pursuing his calling at that time. His indenture would not expire until he reached twenty-one.

After the end of his indenture, Francis worked as a teacher and became licensed to preach in the Catskill Hudson District. Others took notice of his preaching skills and encouraged him to study to become a missionary. His opportunity to do this came in 1834, when he accompanied the Rev. John Seys to Liberia.

The legacy of Liberian-based Methodist ministries started, organized, and led by Bishop Burns continues to flower in many forms today. United Methodists in Liberia number just over 300,000. Though not the largest Christian denomination in Liberia, United Methodists have had a significant influence in public life, including as the nation's last two presidents (Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, 2006-2018, and George Weah, 2018-present). Liberian United Methodists are organized in one annual conference with 20 districts and a variety of outreach ministries including agricultural development, health care (clinics and hospitals), and education (pre-K through university).

Ask your questions and check out more FAQs. at UMC.ORG

LEARN MORE:

<https://www.umc.org/en/content/ask-the-umc-pioneers-in-methodism-francis-burns>



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December 28, 2021

St. Mark's United Methodist Church
5005 Love Rd.
El Paso, TX 79922

Dear Friends,

Please accept my thanks on behalf of the Advocacy Center for the Children of El Paso for your generous donation of Christmas toys and food. The abused and neglected children in our region will truly benefit from your support.

The need is enormous, and the time is now for us to make a difference in the lives of child victims of physical and sexual abuse in the Greater El Paso Region. With support such as yours, we will make a difference in the lives of abused and neglected children. Thank you for your help.

Sincerely,


Susan H. Oliva
Executive Director

*Thank you very much
Happy New Year!*

ADVOCACY CENTER THANK YOU LETTER
VIEW IT ENLARGED AT loveroad.org
MESSENGER NEWSLETTER LIBRARY



Are you interested in serving as a long-term Mission Volunteer? Apply now!

umcmmission.org/mission-volunteers

Global Ministries
The United Methodist Church

SCAN ME

OUR CHURCH FAMILY



Happy Birthday!

February 6 - February 12, 2022

Marcel Bourgon- February, 6

Tristan Sebastian Weeks- February, 6

Jose Burgos- February, 8

Jeffrey Lee Jay- February, 8

David Burgos (6) - February, 11

Donald Gorham- February, 11

Carlee Alexis Bissett - February, 12

Andrea Brooks - February, 12

Virginia Seibert- February, 12



To Learn More, See The Video

[https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/articles/
what-is-messy-church](https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/articles/what-is-messy-church)



To Learn about Shrove Tuesday, See the YouTube Video https://youtu.be/Q0O_7_XCtJs

Where love leads community

Feb 6- Feb 12 Next Week at St. Mark's

Sunday, February 6

8:00 am Nursery (Ages 6 Weeks - 2 Yr)
9:00 am Kids Church
9:00 am Praise Worship Service
10:00 am NUDGE Youth Sunday School
10:00 am Agape Class
10:00 am Sunday School (Ages K - 6)
9:00 am Praise Service
11:00 am Traditional Service

Monday, February 7

6:00 pm Traditional Service Choir Rehearsal
6:30 pm Boy Scout Troop 59

Tuesday, February 8

12:00pm Needlework Group
6:00 pm Jazz Band Rehearsal
6:30 pm Grief Share

Wednesday, February 9

8:30 am Elementary School Chapel
5:30 pm Leadership Team Meeting

Thursday, February 10

8:30 am Elementary School Program Practice
9:00 am Women's Bible Study
6:00 pm Praise Band Rehearsal
6:00 pm Weight Watchers

Friday, February 11

6:30 pm NA - Narcotics Anonymous

Saturday, February 12

8:30 am Weight Watchers
9:30 am Quilters Guild



"Walking with Jesus"

The class will visit the various geographical spots in Israel where Jesus walked, ministered, and impacted the lives of others.

Join the class at 10:00 am
Everyone is welcome!



SHARE PRAYER

Forgive me, Lord. It's been a while.
I think I'm not very good at this prayer thing.
I stopped showing up because it felt like you were not listening.
Life took over, and I hadn't realized that it had been so long.
I have been having trouble believing....
I start to think that it's just prayer. But that is not true. Someone I trust told me, "It's never just prayer!"

AMEN!

How to Share Prayers:

Send your prayer requests to prayer group leader Ruth Lindstrom at ruthlindstrom@yahoo.com.

Call the church office at 915-581-4444 during office hours.

Contact one of our Chaplains (see St. Mark's Chaplains tab on the website).

You can ask that your prayer requests be published to groups or kept private.

Please Pray for...



Pat Thomas

By Joann and Ed Mcelroy - Please pray for Pat Thomas, COVID

Justine Coleman

By Joann and Ed Mcelroy - Please pray for Justine Coleman she had a fall

Dora Angelone's friend Betty

By Dora Angelone - Please pray for friend Betty, she's 92 and recovering from hip replacement and COVID.

Daisy May

By Patty May Daisy May, Wayne's mom, fractured her pelvis.

Addie Bryant (Deceased) Family

Addie Bryant died in early January. She had gone to live with her nephew in Arizona. Addie was a loyal and dynamic member of the Agape Class. She and served the church regularly by editing the bulletin. She was a fun person to be around. She was completely devoted to her son.

<https://www.loveroad.org>





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on the printed version]*

St. Mark's 2021
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To receive our weekly email version,
go to loveroad.org
Click Messenger Our mailing address is:
5005 Love Rd. El Paso, TX, 79922
Phone: (915) 581-4444

St. Mark's United Methodist Church 5555
Loveroad, El Paso, TX 79922
(915) 581-4444 | email: admin@loveroad.org

St. Mark's Church Staff

Senior Pastor – Rev. Douglas Mills
to schedule an appointment with Dr. Mills

[Schedule Now!](http://meetme.so/WDouglasMillsmaster)

<http://meetme.so/WDouglasMillsmaster>

Business Office Manager - Laura Ronald

Cheri Bridges - Office Assistant

Traditional Music Director - Stephen Jackson

Children's Ministry Director - Bianca Milan Analla

Communications Director - Bill Wilkson

Praise Team Director - Lawrence Brown III

Facilities Superintendent - Bunnie Betancourt Head

Head Kitchen Chef - Miguel Guillen

St. Mark's School Principal - Linda Smith