

ST. MARK'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

Messenger

“Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature.” Mark 16:15

September 2023



Here is the latest Pastoral Call Committee news

All 3 surveys that the Michigan District required St. Mark's to complete have been finished. Thanks to everyone who helped fill them out! Very soon, the District will begin compiling the survey results into a report that will provide us with a comprehensive view of where we are in regards to being ready to call a new pastor, what we are seeking in a new pastor, etc. Once that report is ready, the District will contact St. Mark's to schedule a date to share it with us (this would

(See Call Committee Update, Page 6)



Enjoy fun and fellowship at our September 16 BINGO event!

Calling all members of St. Mark's--young (kids included), old, and everywhere in between! If you're looking to get out of the house and have a great time with your fellow parishioners, we hope you'll attend our upcoming Church BINGO Night that will take place here on Saturday, September 16 from 2:00 - 4:00 p.m. The event is being hosted by Nancy McInnis and the LoCascio's as a way to encourage continued Christian fellowship and companionship while we await our next permanent pastor. And, the event is FREE! The laughs will be FREE! Your hosts' comical reactions, also FREE!

Prizes will include a variety of full-size candy bars and a few other little items. Snacks will include popcorn and drinks. No need to bring anything! BINGO chips and cards will be provided!

Mark this on your calendars now! Come, and have a great time with your brothers and sisters in Christ!

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10. September's Church Calendar (insert)

The Messenger is the monthly newsletter of:

St. Mark's Lutheran Church
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Sunday

Divine Service at 9:30 a.m.
Adult Bible Study at 10:45 a.m.

Wednesday

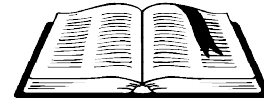
Wed. Nights in Christ for Youth at 5:15 p.m. (on hold)

First Saturday of each month

Men's Bible Study/Breakfast 9:00 a.m. (on hold)

Handicap accessible

Bible Study



St. Mark's current Bible studies

Even though St. Mark's is currently in a pastoral vacancy, we continue to offer the Bible Study opportunities below and encourage you to take advantage of as many as you can!

Adult Bible Class

During the Sundays in September, our vacancy pastors will be teaching on the scripture readings for that particular Sunday. All are welcome and encouraged to join them in the Fellowship Hall from 10:45 - 11:45 a.m. This is a great opportunity to fill your week with God's Word and to grow in knowledge and faith, so please come if you are able!

Read Through the Bible in 2023

For us Christians it is a great joy to read the Bible, for we know that it is the very Word of God, revealing to us Christ for our salvation and encouragement. Therefore, in 2023 we are again reading through the entire Bible in a year! But this time it is a joint effort with other congregations in our Circuit. Will you consider joining us? You can pick up any time. Please visit crafteddaily.com for the reading plan.

Men's Bible Study for September 2 - cancelled

Our Men's Bible Study that was schedule for September 2 has been cancelled. Watch future bulletins for additional information about future studies.

Working on Youth Confirmation Class

We have two young men that are now in 6th grade who wish to go through confirmation class: Dante H. and Jaxson R. As we don't have a permanent pastor right now, our Elder Chairman, Darryl Swainson, and Pastor Frank Pies are currently reviewing some new material for this class that would allow the boys to do more of a self-study program at home, then meet with a pastor once a month for a unit "check-in," additional explanations, answering of any questions, etc. It is our hope to be able to start the confirmation class later in September. Watch future bulletins for more information.

Helpful suggestions for when your church is without a pastor

It happens in every church sooner or later. Eventually, the beloved pastor that many looked to for spiritual guidance will depart for one reason or another. Occasionally, a minister may have the opportunity to devote his entire life to one particular congregation until he retires (or goes to be with Jesus), but pastoral transition occurs with far greater frequency in most churches.

First, when it comes time for your pastor to leave, remember to keep your eyes on the Lord, not the man. It is understandable how people can become attached to their pastor. He is rightly viewed as God's representative to preach and teach His Word and rightly administer the sacraments (Baptism and the Lord's Supper), he is a trusted counselor and friend, a father figure of influence in our faith, and a faithful servant who sacrificed time and energy to love and care for us and our family. However, as remarkably important as God's servants are, we must always remember that they are merely mortals... and that our faith must be rooted in Christ alone, not in a man or any of His servants.

To be sure, no one will ever truly be able to replace your departed pastor. He was a unique person and will always be one of a kind... BUT his position as pastor can indeed be filled again. God will have another genuinely unique servant that He will send to lead His flock.

Pastoral change is not the end of the world. Change is a part of life, and although there will definitely be a need for some extra patience and flexibility by everyone in the congregation, you and your church will get through this.

Below are some suggestions your congregation can use to help get through this transitional period:

1. **Be Faithful to Attending Services** – The lack of a permanent pastor can make some feel less enthused or connected with the church, and may promote more frequent absences or visitations to other churches. However, if there was ever a time your church needed you, this is it. Instead of finding more excuses to stay away, this should be a time to increase your faithfulness in every area. Don't be a fair-weather friend of the church... but remain faithful even during the absence of a permanent pastor.
2. **Be a Person of Prayer** – People in the church must always be persons sincerely devoted to prayer... but even more so

during a time when their church is in a pastoral vacancy. If he can, our enemy, Satan, will attempt to use the pastoral vacancy to incite mischief, conflict and discouragement in the flock, so prayer and spiritual vigilance is especially important during this time.

3. **Be Extra Patient and Understanding** – An interim period for any church may become tense and stressful, creating the possible atmosphere for any number of misunderstandings, so it is very helpful for everyone to add an extra seasoning of patience and sweetness to their attitudes. Usually, once the pastor is gone, the congregation will realize many of the things he used to handle. Suddenly, your church may not run as smoothly as it once did... tasks may fall through the cracks or be forgotten about. It is not a time to criticize or find fault, but to be understanding and pitch in and help make up the shortfalls.
4. **Continue to Contribute Financially** – During a time of leadership transition, church finances can often become one of the first casualties to suffer, so it is vitally important for you to remain steadfast with your tithes and offerings. Remember, the tithe belongs to the Lord, and continue to be faithful to Him, regardless of the changing nature of His church.
5. **Volunteer More than Usual** – Sometimes people look at changes in church leadership, as an opportunity to make changes of their own... perhaps to leave the church or to give up a position or responsibility. Not only is this a poor time to abandon the church, but is a critical time to step up and volunteer more than normal.

The church is not merely an agency to provide a service or benefit to you... the church is a relationship-based community, a family, where people serve and bless each

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(See Without a Pastor, Page 4)

Without a Pastor

(Continued from Page 3)

other mutually, and it takes everyone's participation to make it work the way it should. Another way to look at it is the church isn't as much like a restaurant, where patrons are "served" and "pampered," but is more like a pot-luck dinner where everyone brings a dish to share with each other.

6. **Help Contribute to Unity** – During times of pastoral vacancies within a church, voices of discouragement and discontent can often be heard in the ranks. But this is a moment when your influence of support and encouragement is needed to help promote peace and unity in the body. "Talk up" the church among your friends, speak encouragement and help promote harmony.

There can be a variety of other outstanding leaders, elders, and/or deacons in a church who will undoubtedly help bring unity and stability. But unless these people have established recognized credibility within the congregation, have spoken frequently before the body, or have expertise dealing with the varieties of personalities and sensitivities within a body, they will have their hands full. It can take considerable experience and tact to be a peacemaker and unify people and it helps if everyone will be a part of the solution, and not a part of the problem.

7. **Avoid Church Politics** – "Politics" is essentially a competition or struggle for control, influence or leadership, associated with promoting one's self, opinions, or striving for position, something that is quite contrary to the theocratic philosophy of

leadership that God ordained for His church. Unfortunately, power struggles are frequent in many churches and do far more harm than good. Do your best to contribute to the harmony of the body of believers and cooperate with those who are duly authorized to lead. Do not contend with those in authority, but support and pray for them and let God make whatever changes are needed. If everyone will seek to humble themselves and love and serve, God has an amazing way to bring people together with an obvious awareness of those whom He has chosen to lead.

8. **Don't Waste the Opportunity** – What about the interim time between the pastor's departure and the new pastor's arrival? There is often a prevailing attitude that the spiritual focus and ministry of the church is suspended or stagnant during this period... but this shouldn't be. God still has a vital purpose for every worship service, guest speaker or the ministry of an interim pastor, and it is important for the congregation to remain faithful and engaged, so that God's intended work can be accomplished.
9. **Finally, Don't Panic and Be at Peace!** Do your part to pray, contribute and help as suggested in this article. The congregation will do better if everyone remains calm and steadfast in faith. Ultimately our Lord Jesus is in charge of His church. Trust in Him and in His promises and remain at peace, for as He says in John 14:27: "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid."

(continued next column)

 IN OUR 
Thoughts and Prayers

MORE URGENT PRAYER'S:

Gail Arnold—is receiving chemotherapy for cancer.

Sarah Cook—has multiple medical issues; undergoing tests.

Helga Gonzalez—has medical issues.

Barbara Jewell—is recovering from surgery.

Julia Ligon—has cognitive issues and has moved into a memory care home.

Rose Mielke—is suffering from Dementia.

Marilyn Turner—is having health issues.

Art Vermeersch—is having health issues.

Lynne Welty—is having health issues and requires ongoing blood transfusions.

Barbara Jewell's family & friends:

- Her home contractor, **Ed Derringer**—has been diagnosed with lung cancer
- Friend, **Dick Mason**—is battling lung cancer
- **Joyce Mason**—caregiver for her husband, Dick
- Friend, **Pam Perez**—recovering from a hip replacement; 1 finger amputated.

Jennie Kaufman's nephew, **Jeff Balhoff**—is receiving cancer treatment.

The LoCascio's family & friends:

- Cousin, **Cheryl Hale**—is battling cancer and skin ulcers
- Cousin, **Kaylee Kaeding**—is recovering from surgery & struggling with diabetes.
- Friend, **Chip Cryderman**—is battling cancer, can no longer swallow well
- Friend, **Rhea Thomas**—is receiving chemotherapy
- Friend, **John Murelli**—is recovering from spinal surgery.
- The LoCascio's friend, **Dale Thomas**—is in rehab following knee surgery.

Lexi Powell's grandfather, **Dave Grau**—diagnosed with multiple cancers.

Lynn Thomas' good friend, **Kristy Fresh**—has been diagnosed with a rare cancer.

Lynn Thomas' daughter-in-law, **Linda**—needs strength as caregiver for her mom who has Vascular Dementia.

Marilyn Turner's friend, **Sue**—needs extra prayers.

Marilyn Turner's friend, **Tony**—needs extra prayers.

Marilyn Turner requested a prayer for **the health of "David's baby"**

Dorothy Vermeersch's cousin, **Marilyn Eipper**—is battling pancreatic cancer.

Rob Wheeler's dad, **Rick Wheeler**—is recovering from a brain bleed.

Rob Wheeler's brother, **Rich Wheeler**—having medical issues.

The Whitehead's family & friends:

- Larry's cousin, **Andra Bruce**—is having heart issues
- Lori's brother-in-law's sister, **Nita Duggin**—may have

lung cancer

- Lori's friend, **Ray Baker**—is recovering from knee replacement surgery
- Lori's friend, **Fran Schutz**—has had another stroke
- Lori's friend, **Mary Ann Saliba**—recovering from hip replacement surgery
- Lori's friend, **Vickie Tucker**—has restarted cancer treatments
- Lori's relative, **Callie Weatherford**—diagnosed at 7 years old with terminal brain cancer; continues to receive radiation treatments
- Lori's sister, **Linda**—is having more difficulty with breathing
- Friend, **Bruce Collins**—is battling prostate cancer
- Friend, **Leonard Pittaway**—will be undergoing cancer testing
- Friend, **Mary Baker**—is having medical issues
- Larry Whitehead's daughter, **Tracy Whitehead**—is recovering from carpal tunnel surgery on 8/18

ONGOING PRAYERS:

Joan & John Freeman—they are both having health issues

Friend of St. Mark's, Erika Williams—needs prayers for guidance

Friend of St. Mark's, Allen Geer—is recovering from a fall

Nancy Geer's friend, Kate Keever—prayers for less pain & healing

The Hyrkas' son-in-law, Matt Emery—cancer is in remission

Barbara Jewell's niece's son, Tim Bridges—is recovering from back surgery

Barbara Jewell's neighbor's grandson—confined to home

Barbara Jewell's neighbor, Ed Perez—having health issues

Barbara Jewell's nephew, Steve Lichtman—is recovering from heart surgery

Barbara Jewell's niece-in-law, Peg Feiler—is receiving therapy

Barbara Jewell's nephew, Carl Feiler—diagnosed with prostate and spinal cancer and is caregiver for his wife

Kay Joslin—is receiving therapy for her hip

Debbie LoCascio's cousin, Cheryl Tippet—is battling cancer

Debbie LoCascio's acquaintance, Marti Edens—is battling multiple health issues

The LoCascio's neighbor, Laura Jones—is battling cancer

Mary Ann Lockwood's cousin's kids—Abigail and Amelia List—having health issues

Taylor Lockwood—needs extra prayers

Stephanie Reynolds' son, Emmett Reynolds—has Autism.

The Salo's daughter-in-law, Joni—is receiving therapy following a stroke

Jean Swainson's friend's son, Connor Donahue—is in an intensive inpatient rehab center recovering from being hit by a car

Carolynn Taylor's grandson's wife, Stephanie Payton—is battling breast cancer

Dorothy Vermeersch's cousin, Gloria Maire—has medical issues

Carl & Carol Zienert—are having health issues

(continued next column)



September Birthdays

- 3 Kelly Lekas
- 7 Hannah Dwyer
- 10 Tammy Hurley
- 23 Paul Benson
- 26 John Reardon, Emmett Reynolds
- 30 Jane Hurley



Please remember these folks in your prayers

Those shown below have lost a loved one this past month. Please keep them and their families in your prayers.

✠ The Achimov family as our member, Carolyn Achimov, fell asleep in the Lord on August 23, 2023



September Anniversaries

- 1 Rod & Leslie Oehring 50th
- 15 Glenn & Barbara Jewell 5th
- 25 Larry & Lori Whitehead 13th



Brianna Krus got married

Congratulations are in order for our church member, Brianna Krus--daughter of Brian and Sandy Krus, and granddaughter of Jennie Kaufman--who married Preston Hart in Detroit, Michigan on August 12, 2023. We wish our Lord's richest blessings upon their union!

Special Fund Donations

We thank those listed below who made special donations in **July**:

- Liberian Lutheran School:** Nancy McInnis, Lynn Thomas
- Remodeling - Sanctuary:** Nancy McInnis
- Vacation Bible School:** Jennie Kaufman, Cindy Turner, Pastor Zwonitzer



The Oehrings celebrate 50 years of marriage

Happy 50th wedding anniversary to Rod and Leslie Oehring! They were married on September 1, 1973. May the Lord grant them many more happy years together!

Call Committee Update

(Continued from Page 1)

then be Step 6 in the Call Process). Creating the report can take the District 3 or 4 weeks. After the District presents to St. Mark's, we will then move on to Step 7: receiving congregational nominations for pastoral candidates.

Please continue to keep St. Mark's Call Committee in your prayers as they work through the Call Process. Any questions regarding the process can be directed to Darryl Swainson, Chairman.



Council Meeting Minutes - Summarized July 25, 2023

In attendance: Tom LoCascio, Karen Kaufman, Trent Johnson, Joshua Cook, Darryl Swainson, Kyle Albert, and Nancy McInnis

Call to order at 7:00 p.m.

Opening Prayer by Tom.

Previous minutes from the May 16, 2023, council meeting were presented and accepted as submitted.

Treasurer's Report per Kyle Albert – we are under budget on a couple items as we aren't paying a full-time pastor's salary and benefits. Trent Johnson brought up the cost of utilities. Our water bill was higher this year as there was a water leak – it is believed that an outside faucet was left on. Gas and electric costs have both increased.

Vice President's Report per Trent Johnson – working with Pastor Moyer at Faith Lutheran to try and combine our young adult groups starting in the fall. His group is small like ours, so we will try to plan events together like bowling.

Elders per Darryl Swainson – both Tom LoCascio and Darryl will be out of town on the 2nd weekend in September, and Charlie Powell's baby is due around then too, so none are available to be Elder on Duty for September 10. Darryl spoke with Pastor Zwonitzer about this and Pastor suggested that the Sunday elder could be just a worship assistant. They wouldn't need to vest unless they wanted to and would just need to come up and help with communion. Trent Johnson was willing to do this. Pastor Zwonitzer suggested David Drake too. Darryl spoke to David and David agreed to help. Darryl will discuss this with the elders first. If they agree, David could be placed into the rotation once a month.

Properties per Joshua Cook – The grass is being mowed regularly. The window that has the plastic on it needs to be fixed. Jim O'Brien fixed the light in the lobby.

Parish Report & August's Church Calendar were distributed by Tom

NEW BUSINESS

Since Lori Whitehead is absent from Council, we will table the discussion on whether to move some of St. Mark's money from the checking account into an interest-bearing account or

investment account. Kyle Albert had had a discussion with Lori on this and some types of bank accounts would have restrictions or special requirements. Council to discuss details with Lori at the next council meeting.

The other discussion was the parking lot crack repairs that Lori has been getting prices on. Trent Johnson stated that Jim O'Brien got some quotes last year and the estimates were about \$1500. This would be for filling in the cracks only. No restriping. We can discuss these items further at the next meeting when Lori is here.

Congregational Mission and Ministry Inventory - Council members received a copy of this survey. Debbie LoCascio has already started completing it. She has a lot done but some of it needs to be completed by council. Council members will take this survey home and complete what they can.

Darryl Swainson stated that during VBS, a few parents asked if the volunteers/teachers were vetted. Upon discovering they were not, one family pulled their children out of VBS. Vetting the VBS staff will be something that we'll need to do next year. Trent Johnson brought up that we would need to do this in enough time to allow for the reports to be completed as it does take some time.

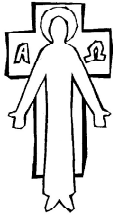
Per Darryl, the MI District is sponsoring a webinar regarding Dual-Parish Pastors/Multi-Point Ministries for all congregations on August 26 and Pastor Moyer was wondering if St. Mark's would like to host it and provide lunch to attendees. After discussion, Council decided we couldn't successfully host it right now due to the number of volunteers that would be needed.

Next meeting will be Tuesday, August 15, 2023, at 7:00 p.m.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:54 p.m. We closed with the Lord's Prayer.

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St. Mark's Lutheran Church



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Address Service Requested

For the latest church news, visit our website

What types of information can you find
on St. Mark's website
(www.stmarwb.org)?



- Monthly church calendars
- Sunday bulletins
- Weekly announcements
- Monthly newsletters
- About St. Mark's
- Event Registration Forms
- Those on Duty (scheduled to help out at church)

...and more! Check it out for all of your worship/church
needs!



Human Care board requests cans/bottles for Liberian school

If you would like to donate your returnable cans and bottles, the Board of Human Care is accepting them **weekly!** Just bring your bag to church and an usher will let you know where you can put them. A member of the Human Care Board will collect them and make the return. All money will then go into the fund for the Ziah Town Liberian Lutheran School to be used for catechisms and/or school supplies.

You may also make donations at any time by either putting your check/cash in a green envelope and writing "Joe Boway" on the front (checks made payable to St. Mark's), or visiting the St. Mark's website, clicking on the online giving button and selecting the fund titled Joe Boway/Liberian School. Thank you for your continued support!

September 2023

Sunday Divine Service 9:30 a.m.

Sunday Adult Bible Class 10:45 a.m.

Wednesday Nights in Christ 5:15 p.m. (on hold)

Men's Bible Study - First Sat. of each Month 9:00 a.m. (on hold)

St. Mark's Lutheran Church

For live, up-to-date versions of ANY St. Mark's calendar, visit our website at:
www.stmarkwb.org.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1	2
3 13th Sun. after Trinity Pastor: Rev. Rodney Zwonitzer Elder: Darryl Swainson 9:30am Divine Service 10:45am Adult Bible Class	4 Labor Day Church Office closed	5 7pm - Elders' Mtg.	6	7 10am Quilting Bee	8	9
10 14th Sun. after Trinity Pastor: Rev. Terry Nelson Elder: Charlie Powell or Trent Johnson 9:30am Divine Service 10:45am Adult Bible Class	11 Patriot Day	12	13	14 Holy Cross Day 10am Quilting Bee	15 DEADLINE TO SUBMIT NEWSLETTER ARTICLES	16 Church BINGO 2:00 - 4:00 pm
17 15th Sun. after Trinity Pastor: Rev. Frank Pies Elder: Tom LoCascio 9:30am Divine Service 10:45am Adult Bible Class	18	19 7pm - Council Mtg. (Distribute Budget here)	20	21 10am Quilting Bee	22 DISTRIBUTE NEWSLTR.	23 1st Day of Fall
24 16th Sun. after Trinity Pastor: Rev. Rodney Zwonitzer Elder: Charlie Powell 9:30am Divine Service 10:45am Adult Bible Class	25	26	27	28 10am Quilting Bee	29 St. Michael/All Angels' Day	30 Sidelinker Family Wedding

ALTAR GUILD: Jennie Kaufman

COUNTERS: Mary Lockwood, Jean Swainson

GREETERS:

3 Sue I./Judy S.
 10 Ellen Rentola
 17 Jennie/Karen K.
 24 Tom/Deb LoCascio

USHERS:

3 Matt Maier
 10 Matt Maier
 17 John Reardon
 24 Tom Kaufman

VIDEO TECH:

On hold for now