

st. mark's lutheran church **Messenger**

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

February 2023



Join Us for Ash Wednesday Service and the Soup/Salad Supper

On February 22, the Church will be observing Ash Wednesday. This day marks the beginning of the season of Lent and is a day when we pay special attention to our own sin and the death that we deserve, that we might better appreciate the sacrifice of Christ by which we are saved.

On this day we will be holding our traditional Ash Wednesday service. The service will be held at 7:00 p.m. and will include the imposition of ashes. We look forward to seeing you there!

Also, before the service we will be hosting our annual Soup and Salad Supper! This will go from 5:45 - 6:45 p.m. and will include great food and fellowship. We hope you will consider joining us for dinner as well! A sign-up sheet for the Supper is located in the entryway.



Lenten Coins will help support Ziah Town Lutheran School, Liberia

In February, you might notice some Lenten Coin Holders sitting on the table in the entryway. The way these work is that if you place a quarter in one of the slots each day during Lent (excluding the Sundays in Lent which are IN Lent, but not OF Lent), you will have \$10 by Easter Sunday. (You may also choose to write a check made payable to St. Mark's Lutheran Church, or place cash in the coin holder instead of filling it with quarters.) Full coin holders can then be placed in the offering plates on Easter Sunday and these donations will be sent to Joe Boway in support of the Ziah Town Lutheran School in Liberia, Africa. The school needs more Large Catechisms, as well as school supplies for the kids.

Thanks in advance for your support of the school!

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The Messenger is the monthly newsletter of:

St. Mark's Lutheran Church

The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod 7979 Commerce Road West Bloomfield, MI 48324 Phone: (248) 363-0741; Fax: (866) 649-6870 *Website: www.stmarkwb.org*

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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. (Sep. - May) Midweek Adult Bible Study 5:45 - 6:45 p.m.

One Saturday/month

Men's Bible Study/Breakfast 9:00 a.m.

Handicap accessible

Bible Study

Are you attending Bible study regularly?

As Christians, it's important that we study God's Word as often as possible. Daily devotions, weekly church services and weekly Bible Studies help us learn more about God's plan for us, and also helps to strengthen our Christian faith. St. Mark's offers the following opportunities for you to delve further into God's holy Word.

Adult Bible Class: The Book of Genesis

In the month of February, we will be continuing our study of the book of Genesis in our Adult Bible Class!

The book of Genesis is the first book of the Bible, and it tells the story of God's salvation from the very beginning. It starts with the creation of the world and the fall into sin, and from there it traces the promise of the Savior from generation to generation, beginning with Adam and culminating with Jacob's twelve children. It includes the account of Noah and the Flood, the Tower of Babel, the Call of Abraham, and Joseph's rise in Egypt. At every place it proclaims the steadfast love of God and His faithfulness in redeeming mankind from the guilt of our sin.

We hope you will join us for this study! This is a great opportunity to fill your week with God's Word and to grow in knowledge and faith!

Adult Bible Class meets on Sundays at 10:45 a.m., after our Divine Service.

Men's Bible Study Will Meet on February 11

Attention Men of St. Mark's! Our next Men's Bible Study will be held on Saturday, February 11. We will gather from 9:00 a.m. - 10:30 a.m. in St. Mark's fellowship hall. Breakfast will be provided, and we will continue our study of the book of Revelation.

We hope to see you there! This is a great opportunity to be formed together as men of God in the image of Christ!

Midweek Bible Study During Wednesday Nights in Christ

Would you like to deepen your knowledge of God's Word and be refreshed in the peace of Christ during the week? Please join us for our Midweek Bible Study! This study will be held on Wednesday evenings from 6 - 6:45 p.m. (during our *Wednesday Nights in Christ* children's program). We will be meeting in the library, and the study is discussion-based. We hope you will consider joining us!

Please note that this study will be paused during Lent, beginning on Ash Wednesday (February 22). We will resume after Easter on Wednesday, April 19. We hope you will join us for our special midweek services during Lent instead!

(See Bible Studies, Page 4)

Pastor's Page

The Bible's Teaching on Love

My friends, once again we find ourselves entering that time of year when the world talks a lot about love. You've probably noticed it. Bags of candy placed prominently on store shelves, within easy reach of both parents and children alike. Flowers moved near the checkout aisles. Cards set on display by the entryways. The color pink on every package. And one word emblazoned, explicitly or implicitly, upon it all: LOVE. Yeah, Valentine's Day is upon us. A time when the world talks a lot about love.

But so does the Bible—and not just in one place or at one time, but from beginning to end. This is, in fact, the central message of the Scriptures. It's all about love, both the love of God and the love of His people. So, at this time of year, as this particular word swirls incessantly all around us, I want to ask: What does the Bible teach us about love? And how does this compare to the teaching of the world?

Now, to do this, I think one of the best places to look is actually the book of 1 John. Here, the Apostle John is writing to the Church-at-large, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. And as he does, he has a lot to say about love. In fact, in this little letter, made up of only 5 chapters, the word "love" is used 46 times. Indeed, John here wraps up the entire Biblical teaching of love succinctly and beautifully.

So what does this letter teach us about love?

First, John teaches that love begins with God and His giving of His only Son for our salvation. "In this is love, not that we have loved God but that He loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 4:10). It's here that we truly see what love is. According to the Bible, love is more than just the sappy, sentimental emotion which fills the month of February. Rather, it is a selfless orientation toward another, which seeks the other's good, prioritizes the other, cherishes the other, and is embodied in real self-sacrifice. It is a God who gives up His only begotten Son to save poor wretched sinners from the death that they deserved. "In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him" (1 John 4:9). And it is this very Son laying down His life, even for His persecutors. "By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us" (1 John 3:16a).

Here, in the cross of Jesus, we see what love really is. And we rejoice to be the beneficiaries of it, for it means our salvation through faith. Indeed, by the surpassing love of God, we are now His children in Christ. "See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God" (1 John 3:1a). And so it is that we can say with confidence and with the highest joy, "God is love" (1 John 4:16b).

But then what happens? *When we come to believe in this saving love of God in Christ, we will love our brothers, for the love of God will abide in us.* God's love becomes our motivation to love. "We love because he first loved us" (1 John 4:19). This is the natural and righteous response of His children. "Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another" (1 John 4:11). The same selfless, unconditional love that we have received from God, we then show to our brothers.

First, this means loving our brothers in the faith, our fellow believers. "Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the Father loves whoever has been born of him" (1 John 5:1). But it also extends to our brothers according to the flesh, all mankind, though it excludes an idolatrous love for worldly things. "Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (1 John 2:15). By the love of God, we are transformed in love and empowered in love. This love will then be perfected in us on the day of the Son's appearing, when at last "we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is" (1 John 3:2b).

In this way, *through our love we show ourselves, even now, to be of God.* "Whoever loves his brother abides in the light, and in him there is no cause for stumbling" (1 John 2:10). "We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers" (1 John 3:14a). "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God" (1 John 4:7). Our love is the outward evidence of our adoption by grace.

But, of course, the converse is also true: "By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother" (1 John 3:10). "Anyone who does not love does not know God,

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Pastor's Page

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because God is love" (1 John 4:8). "If anyone says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen" (1 John 4:20). "But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him?" (1 John 3:17). Those who do not love are not of God, no matter what they might say.

Indeed, love is now God's commandment to us, His children. "And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother" (1 John 4:21). "And this is his commandment, that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us" (1 John 3:23). "For this is the message that you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another" (1 John 3:11). But to love in this way means more than just words: "Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth" (1 John 3:18).

So, my friends, as the world talks about love, especially this month, remember what the Bible says. Don't limit love to the sappy emotionalism of the holiday. But let it stand in its fullness as revealed in the cross of Jesus. And having thus received God's love for you, let that perfect love transform you and motivate you to love one another, not just in February, but every day, both now and forevermore.

Bible Studies

(Continued from Page 2)

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 contact Pastor Vergin for the reading schedule!

Wednesday Nights in Christ Youth Program

St. Mark's Board of Family & Youth invites all kids ages 4 through those in 5th Grade to attend our weekly *Wednesday Nights in Christ* program! This program for youth is both educational, fun and free to all children.

Each Wednesday, we serve a simple dinner to kids and their parents from 5:15 - 5:45 p.m. (except during Lent when the dinner and lesson times switch). After that, the kids enjoy hearing a different Bible lesson each week as they help our teachers place Bible characters and background decor on a large, felt flannel board. Lastly, the kids will either make a holiday craft, play games, or be taught some life skills by a special speaker.

Don't wait to register! If you know of a youth that would like to attend, visit St. Mark's website to sign them up!



Wednesday Nights in Christ dinner and Bible Lesson switch on Ash Wed.

Since St. Mark's Board of Parish Fellowship will be serving the Lenten Dinner on Ash Wednesday from 5:45 - 6:45 p.m., please note the dinner and Bible lesson times for our youth program that evening will switch too. On February 22, the Wednesday Nights in Christ program will begin with the Bible lesson first from 5:15 - 5:45, and then the Soup/Salad Supper will follow from 5:45 - 6:45. Our Board of Parish Fellowship will also be serving pizza for any kids that aren't crazy about soup or salad.



Do you have any bottles or cans to donate?

If you would like to donate your returnable cans and bottles, the Board of Human Care will now be accepting them **EVERY week**! Just bring your bag to church and an usher will let you know where you can set 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 Liberian School 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 of this ministry!



MORE URGEN	NT PRAYER'S:

Carolyn Achimov—is battling cancer. Sarah Cook—is undergoing tests. Helga Gonzalez-is having some medical issues. Barbara Jewell-is recovering from back surgery. Taylor Lockwood—needs extra prayers. Rose Mielke—is suffering from Dementia. Rod Oehring-has medical issues. Nancy Salo—needs some extra prayers. Marlene Steck-has memory & health issues; Hospice has been called in. Marilyn Turner—is having health issues. Art Vermeersch-is having health issues. Lynne Welty—is having health issues and requires ongoing blood transfusions. Larry Whitehead—is recovering from foot surgery. Carl & Carol Zienert—are having medical issues. Carolyn Achimov's cousin's great-granddaughter, Kennedy Shallal—is undergoing Leukemia treatments. Friend of St. Mark's, Allen Geer-has a shoulder fracture. Friend of St. Mark's, Thisvi Steiger-fell, hurt her back and recovering from back surgery. is Nancy Geer's friend, Kate Keever-prayers for decreased pain & healing. The Hyrkas' son-in-law, Matt Emery-is undergoing & chemotherapy for radiation throat, tonsil & neck cancer Barbara Jewell's nephew, Carl Feiler-diagnosed with prostate and spinal cancer. Jennie Kaufman's nephew, Jeff Balhoff-is battling cancer. Debbie LoCascio's acquaintance, Marti Edens-has been diagnosed with bladder cancer; is hospitalized for clots in her legs. blood Debbie LoCascio's cousin, Bob Tanis—is recovering from double knee replacement surgery. Debbie LoCascio's father, Bob Tippett, Sr.-has Dementia and is getting worse. The LoCascio's sister-in-law, Leslie Tippett-is recovering from major back surgery. The LoCascio's friend, Chip Cryderman-is battling cancer and is severely depressed. The LoCascio's friend, Rhea Thomas-is receiving chemotherapy. Stephanie Reynolds' son, Emmett Reynolds-has Autism. Carolynn Taylor's grandson's wife, Stephanie Payton-is battling breast cancer. 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. Dorothy Vermeersch's cousin, **Marily Eipper**—just diagnosed with pancreatic cancer.

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

Lori Whitehead's friend, **Ray Baker**—is recovering from knee replacement surgery

ONGOING PRAYERS:

Joan Freeman-is having health issues.

John Freeman-is having health issues.

Joan Freeman's brother, Ernie Sampson-has medical issues.

Friend of St. Mark's, Erika Williams—needs prayers for guidance. Barbara Jewell's niece's son, Tim Bridges—is recovering from back surgery

Barbara Jewell's niece-in-law, Peg Fieler-keeps falling

- Glenn Jewell's insurance agent, Vicky-is receiving chemotherapy
- Barbara Jewell's neighbor's grandson-confined to home
- Barbara Jewell's neighbor, Ed Perez-having health issues
- Barbara Jewell's friend, Pam Perez-is having medical issues
- Kay Joslin-is receiving therapy for her hip
- Julie Kosmalski-her cancer is in remission

Debbie LoCascio's cousin, Cheryl Tippett-is battling cancer

Debbie LoCascio's friend, Betty Ebejer—is struggling with COPD Debbie LoCascio's brother, Bob Tippett, Jr.—has a lesion on his

liver; will be undergoing more tests

Debbie LoCascio's brother-in-law, Alex Esse—spots found on his lungs; will be undergoing tests

- The LoCascio's neighbor, Laura Jones-is battling cancer
- Mary Ann Lockwood's cousin's kids—Abigail and Amelia List having health issues.
- The Salo's daughter-in-law, Joni—is recovering from a stroke; receiving therapy
- Jean Swainson's friend's son, Connor Donahue—is in an intensive inpatient rehab center recovering from being hit by a car
- Mandy Vergin's father, Bruce Ketcher—health issues have gotten worse.
- Dorothy Vermeersch's cousin, Gloria Maire—has several medical issues

Larry Whitehead's daughter, Tracy Whitehead—prayers for wisdom and guidance

(continued next column)



February Birthdays

2 Rob Wheeler
5 Selah Vergin
7 Mel Maier, Dorothy Vermeersch
8 Dean Hyrkas
9 Debbie LoCascio
12 Lexi Powell, Gabby Vergin
20 Karen Kaufman
26 Elanor Johnson

Special Fund Donations

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

Joe Boway/Liberian Lutheran School: Jennie Kaufman, Rod & Leslie Oehring, Lynn Thomas

Lutheran World Relief: Nancy Salo. Remodeling - Sanctuary: Nancy McInnis



Natalie Dau was baptized at St. Mark's

On January 15, Pastor Vergin baptized infant Natalie Dau at St. Mark's in a private ceremony with her family present.

We welcome Natalie into our church family and rejoice that the Lord is working faith in her tiny heart!



February Anniversaries

28 Dan & Sue Ingram

28th



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 Hale family as Debbie LoCascio's great aunt, Betty Hale, fell asleep in the Lord on 12/27.

SPECIAL DECADES

February's special decade birthdays

This month, we wish a happy Special Decade birthdays to our church members, Dorothy Vermeersch, Dean Hyrkas and Karen Kaufman whose birthdays are on February 7, 8 & 20, respectively.

As always, we can't tell you which decades, but we know all of you will join us in praying that our Lord will continue to bless these three on their birthdays and always.



Change of Address: John & Juanita Reardon 321 Cranberry Beach Blvd. White Lake, MI 48386

We're receiving donations for Keith Elementary lunches

Keith Elementary's *Invisible Dad Lunch Program* was started a few years ago by a dad of one of the students so that if a child forgot to bring a lunch, or if their personal lunch fund balance was short, the school could offer them a full lunch at no cost instead of the free, statesponsored "tiny lunch" that doesn't contain enough food and isn't the healthiest. St. Mark's has placed a collection jar on the table in the back of the sanctuary where anyone who wishes may donate their loose change to help with this program.

We will be totaling those coins and sending Keith a check during the month of March, so if you have any extra change you'd like to donate in February and/or early March, it would be greatly appreciated.



New church servants were installed on January 15

On Sunday, January 15 we installed our congregational servants for the year 2023. This encompassed all those serving the Lord at St. Mark's in any kind of official capacity including congregational officers, board members, musicians, greeters, and offering counters (among others). In this rite, these individuals received the admonition and encouragement of the Lord's Word as well as His divine blessing, and were commended to God through the prayers of the Church. We thank all of those who have stepped forward to serve.

We especially thank Kyle A., who volunteered to be our new Treasurer, and Lori W., who volunteered to be our new Financial Secretary. We also thank Kari K. for her service as Treasurer and Debbie S. for her service as Financial Secretary.

May the Lord continue to bless the work of all His servants here at St. Mark's, for the good of His Church and the glory of His name!

Our 2023 officers and board members are listed below:

President - Tom LoCascio Vice President - Trent Johnson Financial Secretary - Lori Whitehead Treasurer - Kyle Albert Human Resources Director - Open Public Relations Director - Open Recording Secretary - Nancy McInnis

Board of Elders: Darryl Swainson, Tom LoCascio, Charlie Powell, Larry Whitehead

Board of Gospel Outreach: Mary Ann Lockwood, Charlie Powell, John Reardon, Barbara Jewell

Board of Human Care: Karen Kaufman, Leslie Oehring, Paula Albert

Board of Parish Fellowship: Ellen Rentola, Nancy McInnis, Nancy Hewson

Board of Family & Youth: Debbie LoCascio, Lynn Thomas

Board of Properties: Jim O'Brien, Chris Gerard, Trent Johnson

We are also seeking more volunteers to be on the Altar Guild, and to also be Sunday morning greeters, offering counters, ushers and video technicians. If you can help in any of those positions, please let Pastor or Debbie LoCascio know.



A thank you letter from the Open Door Outreach Center

In January, St. Mark's received the following thank you letter from the Open Door Outreach Center in Waterford regarding our support of their Adopt-A-Family for Christmas Program:

Dear St. Mark's Lutheran Church,

Thank you for sponsoring one or more of our Adopt-A-Families this year. Without people and organizations like yours, this program would not exist.

In 2022, the Open Door provided Christmas gifts for 134 individuals/73 families with your help. Our clients at Open Door are struggling to meet their daily living expenses and without you, their Christmas would not have been so merry.

Again, thank you for thinking of Open Door and for your generosity. Together we are making a difference!

Sincerely, John Reardon, Executive Director Tina Davis, Client Services Manager



Quilting Bee will resume on February 2

St. Mark's Quilting Bee will resume meeting on Thursday, February 2 at 10:00 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall. Volunteers are needed to help tie knots and/or sew. You don't have to know how to quilt in order to help out! Feel free to come join this fun group!

Any questions about the quilting group can be directed to Jennie Kaufman or Lynn Thomas.

St. Mark's Lutheran Church



7979 Commerce Road West Bloomfield, MI 48324

Phone: (248) 363-0741 Fax: (866) 649-6870 Email: info@stmarkwb.org Website: www.stmarkwb.org 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!



Thanks for helping to take down our Christmas decorations

We offer our most sincere thanks to all those who showed up at church on Saturday, January 7 to help remove our beautiful Christmas decorations! Enough people lent a hand that everything was put away in an hour or less!

Great job, volunteers! We absolutely appreciate you!

Sunday Divine Service 9:30 a.m. Sunday Adult Bible Class 10:45 a.m.

Wednesday Nights in Christ 5:15 p.m. (Sep. - May)

Midweek Adult Bible Study - Weds. from 6:00 - 6:45 p.m.

Men's Bible Study/Breakfast - One Saturday per mo. 9 a.m.

February 2023

St. Mark's Lutheran Church

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

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5 Mary Lockwood 5 Matt Maier	9:30am Divine Service	Pastor's Day Off					
							VIDEO TECHS:
				J	5 Mary Lockwood 12 Sue I./Judy S.	5 Matt Maier 12 John Reardon	

ALTAR GUILD: Karen Kaufman/Sandy Krus COUNTERS: Joanne Wisti & TBD

GREETERS:	USHERS:	VIDEO TECHS:
5 Mary Lockwood	5 Matt Maier	
12 Sue I./Judy S.	12 John Reardon	
		Feb Karen Kaufman
26 Jennie/Karen Kaufman	22 Tom LoCascio	
	26 Trent Johnson	