



# St. Mark's Lutheran Church

# *Messenger*

December 2023

## **Voters' Meeting on December 3/Pastoral Call News**

St. Mark's Call Committee received a pastoral Call List from our Michigan District on November 14. The Committee then met that evening to discuss and summarize the pastoral "options" research that has been completed to date. They organized their research so that it can be presented to our voters' assembly during the Semi-annual Voters' Meeting on **December 3** after church. The Committee has decided to pause the call process until they have had a chance to present 4 options for moving forward to the voters' assembly and solicit the voters' input. Please continue to pray for our congregation and Call Committee! It is only by the guidance of the Holy Spirit that our congregation will be led to do God's will! It's extremely important that all voters, ages 18 and up, attend the **Voters' Meeting on December 3!**

## **Young Adults' Trivia Night on December 2**

All young adults, from college-age to those in their 40's, are welcome and encouraged to attend the upcoming Young Adults' Trivia Night on Saturday, December 2 at St. Mark's from 4:00-8:00 p.m. Dinner will be included, and young adults from our sister congregations have also been invited. Those with children are welcome to bring them! Enjoy a fun night out with other young adults! Questions regarding this event can be directed to Trent Johnson.

## **Adopt-A-Family for Christmas**

Once again, St. Mark's is working with the Open Door Outreach Center in Waterford to Adopt-A-Family for Christmas. The Open Door has provided us with the names of 4 individuals who need some assistance with Christmas gifts. If you would like to purchase a gift or two for any of the 4 people, there is a sign-up sheet on an easel in the lobby where you can list your name next to the item(s). All gifts should be brought to St. Mark's by November 30. Also, if you can be at St. Mark's to help distribute the gifts on **December 1** from 9:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m., or **December 7** from 9:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. and/or from 4:00 – 6:00 p.m., please sign up on the smaller sheet at the bottom of the easel. See Karen Kaufman with any questions.

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## **What's Inside...**

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3. Volunteers Needed to Work at Live Nativity, Collecting Bottles/Cans for Ziah Town School, Combined Epiphany Service, Accepting Orders for Altar Poinsettias, Anniversaries, Birthdays, Special Funds, Baptism, Member Transfers
4. For the Latest Church News Visit Our Website, Order the *Lutheran Witness* Magazine Now
- 5 & 6. Church Council Minutes (insert)
7. December's Newsletter (insert)

## **The Messenger is the monthly newsletter of:**

**St. Mark's Lutheran Church**  
*The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod*

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### **Editor:**

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### **Sunday Worship**

Divine Service at 9:30 a.m. followed by  
Adult Bible Study at 10:45 a.m.  
Handicap Accessible

**Midweek Advent Worship Services**

Because St. Mark's doesn't currently have a permanent pastor, we won't be offering our usual midweek Advent worship services. However, some of our nearby sister congregations will be taking turns hosting the midweek services and you, your friends, and family are invited to attend! The services will take place at 7:00 p.m. with a theme of: *The Way, The Truth, The Life*, and the schedule is as follows:

- December 6 at Peace Lutheran Church, 7390 Elizabeth Lake Road, Waterford: *The Way of the World, the Way of Christ*
- December 13 at Faith Lutheran Church, 3501 E. Highland Road, Highland Twp.: *The Truth of Man, the Truth of God*
- December 20 at Christ Lutheran Church, 620 General Motors Road, Milford: *Life in the Flesh, Life in the Spirit*

Please make plans now to attend, if you are able!

**No Quilting Bee in December and January**

St. Mark's Quilting Bee group will be taking a break during December and January. They will resume meeting, and sewing, on February 1. If you are a quilter, or would like to learn how to quilt, or might be available to help them tie knots, please consider joining this fun group! They meet most Thursdays at 10:00 a.m.

**We are Seeking a Church Secretary**

Our long-time Office Manager, Debbie LoCascio, will be retiring in mid-March of 2024. We are seeking to hire a secretary to replace her. Duties will include sorting mail, answering the phones, creating publications (weekly bulletins, monthly newsletters) and other miscellaneous duties. Training for the position will take place part-time (days/times are flexible) between now and mid-March. The position will be part-time, 20-25 hours a week. If you're interested, or know anyone who might be interested, please talk to either Trent Johnson or Tom LoCascio. You can also talk with Debbie LoCascio to get a better idea of what the job will entail.

**Adult Bible Study on Sundays**

Each Sunday, directly following our Divine Service, all are welcome to join that day's pastor for Adult Bible Study. The one-hour study will take place in the basement fellowship hall at 10:45 a.m. and will focus on either the readings, or Introit, for that day. Goodies, coffee and juice will also be available for participants. Start your week off right by delving deeper into God's Word and attending this educational study! You'll be glad you did!

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**Greeting Card Donations Needed**

St. Mark's Board of Human Care has a Greeting Card Ministry that they would like to expand! This past year, they took 5 batches of cards to MediLodge in Milford. The staff then gave the cards to the residents who they felt would benefit most from a friendly greeting. If you have any cards, either blank inside, Christmas, Easter, Valentine, 4th of July, etc... and especially general "thinking of you" type, and would like to donate them, there is now a box on the shelves at the bottom of the sanctuary stairs where you can put them. Also, any stickers or cut outs that can be used to decorate blank cards would be very useful. These cards can be secular or religious. And if you would be interested in helping make cards, or have suggestions of places or individuals who would like an occasional card from St. Mark's, please let us know!! If you would like more information, please call Leslie Oehring.

**Come, Hear the Lutheran Choralaires**

The Lutheran Choralaires will be performing a Christmas Concert at 2 different LCMS churches in metro Detroit in early December. The first will take place on Saturday, December 2 at 4:00 p.m. at St. John Lutheran Church, 1101 W. University Dr., Rochester. The second will take place on Saturday, December 9 at 4:00 p.m. at Historic Trinity Lutheran Church, 1345 Gratiot Ave., Detroit. The suggested donation to attend is \$10/adult and \$5/child. For more information, visit their website at [www.lutheranchoralaires.org](http://www.lutheranchoralaires.org), or call Paul Kienman at (248) 890-4405.

**St. Mark's Sunday Advent Worship Services & Christmas Worship Services**

We hope you and your family, friends, neighbors, etc. will make plans now to attend St. Mark's Advent & Christmas worship services! The schedule for these is as follows:

- Sunday, December 3 The First Sunday in Advent – Divine Service at 9:30 a.m.
- Sunday, December 10 The Second Sunday in Advent – Divine Service at 9:30 a.m.
- Sunday, December 17 The Third Sunday in Advent – Divine service at 9:30 a.m.
- Sunday, December 24 (No Advent 4 service that morning) – The Eve of the Nativity of Our Lord Candlelight & Carols Service at 5:00 p.m.
- Monday, December 25 The Nativity of Our Lord – Divine Service at 10:00 a.m.
- Sunday, December 31 The First Sunday After Christmas – Divine Service at 9:30 a.m.

Please join us for these beautiful, educational and inspiring worship services, won't you?

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**Volunteers Needed to Work at Live Nativity**

Christ Lutheran Church in Milford is seeking volunteers to help with their Live Nativity program called Journey with Jesus. Here is information about the program from their website: *On Friday, December 8 from 5:00-8:00 p.m. and Saturday, December 9 from 4:00-8:00 p.m., you're invited to join a family on their way to Bethlehem. This free, 30-minute, interactive walk through the Nativity will guide you to meet shepherds, innkeepers, villagers, and will give you a glimpse into what it may have been like the day Christ was born all those years ago. If you'd like to volunteer to be a shepherd, wise man, innkeeper, structure builder, etc., please visit this website to sign up: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/30E0E4CACA82AA1FE3-45086959-journey?useFullSite=true#/>*

**Collecting Bottles/Cans for Ziah Town 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.

**Combined Epiphany Service on January 6**

For the upcoming Epiphany Service on January 6, 2024, our circuit is planning to have a combined worship service to be held at Christ Lutheran Church in Milford (time TBD). All church members of St. Mark's are invited to attend! The circuit has already secured David Davis, President of our Michigan District LCMS, to preach at the service. Final details are still in the works, but you'll want to put this event on your calendars now as it'll be something you won't want to miss!

**Accepting Orders for Altar Poinsettias**

Would you consider purchasing a poinsettia plant to help decorate our altar area for Christmas? Each plant costs \$11 and you can make your donation in honor, or in memory, of a loved one, or just to help beautify the church. If you'd like to order, please use a pink order form found in each Sunday's bulletin, or contact the

*(Continued in next column)*

church office by December 17. The names of those honored or remembered will then be listed in the Christmas Eve/Christmas Day bulletins.

**December's Anniversaries:**

28 Dean & Sherry Hyrkas—59th  
31 Brian & Sarah Dwyer—13th

**December's Birthdays:**

6 Kathy Benson  
7 Brianna Hart  
8 Jaxson Reynolds  
10 Cindy Turner  
20 Juanita Reardon  
22 Brian Krus  
26 Joshua Cook  
27 Clayton Benson, Phoenix Benson

**Special Fund Donations for October:**

**Liberian Lutheran School:** Nancy McInnis, Lynn Thomas  
**Structures—Maint., Repairs, Improvements:** John & Debbie Sidelinker  
**Sanctuary Remodeling:** Nancy McInnis

**Baptized Into Our Family of Christ:**

Dillon & Riley O'Brien on 11/19/23

**Members Who Transferred Out:**

Susan, Alexis & Blake Ingram and Judy Schassberger transferred to Peace Lutheran, Waterford on 10/3/23

**This Month's Prayers**

**For Our church members:**

Helga Gonzalez, Barbara Jewell, Julia Ligon, Rose Mielke, Nancy Salo, Marilyn Turner, Art Vermeersch.

**For Friends/Family of Our Church Members:**

Lisa, Ian, Ed, Al, Dick, Joyce, Tim, Ron, Jeff, Judy, Cheryl, Chip, Rhea, Linda, Dale, Johnny, Dave, Kristy, Rick, Andra Bruce, Nita, Ray, Fran, Truman, Vicki, Callie, Linda, Debbie, Bruce, Leonard, Mary

**Those Celebrating a Special Decade birthday:**

This month, we congratulate our church members Brianna Hart and Joshua Cook who will be celebrating "special decade birthdays" on December 7 and December 26, respectively. (Of course, we can't tell you which special decade!) We pray that the Lord's richest blessings would be upon them not only on their birthday, but also in the upcoming year!

## 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](http://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!

### Order the *Lutheran Witness* Magazine Now

It's that time of year again where church members can either renew, or newly-subscribe, to the *Lutheran Witness* Magazine, the official periodical of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Published 11 times a year, *LW* provides laypeople with stories and information that complement congregational life, foster personal faith growth, and help interpret the contemporary world from a Lutheran Christian perspective. Your subscription would run from March 2024 through February 2025, and the cost is \$19/year if ordered through St. Mark's. If you'd like to order or renew, please make your check payable to St. Mark's Lutheran Church, place it into a green offering envelope (found in the pew racks), write "Lutheran Witness" on the envelope, and place it into an offering plate **NO LATER THAN DECEMBER 10**. It's that easy! Any questions regarding the *Lutheran Witness* can be directed to Debbie LoCascio.

## Church Council Meeting Minutes—Summarized October 24, 2023

**In attendance:** Tom LoCascio, Karen Kaufman, Trent Johnson, Darryl Swainson, John Reardon, Lori Whitehead, and Nancy McInnis

Call to order at 7:01 pm by Tom LoCascio

Opening Prayer

Financial Secretary's Report per Lori Whitehead – Lori advised that she would be unable to add the column of Actual Expenses versus Budgeted Expenses to her monthly report as she does not have access to that information. Per Trent Johnson, this is intentional in order to keep the two financial reports separate. According to the report through September, what is needed versus what we have received, we are close to a \$20,000 deficit. Since we are not paying a full-time, permanent pastor though, there really isn't a deficit for 2023.

Church Calendar – need to remove the quilting bee meetings after Thanksgiving through January. Darryl Swainson asked to have the midweek Advent services being held at sister congregations entered on the calendar. He will confirm the worship times and then email Debbie L.

Parish Report – eight members transferred to other LCMS churches: the Vergins and Marlene Steck (so Pastor Moyer can visit her at home). There were two deaths: Lynne Welty and Carolyn Achimov. Attendance is down a bit.

Vice President's Report per Trent Johnson – the young adults event will be December 2 from 4-8 pm at St. Mark's.

### **BOARD REPORTS**

Elders per Darry Swainson –

- Working with Pastor Tkac on planning/starting Confirmation for four students: Dante Hilton, Dillon O'Brien, Riley O'Brien and Jaxon Reynolds.
- Baptism for Dillon and Riley O'Brien has been scheduled for Sunday, November 19. Pastor Pies will preside.
- On November 5 we will be celebrating All Saint's Day during the Divine Service. Karen Kaufman agreed to ring the handbell for each name that is read during the service.
- November 22 there will not be a Thanksgiving Eve service at St. Mark's this year.
- December 3 is the first Sunday in Advent. We will be switching to Divine Service, Setting III.
- All midweek Advent services will take place at sister congregations this year.
- Call Committee Update – The Dual Parish Pastor option with a sister congregation that was being researched turned out to be unviable. The next option being researched is a possible pairing with a large LCMS congregation in S.E. Detroit who would share one of their pastors with St. Mark's and split the salary/benefits costs with us. We will be meeting with this church to discuss what this option might entail.
- We have submitted our paperwork including the names of pastors (3) submitted by some of our church members to the MI District for a potential call list.

Properties per Trent Johnson and Lori Whitehead –

- Lori is still working with the asphalt company to set up a day where they can fill the parking lot cracks.
- Lori had a quote for the water leak from a plumber. They discovered that the outside spigots were not turned off so anyone could just turn them on. The plumber suggested that these be replaced as well as the broken interior water shut off valves. The cost would be about \$850. Lori made a motion to replace the outside spigots and the shut off valves with Delta Plumbing for \$850. John Reardon seconded the motion. Motion carried.
- Per Debbie LoCascio, the annual boiler inspection was performed in September. The boiler was fine except we needed the annual CSD-1 testing done. Debbie has scheduled this for October 26.
- Per Debbie LoCascio, the backflow valve testing was completed on October 9. We passed.
- From the Annual Church Planning Meeting:
  - \* A suggestion was made to place a Property Repair Sign-up Sheet on the bulletin board outside the church office where parishioners can list building or property items that need repair or maintenance for the Board of Properties to tackle. Debbie will place the sign-up sheet on the board soon.
  - \* A suggestion was made that the sanctuary windows need to be cleaned and serviced by a window company.

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## Council Minutes

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- \* The leaf and stick clean-up that was on the calendar was cancelled because this chore can wait to be tackled until spring.
- \* Jim O'Brien asked Darryl Swainson if we should do something with the candelabras that have been sitting in the sacristy for years. These are not worth anything and are chipped and will not stand up anymore. A suggestion was made to check with Jennie Kaufman and Tom LoCascio before we throw them out to make sure we don't need the spare parts.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

2024 Election Slate per Tom LoCascio – The most important 2024 position we have open is for the role of President. If no one is nominated, then Trent Johnson, as our current Vice President, would be acting President for a year, until his term is up. Lori Whitehead will be continuing as Financial Secretary. John Reardon is going to continue on Board of Gospel Outreach. Larry Whitehead will continue on Board of Elders. Tom will confirm with Barbara Jewell if she would be interested in continuing on the Board of Gospel Outreach, as well. Per Trent Johnson, we are looking for one more member for Board of Properties.

Michigan District Annual Pledge Amount—Tom LoCascio stated that each year we make a mission donation to the Michigan District. Historically we have donated \$750/year. Trent Johnson made a motion to give \$750 for 2024 also. Council approved.

#### Upcoming Dates and events:

- November 5 is Daylight Saving Time. Remember to turn your clocks back one hour.
- November 25 we will be decorating St. Mark's for Christmas starting at 10 am.
- December 3 is the semi-annual voter's meeting. This will take place after the service. There will not be a council meeting in December.

#### 2024 Budget per Trent Johnson

The 2024 budget draft shows a total of \$144,399. This is less than the 2023 budget due to not paying a full-time pastor's salary and benefits. Our properties budget went up a bit this year, mainly due to gas and electric. The building insurance has gone up as well. Everything else was the same or went down slightly. These numbers will be finalized during our November council meeting before submitting them to the congregation at the December's voter's meeting.

Our Investment Funds—Lori Whitehead brought up moving our investment funds for the Feed My Lambs and the Endowment Fund to other, interest-bearing accounts. There is about \$8500 between these two accounts. This was tabled until Kyle Albert can be in attendance to provide additional information.

Church Office Secretary—Trent Johnson stated that we are still looking for a part-time secretary. Darryl Swainson mentioned that we could have other local churches make an announcement. Tom LoCascio suggested that we should advertised in the Mission District magazine.

Next meeting will be Tuesday, November 21, 2023, at 7 pm.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:52 pm. We closed with the Lord's Prayer.

### **2024 Contribution Envelopes Will be Available in the Sanctuary Soon!**

Watch for 2024 contribution envelopes to be available on a table near the back of the sanctuary in early December! At that time, we ask that you locate your box of envelopes and take them home with you, then begin using them starting January 1, 2024. Thank you!

# December 2023

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

St. Mark's Lutheran Church

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

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<b>ALTAR GUILD:</b> Jennie & Karen Kaufman <b>COUNTERS:</b> Nancy Hewson & Lori Whitehead					<b>1</b> 9am Adopt-A-Family Gift Pickup	<b>2</b> 4pm Young Adults' Trivia Night & Dinner
<b>3 1st Sunday in Advent</b> Pastor: Frank Pies Assistant: David Drake 9:30am Divine Service 10:45am Voters' Meeting	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b> 7pm - Elders' Mtg.	<b>6</b> Midweek Advent Svc. 7pm Peace, Waterford	<b>7</b> 9am Adopt-A-Family Gift Pickup 4pm Adopt-A-Family Gift Pickup	<b>8</b> Live Nativity 5pm Christ, Milford	<b>9</b> Live Nativity 4pm Christ, Milford
<b>10 2nd Sun. in Advent</b> Pastor: Rod Zwonitzer Assistant: Trent Johnson 9:30am Divine Service 10:45am Adult Bible Class	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b> Midweek Advent Svc. 7pm Faith, Highland	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b> DEADLINE TO SUBMIT NEWSLETTER ARTICLES	<b>16</b>
<b>17 3rd Sunday in Advent</b> Pastor: Terry Nelson Assistant: Darryl Swainson 9:30am Divine Service 10:45am Adult Bible Class	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b> Midweek Advent Svc. 7pm Peace, Waterford	<b>21 1st Day of Winter</b>	<b>22</b> DISTRIBUTE NEWSLTR.	<b>23</b>
<b>24 Christmas Eve</b> Pastor: Rod Zwonitzer Assistant: David Drake 5:00pm Service of Carols & Candlelighting (Advent 4-no AM worship svc.)	<b>25 Christmas Day</b> Pastor: Frank Pies Assistant: Tom LoCascio 10am Divine Service	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>31 1st Sun. after Christmas</b> Pastor: Terry Nelson Assistant: Darryl Swainson 9:30am Divine Service 10:45am Adult Bible Class <b>New Year's Eve</b>		<b>GREETERS:</b>			<b>USHERS:</b>	
		3 Jennie/Karen K.	24 Mary Lockwood		3 Matt Maier	24 Darryl S./Tom K.
		10 Kelly Lekas	25 Tom/Debbie L.		10 John Reardon	25 Darryl Swainson
		17 Gail Fitzgerald	31 Jennie/Karen K.		17 Tom Kaufman	31 John Reardon