



St. Mark's Lutheran Church

Messenger

February 2024

Ash Wednesday Divine Service

On Wednesday, February 14, the Church will observe Ash Wednesday. This day marks the beginning of the season of Lent, a special 40-day period of penitence through which we prepare ourselves to celebrate our Lord's death and resurrection. On Ash Wednesday, we focus especially on the depths of our sin and the death that we deserve, so that we might better appreciate the sacrifice of Christ. At St. Mark's, we will be hosting our traditional Ash Wednesday service at 7:00 p.m. that evening. The service, led by Pastor Frank Pies, will include the Imposition of Ashes, as well as Holy Communion. We hope you will make plans now to join us and begin your Lenten preparations with the Word of God!

Midweek Lenten Services

The midweek Lenten services that follow Ash Wednesday will be held at 3 of our sister churches—Peace Waterford, Faith Highland, and Christ Milford—at 7:00 p.m. (pastoral preaching schedule to be determined). The pastors of those congregations will be rotating in a round-robin style and parishioners are encouraged to select ONE location to attend so that they get to see/hear all 3 pastors preach over the 5 week Lenten period. Please attend, if you can!

Lenten Coin Holders

The season of Lent officially begins on Ash Wednesday, February 14. Once again, we will be receiving donations via our Lenten Coin Folders that will be located on the table in the entryway soon. This year's coin folder donations will be going toward the Ziah Town Lutheran School Fund as we continue to help missionary, Joe Boway, provide catechism books and other needed supplies to the students there. How do the folders work? Just place one quarter each day during Lent into the corresponding slot (excluding Sundays, which are celebrated as "mini Easters" and are IN Lent, but not OF Lent), and by Easter Sunday, your holder will be full and equal \$10! Then, you can place your full folder into any offering plate on Easter Sunday or before. Collecting quarters is an easy and fun activity to do, especially for kids!

(Continued on Page 2, Column 1)

What's Inside...

1. Ash Wednesday Divine Service, Midweek Lenten Services, Lenten Coin Holders
2. Trivia Night at Faith, Highland, St. Mark's Quilting Bee Resumes, Pastoral Call Committee Update, Adult Bible Study on Sundays, The Search for a New Church Secretary, Lenten Devotional Books, Collecting Bottles/Cans for Ziah Town Lutheran School, Thanks to Those Who Helped Undeck the Halls, An Update from Joe Boway
3. A Thank You Note from the Open Door, Accepting Orders for Easter Plants, Birthdays, Anniversaries, Special Fund Donations, Transferred Membership
4. For the Latest Church News Visit Our Website, Easter Plants (cont'd.)
5. February's Church Calendar (insert)

The *Messenger* is the monthly newsletter of:

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

7979 Commerce Rd.
West Bloomfield, MI 48324

Ph: (248) 363-0741
Fax: (866) 649-6870

Website: www.stmarkwb.org

Editor:

Debbie LoCascio

E-mail: debbie@stmarkwb.org

Sunday Worship

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

Trivia Night at Faith Lutheran Church, Highland

Faith Lutheran Church located at 3501 E. Highland Road in Highland is sponsoring another Trivia Night on Saturday, February 3, from 5:00 – 8:00 p.m. All sister congregations are invited, and feel free to invite a friend or some family members too! The cost is \$50.00 for a table of 6 or \$10.00 per person. There is a cash prize for 1st, 2nd & 3rd place and a 50/50 Raffle. Start forming your teams now, or sign up individually and join a table when you arrive at the event. There will be pop & water to drink & snacks on the table, and we will take a break halfway through to have pizza, salad & cookies. To sign up for this event, please call the Faith Lutheran Church office at 248-887-5550. They would love to have you join them!

St. Mark's Quilting Bee to resume on February 1

St. Mark's Quilting Bee group will resume meeting on Thursday mornings at 10:00 a.m. beginning February 1. 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 just show up on Thursdays! Any questions regarding the Quilting Bee can be directed to Jennie Kaufman.

Pastoral Call Committee Update

On Wednesday, January 17, St. Mark's Call Committee met with Pastor Meckes from the Michigan District LCMS to discuss the next steps to be taken in finding a possible dual parish pastor. Pastor Meckes plans to check with the LCMS' English District to discuss the possibility of us looking at area English District churches too. This would expand our LCMS congregation pastoral search options. In the meantime, the committee will be getting together soon to discuss what St. Mark's needs would be for a dual parish pastor.

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 goodies, coffee and juice are often available for participants. Start your week off right by delving deeper into God's Word! You'll be glad you did!

The Search for a New Church Secretary

Interviewing for St. Mark's Church Secretary position began in mid-January. The posting will remain open through January 31, and we hope to make a decision at the beginning of February.

(Continued next column)

Lenten Devotional Books

As you prepare for Lent, we hope you will grab a copy of the Lenten Devotional Booklets provided to us by Lutheran Hour Ministries that will be located on the table at the rear of the sanctuary soon. These booklets offer scripture readings and devotions for each day during Lent. They make for excellent reading during this penitential season! We thank Lutheran Hour Ministries for making the booklets available to us free of charge, and hope they will enhance your Lenten studies.

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 the online giving button and selecting the fund titled *Joe Boway/Liberian School*.

Thanks to Those Who Helped Undeck the Halls

Several members of St. Mark's gathered at our church on Saturday, January 6, to take down all of the Christmas decorations and place them back into storage. Your help was so very much appreciated! Thank you!

An Update from Joe Boway

In Joe Boway's recent newsletter regarding the LCMS' mission work in Liberia, he writes about how far the work with children has come. He stated that 20 years ago in 2004, it all started with one school and 36 children. Today, there are 15 schools with over 6500 children! He goes on to say that lives are being changed for eternity by the Holy Spirit because of your prayers and support. Twenty-six children and their parents were baptized on December 24 at the Christmas conference held by the churches where our Lutheran schools are located. He also shared news that 5 LCMS church members from 2 different LCMS congregations in Illinois would be joining him in Liberia in January and February in order to conduct sewing workshops for teachers and students at five of the 15 schools. The sewing instructors plan to teach the teachers and students how to sew hygiene products for the girls in the schools, and they will include a pattern that can be used. The team will also offer training on sewing machine maintenance and repair. Please keep Joe and the sewing team in your prayers as they work to

(Continued on Page 3, Column 1)

Page 3, Column 1

help the students and staff of the Liberian Lutheran schools. And pray for their safe travels throughout that country, and also as they return to the U.S.

A Thank You Note From the Open Door

Following St. Mark's assistance with the Open Door Outreach Center's Adopt-A-Family for Christmas program, we received the following thank you letter from the them:

Dear St. Mark's,

Thank you for your gracious sponsorship of local families this Christmas. It is because of people like you that this program even exists.

For the 2023 holiday season, Open Door provided, along with your help, Christmas gifts to 79 families. This included 112 children up to the age of 18, and 27 seniors age 62 and over. These families were overwhelmed by your generosity and delighted with the wonderful gifts you provided.

On behalf of the Board, Staff and Volunteers at Open Door, we thank you for sharing your heart and again, for sponsoring a family. We look forward to the coming year, continuing to serve our community by alleviating hunger and helping our Lakes Area neighbors with the varied and unique challenges they face on a daily basis. Together, we are making a difference.

Sincerely,

*Tillie Raymond, Interim Director
Tina Davis, Client Services Manager*

Accepting Orders for Easter Plants

You can help beautify St. Mark's altar area on Easter morning by purchasing beautiful, flowering, spring plants that will adorn that area for Easter. Following the Easter Divine Service, you may then take your plants home and transplant them into your garden.

Plants may be ordered in honor or memory of a loved one, or just to help beautify the sanctuary for Easter. The names of your loved ones will then be included in the Easter morning bulletin. To place an order, either complete a pink flower order form (found in the Sunday bulletins) and place it and your check (made payable to St. Mark's) into the offering plate, OR mail your order (include number & type of plant wanted), any plant tributes, and your check (made payable to St. Mark's Lutheran Church) to the Church Office NO LATER THAN MARCH

(See Easter Plants, Page 4)

February's Anniversaries

2 Paul & Andrea Benson	28th
7 Kyle & Paula Albert	37th
22 Joshua & Sarah Cook	4th

February's Birthdays

2 Rob Wheeler
7 Mel Maier, Jr., Dorothy Vermeersch
8 Dean Hyrkas
9 Debbie LoCascio
12 Diane Burnett
20 Karen Kaufman
22 David Drake
26 Elanor Johnson

Special Fund Donations for December:

Liberian Lutheran School: Truman & Debbie Duggin, Nancy McInnis, Rod & Leslie Oehring, Lynn Thomas

Sanctuary Remodeling: Nancy McInnis

Transferred Membership to St. Mark's:

Diane Burnett (on 1/10/24)
3120 Barberry
Commerce, MI 48382
(941) 773-7339

This Month's Prayers

For Our church members:

Sarah Cook, Helga Gonzalez, Barbara Jewell, Julia Ligon, Mary Ann Lockwood, Rose Mielke, Angela Peters, Nancy Salo, Carolyn Turner, Marilyn Turner, Art Vermeersch.

For Friends/Family of Our Church Members:

Nancy, Lisa, Ian, Ed, Angel, Ron, Mary Lou, Josh, Judy, Alex, Chip, Rhea, Cheryl, Dale, Dan, Johnny, Sandy, Dave, Kristy, Rick, Rich, Ray, Truman, Callie, Mary

For Those Who Lost Loved Ones Recently:

- * The Domeier family as Barbara Jewell's step-daughter's husband, Ron Domeier, passed away on Jan. 12
- * The Moyer family as Pastor Moyer's grandmother fell asleep in the Lord on Jan. 15

St. Mark's Lutheran Church

7979 Commerce Road
West Bloomfield, MI 48324
Website: www.stmarkwb.org
Phone: (248) 363-0741
Fax: (866) 649-6870

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!

Easter Plants (*Continued from Page 3*)

3. Only pre-paid orders will be accepted. Prices are as follows:

6" Lily (White)	\$10.00
6" Tulip (Red, Pink, Yellow, Lavender)	\$ 8.25
8" Hydrangea (Blue, Pink)	\$18.00
6" Hyacinth (Pink, Blue, White)	\$ 8.25
6" Daffodil (Yellow)	\$ 8.25
4" Mini Daffodil (Yellow)	\$ 3.50
6" Azalea (Pink, Red, White)	\$18.00

Thank you in advance for your order!

Church Council Meeting Minutes—Summarized November 21, 2023

In attendance: Tom LoCascio, Karen Kaufman, Trent Johnson, John Reardon, Lori Whitehead, and Nancy McInnis. Larry Whitehead was a visitor.

Call to order at 7:01 pm

Opening Prayer

Previous minutes accepted as submitted.

Vice President's Report per Trent Johnson – Trivia Night for the young adults has been set for December 2 from 4-8 pm. Dinner will be served. The Trivia Night is at St. Mark's.

BOARD REPORTS

Elders per Trent Johnson –

- Confirmation has begun for four students with Pastor Tkac being available for the students to call with questions and he will administer the Unit Check-ins. Dillon and Riley O'Brien were baptized by Pastor Pies on Sunday, November 19.
- Thanksgiving Day worship service will be held at Our Savior, Hartland at 10 am on November 23.
- The first Sunday in Advent is December 3. We will be switching to Divine Service, Setting III.
- Midweek Advent service times will be 7:00 pm with the theme – The Way, the Truth, The Life
 - * December 6 at Peace Lutheran Church, Waterford
 - * December 13 at Faith Lutheran Church, Highland
 - * December 20 at Christ Lutheran Church, Milford
- St. Mark's Advent/Christmas Worship service schedule:
 - * Sunday, December 3 Advent 1 Divine Service at 9:30 am
 - * Sunday, December 10 Advent 2 Divine Service at 9:30 am
 - * Sunday, December 17 Advent 3 Divine Service at 9:30 am
 - * Sunday, December 24 (no Advent 4 morning service) The Eve of the Nativity of Our Lord Candle-light and Carols Service at 5:00 pm
 - * Monday, December 25 The Nativity of Our Lord Divine Service at 10:00 am
 - * Sunday, December 31 Christmas 1 Divine Service at 9:30 am
- Call Committee Update – The Call Committee received a pastoral Call List from our Michigan District on November 14. The Committee met that evening to discuss and summarize the pastoral "options" research that has been completed to date. The Committee has decided to pause the call process until they present the four pastoral call options to the voter's assembly at the Voters' Meeting on December 3 and the voters can decide which direction they would like to go.
 - The four options are:
 - Call a Pastor
 - Dual Parish
 - Merger
 - Perpetual Vacancy

Lori Whitehead brought up about reaching out to the folks who are not coming to church. This was discussed at the planning meeting in September. Perhaps this should be the Gospel Outreach group calling folks and try to persuade them to come back to church. We need to do something to get attendance back up.

(Continued on back—Page 6)

Council Minutes continued from Page 5

Human Care per Karen Kaufman –

- Adopt-A-Family program through the Open Door, Waterford. The sign-up sheet is in the lobby. St. Mark's was given four people to buy for.
- Greeting Cards for area nursing homes – need donations of various greeting cards, stickers, etc. A box is located in the bookshelf area for card donations.
- The next St. Paul Dinner will be on Wednesday, May 29.

Properties per Trent Johnson, Debbie LoCascio and Lori Whitehead –

- Annual Boiler Inspection was completed. We passed and the paperwork was submitted to the state.
- Lori Whitehead sent an email to the committee regarding KCA Paving not responding to her calls and emails. She asked for approval to hire HD Sealcoating & Paving and Tom LoCascio and Trent Johnson approved it. They will be out to do the job on Wednesday, November 22, 2023.
- Lori Whitehead talked to the plumber and he will not be able to get to us until the first week of December.
- The Plexiglas in the sanctuary windows will be fixed as soon as the ladder can be accessed. There was something wrong with the lock and no one could get to the ladder. The crank windows will be taken care of in the Spring.
- The list of projects is working out well.

LWML per Debbie LoCascio for Leslie Oehring – the Quilting Bee is on hiatus until February 2024.

NEW BUSINESS

- Church office will be closed for Thanksgiving on November 23 and 24.
- We will decorate for Christmas on Saturday, November 25 at 10:00 am.
- The Semi-Annual Voters' Meeting will be Sunday, December 3 after service. All voting will be by paper ballot. No council meeting in December.
- Sarah Dwyer has expressed an interest in the Church Secretary's job. She will be meeting with Debbie LoCascio the week after Thanksgiving to discuss further.
- Election Slate – we will be voting on this at the Semi-Annual Voters' Meeting on December 3.
- Distribution of 2024 Budget – everyone received two copies of the 2024 budget—one included the cost for a full-time pastor and the second included the cost for a part-time pastor (or dual parish pastor).

Discussion ensued: After going through the budget, Council decided to remove \$76 for the Easter Door Hangers.

Properties' costs have gone up mainly due to increased gas and electric bills. We are saving some on lawn care as we purchased a lawn mower in 2023. Lori Whitehead offered to check on health insurance to try and get closer to an actual cost. Budget was approved for submittal to the voters' assembly on December 3.

- The council acknowledges and thanks Tom LoCascio for his service as St. Mark's President these past 6 years. This will be his last council meeting.

Next council meeting will be Tuesday, January 16, 2024, at 7 pm.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:00 pm. We closed with the Lord's Prayer.

February 2024

PAGE 5

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.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1 10am Quilting Bee	2 Groundhog Day	3 5-8pm Trivia Night @ Faith, Highland
4 Sexagesima Pastor: Terry Nelson Assistant: David Drake 9:30am Divine Service 10:45am Adult Bible Class	5	6 7pm - Elders' Mtg.	7	8 10am Quilting Bee	9	10
11 Quinquagesima Pastor: Frank Pies Assistant: Darryl Swainson 9:30am Divine Service 10:45am Adult Bible Class SUPERBOWL SUNDAY	12	13	14 Ash Wednesday Valentine's Day 7pm Ash Wed. Divine Service (at St. Mark's) Elder: Darryl Swainson	15 10am Quilting Bee Debbie LoCascio out of the office	16 DEADLINE TO SUBMIT NEWSLETTER ARTICLES	17
18 1st Sunday in Lent Pastor: Frank Pies Assistant: David Drake 9:30am Divine Service 10:45am Adult Bible Class	19 Presidents' Day	20 7pm - Council Mtg.	21 7pm Midweek Lent Svc. (not at St. Mark's)	22 10am Quilting Bee	23 DISTRIBUTE NEWSLTR.	24
25 2nd Sunday in Lent Pastor: Terry Nelson Assistant: Tom LoCascio 9:30am Divine Service 10:45am Adult Bible Class	26	27	28 7pm Midweek Lent Svc. (not at St. Mark's)	29 10am Quilting Bee		

ALTAR GUILD: Sandy Krus/Karen Kaufman
COUNTERS: Mary Lockwood/Jean Swainson

GREETERS:	USHERS:
4 Cathy Fitzgerald	4 Matt Maier
11 Kelly Lekas	11 Tom LoCascio
14 None	14 Tom Kaufman
18 Mary Lockwood	18 Trent Johnson
25 Gail Fitzgerald	25 John Reardon