



St. Mark's Lutheran Church

Messenger

January 2024

Combined Epiphany Worship Service on January 6

For the upcoming Epiphany worship service on January 6, 2024, our Kensington Circuit is planning to have a combined worship service to be held at Christ Lutheran Church in Milford at 7:00 p.m., and we hope you will make plans to attend! The circuit has already secured David Davis, President of our Michigan District LCMS, to preach at the service. Please place this event on your calendars now as it'll be something you won't want to miss.

It's Time to Undeck the Halls

We're seeking volunteers to help take down St. Mark's church decorations on Saturday, January 6 starting at 10:00 a.m. Can we count on you to help? Many hands make for light work and your assistance would be greatly appreciated!

Transfiguration of our Lord, "Burying" the Alleluia, and the Installation of 2024 Church Servants

On Sunday, January 21, several exciting things will be occurring at St. Mark's during the Divine Service. First, we will be celebrating the Festival of Christ's Transfiguration, where we remember the account of how Jesus was transfigured on the mountain, shining out in glory before the eyes of Peter, James, and John. This affords us an opportunity to consider Jesus' true identity as the glorious Son of God in the flesh, as well as our hope of glory in the age to come. During the middle of the service, we will be installing our church servants into their 2024 church positions. And at the end of the service, we will be "burying" the Alleluia banner, removing that word from our services until we can say it with joy again on Easter Sunday. We hope you will join us for worship on this day!

St. Mark's Quilting Bee on Hiatus Through January

St. Mark's Quilting Bee group will continue to be on hiatus during the month of January. They will resume meeting, and sewing, on February 1. Anyone who would like to learn how to quilt, or if you already know how to quilt and would like to join this fun group, just show up on Thursday, February 1 at 10:00 a.m.!

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The Messenger is the monthly newsletter of:

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

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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

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 as we work to pare down her duties so that a part-time (25 hours per week) Secretary can perform them. Duties will include sorting mail, answering the phones, creating publications (weekly bulletins, monthly newsletters) and other miscellaneous chores. Paid training for the position will take place part-time (days/times are flexible) between now and mid-March. If you're interested, or know anyone who might be interested, please talk to either Trent Johnson or Tom LoCascio.

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 will be available for participants. Start your week off right by delving deeper into God's Word! You'll be glad you did!

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!! Questions can be directed to Leslie Oehring.

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

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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*.

Debbie LoCascio Offers her Thanks

Following the Christmas Eve worship service, St. Mark's Vice President, Trent Johnson, presented Office Manager Debbie LoCascio with a "thank you" gift from the congregation for all of her hard work during 2023. Surprised, Debbie was left *almost* speechless as she then briefly thanked the congregation for their kindness. Now that she's had a chance to recover, she once again offers her most sincere thanks for the generosity and support she has received from the parishioners of St. Mark's over the years, and she continues to keep our church in her prayers, always!

Thanks to Those Who Purchased Poinsettias

Thanks so much to those who purchased Christmas poinsettias in honor or memory of their loved ones (listed below) during Christmastime.

In Memory of:

- Nathan Allen--Barbara Allen
- Jeffrey Balhoff, my nephew--Jennie Kaufman
- Frank Brandt--Rod & Leslie Oehring
- Irv Sr., Irv Jr., & Robert Burnett--Diane Burnett
- Butch Fitzgerald--Cathy Fitzgerald
- Robert Hart--The Kaufman, Krus, Clark & Hart Families
- Del Joslin--Kay Joslin
- Marvin Kaufman--The Kaufman, Krus, Clark & Hart Families
- Mr. & Mrs. Richard Krus--The Kaufman, Krus, Clark & Hart Families
- My mom & dad--Nancy McInnis
- Nick, Anetta & George Lekas--Nick & Kelly Lekas
- Donna Lewin--Barbara Allen
- Dennis Moriarty--Janet Moriarty
- Oscar Oehring--Rod & Leslie Oehring
- Betty Rice--The Kaufman, Krus, Clark & Hart Families
- Frank Salo--Nancy Salo

In Honor of & in Gratitude for:

- The blessing of our wonderful family--Dean & Sherry Hyrkas
- Dean & Sherry Hyrkas--Nick & Kelly Lekas
- In Memory of All, In Honor of All--Donna Clark
- My Family: Karen Kaufman; Sandy, Brian & Austin Krus; Brianna & Preston Hart;
- Jim Kaufman; & Tom Kaufman--Jennie Kaufman
- Jennie Kaufman--The Kaufman, Krus, Clark & Hart Families
- My sons, Michael & Jeffrey Lockwood--Mary Ann Lockwood

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Voters' Meeting Minutes—Summarized December 3, 2023

Called to order at 10:45 a.m.
Opening Prayer/Devotion by Pastor Pies

Vice President's Report—The Young Adults group met on December 2. Lower attendance than usual.

Board Reports

Elders: They are working with Pastor Tkac from Peace re: confirmands; Larry Whitehead continues to write/mail birthday, anniversary and visitor post-cards; still working with the Call Committee.

Gospel Outreach per John Reardon: waiting for new pastor to be called so he can work with this board; suggestion made to check with Pastor Zwonitzer re: the congregation Revitality process.

Human Care per Karen Kaufman: continuing to collect bottles/cans for Ziah Town Lutheran School in Liberia; they are writing/mailling cards to an area nursing home; St. Mark's to serve dinner at St. Paul, Pontiac in May 2024.

LWML per Leslie Oehring: made 40 quilts for Lutheran World Relief this year; 4 St. Mark's ladies attended the Fall Zone Rally; LWML dues are caught up.

Parish Fellowship per Nancy McInnis: oversaw the Fall Harvest Potluck; will help with Wed. Nights in Christ next fall; Ash Wed. Soup & Salad Supper will depend on if we get a pastor before then.

Properties: bought a new commercial lawn mower in 2023, need volunteers to mow again in 2024; the parking lot cracks have been filled; discussed current water leak, suggestion was made to replace the men's room toilet, also the 2 main water valves that don't work.

Misc. Business Items

2024 Election Slate—approved as submitted.

Call Committee Update: met with a sister LCMS church re: a possible dual parish, but that didn't work out. Met with another sister LCMS church re: them "leasing" us one of their extra pastors at 50% shared cost, but that didn't work out. St. Mark's completed the congregation surveys and received a pastor Call List containing 11 candidates. Trent presented details re: St. Mark's current budget concerns.

A question was then posed to voters: *should the Call Committee continue moving forward with calling a full-time pastor considering St. Mark's budget*

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and the average age of our church members? A paper ballot vote ensued: 21 voted NO; 2 voted YES; 1 abstained. Therefore, this option was dropped.

The remaining 3 options were then voted on: *look into a dual parish situation, look into merging with a sister congregation, remain in a permanent vacancy status utilizing vacancy pastors going forward.* A paper ballot vote ensued: 16—Dual Parish; 3 Merge; 5 Remain in Permanent Vacancy. The majority was DUAL PARISH, so that's what the Call Committee will pursue.

2024 Budget was approved with a part-time pastor's salary & benefits and also a part-time secretary.

Meeting was adjourned at 12:10 p.m. Closed with the Lord's Prayer.

This Month's Prayers

For Our church members:

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

For Friends/Family of Our Church Members:

Lisa, Ian, Ed, Al, Dick, Joyce, Tim, Ron, Judy, Chip, Rhea, Dale, Johnny, Dave, Kristy, Rick, Rich, Ray, Truman, Callie, Mary

For Those Who Lost Loved Ones Recently:

- * The Burnett family as Diane Burnett's son, James Burnett, went to be with Jesus on Nov. 18
- * The Kaufman family as Jennie Kaufman's nephew, Jeff Balhoff, went to be with Jesus on Dec. 8
- * The Tucker family as Lori Whitehead's friend, Vickie Tucker, passed away on Dec. 11
- * The Hale family as Debbie LoCascio's cousin-in-law, Cheryl Hale, went to be with Jesus on Dec. 22

Those Celebrating a Special Decade Birthday:

This month, we congratulate our church members Leslie Oehring and Sandy Krus who will be celebrating "special decade birthdays" on January 24 and January 27, 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)?

- 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!

Faith Lutheran Invites All to Trivia Night

Faith Lutheran Church in Highland invites everyone to attend their Trivia Night on Saturday, February 3 from 5:00—8:00 p.m. They will be serving dinner (pizza), snacks and drinks. It's going to be an evening of fun and laughter that you won't want to miss! Start forming your teams now and feel free to invite your friends and family. For questions, please call their church office at (248) 887-5550.

January's Anniversaries—none

January's Birthdays:

- 21 Sarah Dwyer
- 24 Cathy Fitzgerald, Leslie Oehring
- 27 Sandy Krus, Gabriel Peters
- 31 Tom Kaufman

Special Fund Donations for November:

Liberian Lutheran School: Nancy McInnis,
Lynn Thomas

Sanctuary Remodeling: Nancy McInnis

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.

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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.

January 2024

St. Mark's Lutheran Church

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

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 New Year's Day Church Office closed Circumcision/Name of Jesus	2	3	4	5	6 Epiphany of Our Lord 10am Undecorate St. Mark's 7pm Epiphany Service at Christ, Milford
7 Epiphany (observed) Pastor: Rod Zwonitzer Assistant: Tom LoCascio 9:30am Divine Service 10:45am Adult Bible Class	8	9	10	11	12	13
14 2nd Sun. after Epiphany Pastor: Terry Nelson Assistant: Darryl Swainson 9:30am Divine Service 10:45am Adult Bible Class	15 Martin Luther King, Jr	16 7pm - Council Mtg.	17	18	19 DEADLINE TO SUBMIT NEWSLETTER ARTICLES	20
21 Transfiguration of our Lor Pastor: Frank Pies Assistant: David Drake 9:30am Divine Service 10:45am Adult Bible Class INSTALLATION OF SERVANTS	22	23	24	25	26 DISTRIBUTE NEWSLTR.	27
28 Septuagesima Pastor: Rod Zwonitzer Assistant: Tom LoCascio 9:30am Divine Service 10:45am Adult Bible Class	29	30	31			

ALTAR GUILD: Barb Allen
COUNTERS: Barbara Jewell & TBD

GREETERS:	USHERS:
7 Mary Lockwood	7 Matt Maier
14 Gail Fitzgerald	14 Trent Johnson
21 Tom & Deb L.	21 Tom Kaufman
28 Jennie & Karen K.	28 John Reardon