

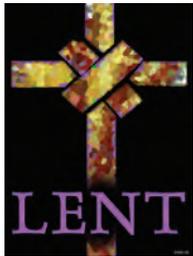


The Vineyard Press

MARCH 2018
VOL 19, ISSUE 3

ST. MARK'S LUTHERAN CHURCH
Sharing Christ's Abundant Love

"I am the vine, you are the branches." (John 15:5)



Lent is not lost

In the not-so-older days, many observed Lent with disciplines of fasting, prayer, and almsgiving. Even though the Jewel still sells paczki on Fat Tuesday, and fish will be on sale for Fridays, much has changed.

Over the years at St. Mark's, we have worshiped midweek with Holden Evening Prayer, Taize, and Holden Prayer Around the Cross. These worship services were/are compelling and connecting. Lovely and meaningful. I like them and miss them. But, year-by-year, attendance dwindled. Toward the end of the season, only a few people gathered around the cross. Why, we wonder? It's late, dark, cold, people are busy, tired, overbooked . . .???

But, busy or not, it is still Lent. And, like it or not, we are all dust and to dust we shall return. Yet Lent is more than a time to consider our mortality. The Season invites us to be refreshed, to be people who reflect Steadfast Love.

Even though there will not be any Lenten evening worship this season, we will gather for Lenten worship on weekends. Young people will gather on Wednesdays. Second graders will hear again the story of God's liberating power as they prepare for their first communion.

Lent begins with Ash Wednesday, every year: "Remember you are dust and to dust you shall return." We know this. As we gaze through the glass in the entrance of the nave, we remember those who have gone before us whose ashes rest in the columbarium. We remember them, and we remember that we, too, are dust. We remember that we are invited to open our hearts, again, to the Word that realigns, breathes new life into us, and challenges us to really live—to be fully alive and human.

As Joan Chittister writes, "Lent is our salvation from the depths of nothingness. It is our guide to the more of life."

I hope you will join us in the season,
Pastor Patricia Geiseman

Acts of kindness

We have celebrated Mardi Gras and participated in Ash Wednesday. Lent has officially begun. Are you one of the many that "give up something" for Lent? How long have you been doing the same thing?

This year at St. Mark's, the Outreach Team suggests rethinking what spiritual practice you will engage in during Lent. "National Random Acts of Kindness Day" took place on February 17th, and the Outreach Team was inspired to draw our attention to "acts of kindness" as we begin our journey with Christ to the cross. Instead of giving up an earthly "something" for Lent, DO something. Do something KIND!



Step out of your comfort zone and . . .

- Help a neighbor by shoveling their driveway.
- Share a trip to the grocery store with an elderly neighbor.
- Call or visit someone you haven't talked with in a while.
- Say thanks by delivering baked goodies to our first responders.
- Give to the hand reaching out.
- Volunteer! During the weeks of Lent, we'll be sharing some ideas on where you can volunteer.

Let's make kindness a habit and train our eyes to see what God is doing in our world. Centered on Christ and renewed in his love, we can and will make the world a better place.

Go! Do! Be the church!

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Mark your calendars



Coffee & Chocolate
Sat/Sun, March 3 & 4
Sunday, March 18

NOTE: Beginning in March, on Sundays the Coffee Team will be selling coffee and chocolate only between services. If you attend the 10:30 service, come a little early to make your purchase.



Blood pressure screenings
Sat/Sun, March 17 & 18



Faces of Christ

A Lenten study for adults, Tuesdays, 10:00 a.m.

During Lent, we will continue our Adult Study on Tuesday mornings with a 5-week ELCA Lenten study on the "Faces of Christ." This is a study that ELCA congregations across the world will be participating in during the season of Lent. By participating in this study, we, at St. Mark's, remember that we are never a church alone; instead, we believe we are stronger together and know that we are always a part of the larger Church and larger ministry that God is doing.

Through this Lenten study on justice, hunger, and hope, we will . . .

- deepen our sense of who Jesus is;
- discuss what it means to be God's hands, feet, and voice in the world;
- discern where God resides within our daily lives;
- develop an understanding of God's activity and presence not just here at St. Mark's but also in our neighborhoods;
- draw upon what it means for us to see Christ in us, our church, and in our community.

Lent is a time to remember and recommit our faith in Christ. We hope you do so by joining us for our Lenten Adult Study!

FEBRUARY 27 (week 2): What does it mean to be partners in God's mission?

MARCH 6 (week 3): Where is God?

MARCH 13 (week 4): God lives in the neighborhood.

MARCH 20 (week 5): Christ, Hunger, Lent and Hope.



Barn banks

A Lenten offering project for kids

This year we are doing a special Lenten offering project with the kids for **ELCA Good Gifts**. Each student will receive a "barn bank" to assemble and personalize with their names. (We'll keep the banks at the church.)

Each week, we are asking the kids to collect coins, dollars, etc., to add to their banks. This is where you come in! Perhaps they can do extra chores around the house or for a neighbor to earn money.

We'll have handouts, including a coloring book, that explains how life-changing their offerings can be for kids in other countries. Please review the handouts with your kids. Our goal is to help them see that everyone can make a difference, that God can do BIG things through our small offerings.

At the end of Lent, the kids will vote on what type of ELCA Good Gift we will give as a group. There are many options, such as baby chicks, a pig, a goat, a cow, a fish farm, etc. We will talk to the kids each week about how different types of animals help families in need. We will pool the money from Sunday School, FDL, and confirmation students to see how much we can give back to others.

Thank you for your support with this project!

40 Bags in 40 Days

A Lenten spiritual practice



“Create in me
a clean heart,
O God,
and renew
a steadfast spirit
within me.”
Psalm 51:10

A challenge to create change by decluttering

Lent offers us an opportunity to create positive change over a forty-day period. One way to transform our lives is to participate in the “40 bags in 40 days” challenge to declutter. Simply put, clutter is the accumulation of more than we can fit into an available space.

But clutter can be more than just “stuff.” A University of New Mexico 2016 study defined home as not just a physical dwelling, but as a broader combination “of experiences, meanings, and situations that shape and are actively shaped by a person in the creation of his or her lifeworld.” Think of the things that make it difficult to navigate through your life, to get things done, or to live comfortably.

Clutter comes in many forms:

- accumulation of “stuff” (e.g.: collectables, furniture, clothing, overflowing closets and drawers)
- piles of mail, bills, photos, dishes, laundry
- overflowing email inbox
- chaotic computer files

Clutter harms your health by:

- increasing levels of the stress hormone, cortisol
- overwhelming the brain, which can lead to overeating
- triggering respiratory issues
- becoming a safety hazard
- decreasing productivity
- creating isolation and a general sense of unhappiness

Not sure where to start?

- Begin with pen and paper; list some things you would like to clear out.
- Prioritize and start with an area that is important to you.
- Break it down by tackling one drawer or cupboard, one pile or folder at a time.

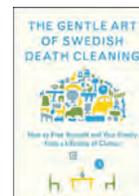
- Clear out something each day during Lent and put it in a bag.
What counts as a “bag”? Anything you have worked on and completed (e.g., clearing the top of the refrigerator, cleaning out the toy chest, purging the medicine cabinet, tidying up your computer files, etc.)
- Decide what to keep, throw out, or donate.
- Note your accomplishments on a calendar so you can see your progress.

Look in the *Courier* each week for suggestions of an area on which to focus. Log the number of bags you’ve gotten rid of each week on the log at the WELCOME CENTER. You can also pick up a list of areas to declutter.

Other resources include:



The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up: The Japanese Art of Decluttering and Organizing
by Marie Kondo



The Gentle Art of Swedish Death Cleaning: How to Free Yourself and Your Family from a Lifetime of Clutter
by Margareta Magnusson

Hopefully, by Easter Sunday you will greet the risen Lord with a lighter spirit, an increased sense of wellbeing, and a more organized household.

Sources: whitehouseblackshutters.com; usnews.com

—Jean Clementz, RN
Presence Mercy Hospital Medical Center
Faith Community Nurse at St. Mark’s Lutheran Church

If I can be of assistance to you or someone you know, please contact me, 630-897-6891, ext 23, or jean.clementz@presencehealth.org





Enrich your Lenten experience

There is a rhythm to a liturgical church year, which the Sanctuary Art and Banner team explores through color, symbols, and visual art. During Lent, we invite you on “A Journey of Love.” Walk with Jesus down Via Dolorosa as you experience the Stations of the Cross hanging in the sanctuary. Travel with Jesus in the wilderness by gazing at the desert by the font or the pots to the left of the chancel. Experience the ongoing display on the wooden wall in the narthex.

We invite you to take a piece of material or a card with string attached and write a word or thought about your Lenten journey or a prayer. Tie or lay the material or card on the roughhewn cross in the narthex, to the right of the red heart.

We also invite you to take a finger labyrinth* from the basket to help focus your heart and mind. Later in the season, find the basket of red glass hearts. Take one and carry it with you to remind you that God’s love endures and that God’s covenant is written on our hearts.

*A labyrinth is a path with twists and turns that lead to the center and back out again. During the Middle Ages, Christians adapted the ancient tradition of walking a labyrinth to symbolize the winding road to God. “Walking” the path, even tracing it with your finger on paper, can be a form of quiet listening, prayer, or personal meditation.



Seder Feast for kids

In Jewish tradition, the Passover Seder feast celebrates how God led his children from captivity to freedom. From darkness to light. It is a feast celebrating redemption. In Christian tradition, the Passover Seder is believed to be when Jesus instituted the Eucharist.

In past years at St. Mark’s, we have shared a Seder Feast on the Tuesday of Holy Week. This year, we will be doing it a little differently.

THE DATE: Wednesday, March 21 (the Wednesday before Holy Week)

THE TIME: 6-7:30 p.m., during FDL (the last meeting of FDL before Spring break)

THE INVITATION: This year, the meal will be limited to St Mark’s children and Wednesday night volunteers. First graders through high-school students will dine together for the Seder meal. (Sunday School students are welcome as well.)

This is a very meaningful experience for all our First Communion children as well as all the other kids. **Please let Kari Reiseck know if your child will join us so we can plan accordingly.** Wednesday night teachers and volunteers will help at individual tables., but we will also need additional volunteers to help cook, serve, and clean up. Please sign up at the WELCOME CENTER if you can help out.

HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE

Wednesday, Mar 21
6:00 Seder Feast for kids

Saturday, Mar 24
5:00p Palm Sunday Worship

Sunday, Mar 25*
PALM SUNDAY
9:00a Palm Sunday Worship
9:30a Pancake breakfast starts
10:30a Palm Sunday Worship

Wednesday, Mar 28
(NO FDL)

Thursday, Mar 29
MAUNDY THURSDAY
7:00p Worship & Communion

Friday, Mar 30
GOOD FRIDAY
3:00p Stations of the Cross
7:00p Service of Shadows

Saturday, Mar 31
HOLY SATURDAY
5:00p Easter Worship

Sunday, April 1*
EASTER
8:30a Easter breakfast starts
7:30a Easter Worship
9:00a Easter Worship
10:30a Easter Worship

* NO SUNDAY SCHOOL
on Palm Sunday or Easter Sunday.

Easter flowers

Help beautify the Sanctuary on Easter by sponsoring an azalea or lily in memory of or in honor of a loved one. Plants are \$15 each, and you can take yours home after the last Easter Sunday service. Sign up at the WELCOME CENTER.

Palm Sunday pancake breakfast

Sunday, March 25, 9:30–11:00 a.m.

The Palm Sunday breakfast will include pancakes, sausage, applesauce, coffee, juice, and milk. A free-will offering will benefit Naomi Circle’s Pillowcase Dress ministry, which sews simple pillowcase-style dresses for little girls in need around the world.

Easter breakfast

Sunday, April 1, 8:30–10:30 a.m.

Our high school students will be serving breakfast on Easter morning to anyone attending one of the worship services. The meal is a free-will offering. All the proceeds will go toward the 2018 mission trip. We are also asking people to help by cooking and donating breakfast casseroles. If you can help, sign up at the WELCOME CENTER.

Holy Week at St. Mark's

The Easter Triduum (“Three Sacred Days”) is the culmination of the liturgical year. The services of the Triduum (from the Latin *tri-* = three, *-dies* = days) were originally one annual service remembering the Lord’s death and resurrection. They became split into separate services—Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter—in order to pay closer attention to the significant details of each event. Yet they comprise a three-day worship event, with no benediction until the end of the service with the Easter announcement: “Christ is risen!”

Maundy Thursday

Thursday, March 29, 7:00 p.m.

As the sun goes down on Maundy Thursday, the Triduum begins. Since the fourth century, Christians have gathered on Maundy Thursday to keep the feast that Jesus shared with his disciples on the night of his arrest. “Maundy” comes from the Latin *mandatum novum*, meaning “new commandment,” and we remember Christ’s command that we “love one another as I have loved you.” During the service, we wash each other’s hands as a symbol of blessing our hands as we live out the theme of “God’s work—Our hands” in the world today. We celebrate the Eucharist and close the service with the stripping of the altar.

Good Friday

Friday, March 30th, 3:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.

At 3:00 o’clock on Good Friday, we journey the “Way of the Cross.” (The Stations of the Cross displayed in the sanctuary are the work and inspiration of artist Michele Hubbart.) This solemn pilgrimage gives us the opportunity to walk with Jesus and deepen our awareness



of his final hours. Through hymns, prayers, narrative, and artwork, we walk the Via Dolorosa together.

At 7:00 o’clock on Good Friday, we gather for the “Service of Shadows” (also known as *Tenebrae*, the Latin word for “shadows” or “darkness”). The reading of The Passion of Jesus is divided into seven sections from the Gospel of Luke. Between each reading, there is silence for meditation followed by a musical piece. The sanctuary gradually darkens until only the Christ Candle provides a flicker of light. The tomb is slammed shut, the bell tolls 33 times (once for each year of Jesus’ life), and the congregation sings “Were You There When They Crucified My Lord?”. We leave the sanctuary in silence.

Easter Sunday

Sunday, April 1, 7:30 a.m., 9:00 a.m., 10:30 a.m.

Finally, on Easter, we gather at the tomb ... only to discover that the stone is rolled away, and the grave is empty. We celebrate the good news: Jesus Christ is risen!



Experience the sound and color of Holy Week

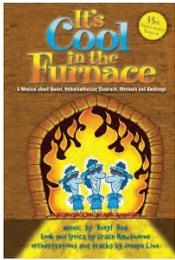
Holy Week services at St. Mark’s are beautiful, inspiring, meaningful, and sacred. From the purple altar appointments and banners, to the Stations of the Cross artwork, to the flowers and resurrection colors of Easter morning, it is THE time to experience church. On Palm/Passion weekend, we hear the cries of Hosanna, wave palms, and hear the Passion story. Choirs sing, bells ring, and we begin Holy Week.

On Maundy Thursday, we hear the story of the Last Supper and experience a hand-washing ritual. Choral music and bells reflect the solemnity of the evening, and the altar is stripped. Through this experience we are ready to head to the Garden of Gethsemane.

On Good Friday, we walk the Stations of the Cross and, in the evening, conclude with *Tenebrae*, the Service of Shadows. Rich choir and bell anthems, with heartfelt cello accompaniment, help us experience the Passion, the sacrifice, and the grace.

Then we are ready for Easter morning! Bells ring, choirs sing, brass and timpani shout in praise: HE IS RISEN!!!

Opportunities ahead . . .



A "cool" musical for kids
1st-5th graders
Rehearsals, Wed, 6:00 p.m.

"It's Cool in the Furnace" is a great musical telling the story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, their faith in God, and God's deliverance. Encourage your kids to join us!

Questions? Please contact Kristin Young.
PERFORMANCE DATE: Wednesday, April 25



Spring confirmation retreat

6th-8th graders
April 20-22

Our annual confirmation retreat at Lutheran Outdoor Ministries Center in Oregon, IL, is much-anticipated event. **We HIGHLY encourage all confirmation students to attend!** Activities include ropes course/team building, zipline (Midwest's largest!), GaGa court, human foosball, and morning prayer/Bible study. Check out the St. Mark's Family Ministry Facebook page for pictures from our last retreat. Kids who have attended prior years describe this retreat as transforming: friendships are created and strengthened, walls and cliques are broken down, and faith is strengthened. **Contact Kari Rieseck ASAP if your 6th-8th grade student would like to attend.**



Summer mission trip

High school students
July 21-28, cost \$350
Blue Ridge Mountains, NC

For this summer's YouthWorks Mission Trip, we will travel the 12-hour trek down to North Carolina in rented vans. On the way there and on the way back, we will be staying at a church in Lexington, KY. We are grateful for their hospitality. When we arrive in North Carolina, we will serve the community by volunteering at kid's club, painting projects, and whatever else the community needs. In addition to service, each day we will have Bible Study, fellowship, and worship. There is still a spot available for one more student. We are also looking for one more adult leader. **Contact Pr. Patrick if you'd like to join us in July.**



Explore Aurora: From the Ice Age to the Digital Age

Adult Fellowship
Thursday, March 22, 10:00 a.m.

The Adult Fellowship is meeting at Aurora's new Santori Library (101 S. River St. - plenty of parking in their lot) to learn about Aurora's past, present, and future. We will have a guided tour of the facilities, and they can answer questions about Overdrive, Hoopla, Once-Click Digital, and Makerspace. We'll lunch at Ballydoyle and then head over to the Pierce Art and History Center (20 E. Downer Pl. - parking is available on the street or in the Stolp Avenue parking deck.) We'll see the traveling exhibit about African-American soldiers who participated in World War II, as well as Aurora history and art exhibits. It should be a close-to-home but "I never knew that!" experience. Everyone is welcome. Sign up at the WELCOME CENTER. For questions, call Irma Larson, 630-466-1843 or Arlene Flynn, 630-892-8214.



An inspiring read

Friday, March 9, 10:00 a.m.
St. Mark's Book Club

The Book Club March selection, *The Zookeeper's Wife: A War Story* by Diane Ackerman, is a true story of how the keepers of the Warsaw Zoo saved hundreds of people from Nazi hands. The Book Club welcomes all who have read and would like to discuss this inspiring book.



Sing, travel, and have fun!

Announcing the Festival Choir Tour, June 30-July 10, 2019

Next year, on June 30th, travelers and singers will head to Paris to commemorate the 75th anniversary of D-Day. During the trip, we will experience all that Paris has to offer, including Notre Dame Cathedral, Champs Elysees, Place de la Concorde, The Louvre, Luxembourg Palace, and Versailles, to name a few. The choir will be a part of a huge festival at L'eglise de la Madeleine, where Gabriel Faure was the musician. We will also visit the beaches at Normandy and be a part of a special wreath-laying ceremony at the American Cemetery. **Contact Kristin Young if you are interested in joining this special trip.**

St. Mark's Calendar March 2018

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
3 LENT 9:00a Worship Sunday School Coffee sales 10:30a Worship	5 7:00p Fox Valley Festival Chorus Naomi Circle 7:00p	6 10:00a Adult Study Staff meeting 5:00p CDC board meeting 7:00p Glory Ringers - HS & adults rehearsal	7 9:30a The Bread Wrappers 1:00p Office volunteers 5:00p Roaring Ringers gr 3-5 5:30p FDL gr 1-5, HS 5:30p Joyous Praise Bells gr 6-8 6:00p Confirmation classes gr 6-8	1 7:00p AA meeting Lion's Voice Choir 7:00p	2 6:30p At-Anon	3 LENT 5:00p Worship Coffee sales
4 LENT 9:00a Worship & Baptism Sunday School 10:30a Worship 11:45a Council meeting 3:00p WVM/TA AIMS Honor Recital	12 7:00p Fox Valley Festival Chorus	13 10:00a Adult Study 1:00p Staff meeting 7:00p Glory Ringers - HS & adults rehearsal	14 9:30a The Bread Wrappers 9:30a WVM/TA meeting 1:00p Office volunteers 5:00p Roaring Ringers gr 3-5 5:30p FDL gr 1-5, HS 5:30p Joyous Praise Bells gr 6-8 6:00p Confirmation classes gr 6-8 6:00p Sanctuary Arts & Banners	15 7:00p AA meeting Lion's Voice Choir 7:00p	16 6:30p At-Anon	4 LENT 5:00p Worship PADS dinner service at Hessed House
5 LENT 9:00a Worship Sunday School Coffee sales Blood pressure screening 10:30a Worship	19 9:30a Ruth Circle 7:00p Fox Valley Festival Chorus	20 10:00a Adult Study 1:00p Staff meeting 7:00p Glory Ringers - HS & adults rehearsal	21 9:30a The Bread Wrappers 1:00p Office volunteers 5:00p Roaring Ringers gr 3-5 5:30p FDL gr 1-5, HS 5:30p Joyous Praise Bells gr 6-8 6:00p Seder Feast for kids	22 10:00a Adult Fellowship (Santori Library) 7:00p AA meeting Lion's Voice Choir 7:00p	23 6:30p At-Anon	PALM/PASSION WORSHIP 5:00p Worship
PALM SUNDAY 9:00a Worship Palm Sunday pancake breakfast 10:30a Worship	26 9:00a Lydia's Piecemakers & Knit Pickers 7:00p Fox Valley Festival Chorus	27 1:00p Staff meeting 7:00p Glory Ringers - HS & adults rehearsal	28 9:30a The Bread Wrappers 1:00p Office volunteers 7:00p Hope Circle NO FDL DURING HOLY WEEK	MAUNDY THURSDAY 7:00p AA meeting Maundy Thursday Worship & Communion	30 GOOD FRIDAY 3:00p Stations of the Cross 6:30p At-Anon 7:00p Service of Shadows	HOLY SATURDAY 5:00p Worship
						APRIL 1 EASTER



Why does St. Mark's support PADS?

If you are looking for a family activity that truly shows the meaning of being the hands and feet of Christ, you can't do better than serving at PADS. Most people, especially

families, who end up at Hesed House have lost a job or lost their home; they have no family or anyone to help support them. Hesed House is there to be that support and to help them through this difficult time. It is there to provide hope and to help them get back on their feet.

St. Mark's volunteers are part of over 4,000 volunteers serving our neighbors in need. The St. Mark's team is committed to preparing dinner for about 200 men, women, and children six times a year. We pray before

serving a nourishing meal. We provide smiles and friendly conversation. If someone needs to talk, we are there to listen. We help pass out basic healthcare items in the PADS "store" and offer a Bingo game to help pass the evening in a fun way.

PADS and Hesed House are so worthy of our support, but we know not everyone is able to work at PADS. There are many other ways you can offer support. Those experiencing homeless need and appreciate our prayers. And there is always a large bin in the narthex for our donations. Throughout the year we collect lightly used twin-size sheets, bath towels and washcloths, and hotel-size toiletries. We also appreciate nonperishable food items at any time.

Our next dinner service is Saturday, March 10.
Will you sign up at the WELCOME CENTER to help?

I was hungry...I was thirsty...I was a stranger and you invited me in.—Matthew 25:35



Explore this listening ministry

St. Mark's offers a four-week training session for people who are interested in becoming a "BeFriender." A BeFriender is someone who listens with compassion, accepts people as they are, respects another's spiritual journey, and embodies the caring presence of God. The dates for this year's training are:

Saturday, April 14	9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.	Monday, April 23	6:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.
Monday, April 16	6:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.	Monday, April 30	6:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.

If you would like to learn more about becoming a BeFriender Minister, please speak to one of our Befriender Ministry leaders: Jean Clementz, Dave Gibson, or Becky Mueller, and sign up at the WELCOME CENTER. (NOTE: You need to be able to attend all sessions.)



Enjoy quilting, sewing, knitting?

The women of Lydia's have a special invitation for you. We are a joyful ministry that works with Lutheran World Relief (LWR) to share gifts of love around the world.

Our quilting group, the **Piecemakers**, creates a plethora of quilts that are sent by LWR to all parts of the world, as well as used here in our city and state.

Our **Knit Pickers** group knits hats and collects scarves. Last year alone, we delivered 300 hats, 44 scarves, and 60 mittens and gloves to Hesed House and the Community in Schools in Aurora.

Our **Baby Care Kit** group is the newest extension of Lydia's. This group collects baby items, such as cloth diapers, receiving blankets, soap and towels, and ships them to LWR for distribution.

We meet twice a month (on the fourth Monday morning and the next Monday morning) at 9:00 a.m. in the lower level of St. Mark's. What we produce each month is helpful to people near and far, but just as important is the ministry we share with each other: the laughter, the tears, the questions and support we find in our association with each other. God's Work....Our Hearts and Hands. Come, join us!

Highlights from “Feed the Need” MobilePack 2018



If you were a volunteer this year, thank you! Please make sure the church office has your \$50 donation, so the church can close the books with FMSC.

What a great day at the Feed My Staving Children MobilePack Event at North Central College on Sunday, February 18th. A group of 32 volunteers from St. Mark's joined with over 900 others for the last two-hour packing session of the event. Our shift packed 982 boxes, which equals 212,112 meals. That will feed 581 children a meal a day for a year!

In total, the MobilePack event packed over 1.2 millions meals in two days. That means 3,307 kids will not go hungry this year!

St. Mark's endowment mission

What is an endowment fund? Why do we need one? An endowment fund a special fund that's invested for long-term growth, and the St. Mark's Endowment Fund exists to provide long-lasting support for our mission now and in the future. It's in place to receive gifts and address a variety of future needs, beyond what our annual budget is designed to provide.

Only a portion of the annual earnings from our Endowment Fund is used each year, so the fund continues to grow. Through careful investing through ECLA Endowment Fund, this fund provides a buffer against inflation and a permanent source of support for the mission of our church.

If you have any questions please contact anyone on the Endowment Team: Pastor Bergh, Pastor Geiseman, Erik Egeland, Don Friend, Susan Hilderbrand, Mark Hipp, Craig Mandel.



Thrivent Choice

Eligible Thrivent Financial members can use the Thrivent Choice grant program to direct their “Choice Dollars” to St. Mark's or to another participating nonprofit organization or congregation.

Last month, Thrivent deposited \$501.00 in our account, thanks to Judith and Lawrence Conant, Carol and Jens Jensen, and Sheryl Murphy. These gifts help St. Mark's in its ministries. Thank you for directing your Thrivent Choice Dollars here!

Monthly budget recap for January 2018

Monthly Information

Monthly Budget Goal		\$ 71,753.33
Monthly Offering Information		
Envelopes – General Fund	\$ 88,352.68*	
CDC Rent	\$ 4,387.50	
Miscellaneous (primarily Child Care Center)	\$ 429.00	
Other (loose, Sunday School, interest)	\$ 523.96	
Total General Fund Income		\$ 93,693.14
Monthly Surplus (Shortfall)		\$ 21,939.81

*NOTE: \$27,445 of this income came from 2018 pledges prepaid in 2017

Summary Information as of 01/31/2018

Annual Budget	\$ 861,040.00
Percent of Year Completed	8%
Offerings/Commitments received Year to Date	\$ 93,693.14
Actual Expenses Year to Date	\$ 62,127.56
Actual Expense Surplus (Shortfall) Year to Date	\$ 31,939.81
Budget_Surplus (Shortfall) Year to Date	\$ 21,939.81

Share and Secure Capital Campaign

Additional principal payments to Mortgage from 2016 Gifts	\$ 90,000.00
Additional principal payments to Mortgage from 2017 Year to Date	\$ 194,725.57
Additional principal payments to Mortgage from 2018 Year to Date	\$ --- *

* NOTE: waiting for mortgage refinance to finalize before paying principal in 2018

Mortgage Balance as of 01/31/2018

Balance Due on Church (not including CDC)	\$1,978,319.44
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AmazonSmile

You've heard of Amazon, right?

But do you know about AmazonSmile?

It has exactly the same stuff as Amazon, but it has a great bonus: When you shop on AmazonSmile, the AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the price of eligible purchases to St. Mark's, at no cost to you or us!

For the last quarter of 2017, St. Mark's received \$32 in AmazonSmile donations.

THANK YOU to all who are buying smart and contributing in this way.

We'd love to double or triple that amount!

Will you give it a try?

- Go to smile.amazon.com.
- Type in your email and create a password. (Or log into your account, if you already have an Amazon account.)
- Where it says "Pick your own charitable organization," type in St. Marks Lutheran Church (NO apostrophe). It does take a little patience to scroll through all the St. Marks Lutheran churches to find the one in Aurora, IL, but it's worth it!
- Once you've selected us, you'll not need to do it again. (This thing is smart; it remembers you.)

Just think: If we all did this each time we shopped on Amazon, our donations could start to add up. Smile! It works!

Pastoral Acts

Memorial Services:

Jack Ekstrom – January 31, 2018

Jack Meyers – February 13, 2018

Council members

Don Friend Council President	630-892-6616 donaldfmd@yahoo.com
Charlie Brummet Treasurer	630-466-7087 cbrummet@aol.com
David Albers Property	219-477-7250
Austin Bredow Member	773-988-1231 a_bredow@yahoo.com
Jeanne Flynn Member	630-896-6312 flynn64sq@sbcglobal.net
Chad Gooch Member	630-466-0742 cgooch@cleo.com
Ginny Pavesich Member	630-337-7004 alinenow@reagan.com
Heather Rehg Member	630-801-4121 rehg@comcast.net
Carol Reiseck Member	630-554-4255 carol.reiseck@cuchicago.edu
Pastor Patrick Fish	Ext. 13 pfish@stmarksaurora.net
Pastor Pat Geiseman	Ext. 15 pgeiseman@stmarksaurora.net

Have information to share? Cutoff time for the weekly *Courier* is **noon each Monday**, and for the monthly *Vineyard*, the **15th of the month**. Email your article to news@stmarksaurora.net, or drop it in Marcia Broucek's mailbox.

St. Mark's staff

(phone is 630-897-6891, unless indicated otherwise)

Pastor Patricia Geiseman Pastor	Ext 15 pgeiseman@stmarksaurora.net
Pastor Patrick Fish Associate Pastor	Ext. 13 pfish@stmarksaurora.net
Kristin Young Director of Worship & the Arts	Ext 16 kyoung@stmarksaurora.net
Kari Reiseck Director of Youth & Family Ministry	Ext. 22 kreiseck@stmarksaurora.net
Sue Hilderbrand Director of Bell Choir	Ext. 24 shilderbrand@stmarksaurora.net
Marcia Broucek Communications Coordinator	Ext. 27 news@stmarksaurora.net
Deb Arcilla Office Manager	Ext. 10 darcilla@stmarksaurora.net
John Themanson Finance Administrator	Ext. 19 jthemanson@stmarksaurora.net
Al Lettow Facility Manager	Ext 12 facilitymgr@stmarksaurora.net
Jean Clementz Faith Community Nurse	Ext. 23 jean.clementz@presencehealth.org
Jim Erickson Financial Secretary	630-235-6510 jerickson@stmarksaurora.net
Colette Patterson-Moon Director, Child Development Center	630-897-6063 stmarksdir@att.net
Terese Ruppel Nursery Coordinator	630-466-1036 ter60554@gmail.com

Do you get your copy of the *Vineyard* in the mail? Want to receive a digital copy instead? (You'll be helping save printing and postage!) Do you get the weekly email blasts? If not, let us know. Email news@stmarksaurora.net, and we'll make sure you get what you need.

Servers for worship

March 3 & 4	Saturday, 5:00pm	Sunday, 9:00am	Sunday, 10:30am
Acolytes	TBA	Cooper Winslow, Louis Blickem	TBA
Adult Worship Assistants	Bob Johnson	TBA	-
A/V Desk	Kasey Minard	Scott Thompson	Jill Fox
Altar Care	Don Bryant	Team A	Team A
Bread Baker	Emma Albers	Emma Albers	Emma Albers
Hospitality Team	Shell & Lynida Tomlin, Kathy Walz	Team A - Mark Perry	Team A - Deb Steinheimer
Reader	Bob Johnson	Team A	Team A
Welcome Center Hosts	TBA	Team A	Team A
March 10 & 11			
Acolytes	TBA	I. Jones, S. Dunn, C. Winslow	Elena Gooch
Adult Worship Assistants	Bob Johnson	TBA	-
A/V Desk	Kathy Walz	Fred Krueger	TBA
Altar Care	Erik Egeland	Team B	Team B
Bread Baker	Jens Jensen	Jens Jensen	Jensen
Hospitality Team	K. Minard, M. Hicks, S. Kuhn	Team B—Bruce Wood	Team B - Youth Group
Reader	Erik Egeland	Team B	Team B
Welcome Center Hosts	TBA	Team B	Team B
March 17 & 18			
Acolytes	TBA	O. King, C. Winslow, L. Blickem	Brady Reiseck, G. Gooch
Adult Worship Assistants	Bob Johnson	TBA	TBA
A/V Desk	Nancy Clark	Dan Hawks	Melvin Smith
Altar Care	Sheila Johnson	Team C	Team C
Bread Baker	Susan Manning	Susan Manning	Susan Manning
Hospitality Team	Jim & Clare Toynton, Jens Jensen	Team C - John & Terry Thorsen	Team C - Gordon Olp
Reader	Clare Toynton	Team C	Team C
Welcome Center Hosts	TBA	Team C	Team C
March 24 & 25			
Acolytes	TBA	Olivia King, Shaelin Dunn	Brady Reiseck
Adult Worship Assistants	Bob Johnson	TBA	-
A/V Desk	Sheila Johnson	Matt Greising	Mark Hipp
Altar Care	Don Bryant	Team D	Team D
Bread Baker	Matt Greising	Matt Greising	Matt Greising
Hospitality Team	Don Bryant, Dave & Nancy Clark	Team D - John & Terry Thorsen	Team D
Reader	Nancy Clark	Team D	Team D
Welcome Center Hosts	TBA	Team D	Team D



St. Mark's Lutheran Church
 27 South Edgelawn Drive
 Aurora, IL 60506

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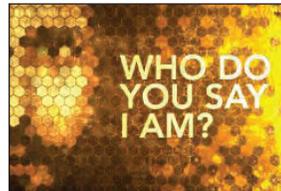
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March highlights



Acts of Kindness
 A Lenten outreach
 (see pg 1)



Faces of Christ
 A Lenten adult study
 (see pg 2)



Barn Banks
 A Lenten offering project
 (see pg 2)



40 Bags in 40 Days
 A Lenten spiritual practice
 (see pg 3)



Seder Feast for Kids
 Wednesday, March 21
 (see pg 4)



The Easter Triduum
 Thurs, March 29–Sun, April 1
 (see pg 5)