

# LIFE TOGETHER

AUGUST 2025

[www.saintmarkstormlake.com](http://www.saintmarkstormlake.com)



*"We are a community learning to love Jesus by loving and serving our neighbors."*

## JULY HAPPENINGS

**Holy Baptism of Nolan Michael Budach**



**"Sleep in Heavenly Peace"**



**Friends with Food - July 17**



## A NOTE FROM THE ST MARK CONGREGATION COUNCIL

Friends, we as the Congregation Council of St Mark are hoping that you are all doing well and staying as cool as you can during the extra hot and humid days of Summer. This is a good time of the year to check in on neighbors to see how they are doing, or if there is something they need help with. It is just one way that we can all "love our neighbors."

As Pastor Dave and others have shared through the newsletter, Congregation Council minutes, Sunday mornings, and eNEWS, we have been working on several projects over the past 12 months. All of the projects we are hoping to complete this year are caused by normal wear and tear on our church building and changes in technology. Items such as carpet, air conditioners, and technology wear out and need to be replaced. Other projects such as relocating the steeple are caused by weather, aging, and other factors.

A Special Congregation Meeting is being called for ***Sunday, August 17th following worship (10:00 AM in the Sanctuary)*** to discuss and vote on moving ahead with the projects we are recommending. Unlike most projects and Special Congregational Meetings, most or all funds needed to pay for these projects have already been received (memorials and unrestricted savings.) We have used these months to research and prepare plans for these projects, as well as to share ideas and information with you. We will share information on each project with you in this article. Additional information will be shared as we move closer to August 17. We want to seek approval for the projects in August so that we can complete all of the projects before the Holidays arrive later this year.

### AREA 1- CARPET REPLACEMENT

We are hoping to replace as much of the worn-out carpet in the building as we can. The carpet throughout the entire building is showing its age from use. As you walk through the building you will see tripping hazards where the carpet has stretched and bunched in the center of rooms, as well as worn out. If you walk around St Mark you will notice that there are at least 6 different kinds of carpet spread through the entire building. In addition, the rugs we have used in the entrances have also become a tripping hazard. CONGREGATION

***COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION*** – *we recommend replacing the carpet in all halls, Narthex, Fellowship Hall, Library, and entrances. We have funds in place to carpet these five areas and are open to receiving additional funds to carpet more areas such as classrooms and offices. Estimated Cost is \$35,500.*

### AREA 2-TECHNOLOGY UPDATES AND BUILDING SECURITY

We have gone through a technological whirlwind since the different sections of the building were built in 1953, 1967, 1991, and the remodeling in 2012-13. Electrical updates and telephone technology have all had numerous updates. Since the 1990s CATV was introduced and now ethernet, WIFI and increasingly faster technology. Add to all of this, the changes in the technology in worship moving beyond just a microphone and speakers using analog signals, to now when everything is being updated to digital equipment for sound, video, computers, cameras, digital presentation screens, and online streaming. The best way to describe these changes may be to think about that old heavy cathode tube television of the late 50s along with the dialer phone on the wall (complete with a party line). Now think about 2025 where an iPhone or Samsung phone that can do all of that and much more without any wires. We have made a number of changes to our church building over the years, but we are surpassing the capacity of the equipment and wiring that is currently in place.

**SECURITY AND SURVEILLANCE SYSTEMS** This is one area that most of us would prefer to not think about, but it is a common issue for churches even in Storm Lake. More and more churches have installed security and surveillance systems to keep property safe, AND increasingly, this is being done to keep people who are in and on the church properties safe from harm.

**CONGREGATION COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION**- we recommend updating the WIFI/ internet systems in the building, install surveillance cameras on the inside and outside of the building, and install a main door surveillance system that allows us to remotely monitor the main entrance and other areas+. Estimated Cost \$35,000

### **AREA 3- RELOCATING THE STEEPLE**

Because of age, windstorms, and perhaps an underestimation of the weight and wind sheer loads in the engineering of the original structure (i.e. the creaks we heard when it was windy in the sanctuary), the Steeple has been removed from the peak over the sanctuary and the holes have been patched. A licensed engineer is working with us to come up with a plan to relocate the steeple.

**CONGREGATION COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION** - we recommend installing the steeple on top of an engineered concrete base that would be located near 5<sup>th</sup> Street on the east side of the building. Preferably in the green space (precise location to be determined by City zoning rules.) The legs of the steeple will be modified to be mounted on a concrete base that would rise out of the ground up to 5 feet. Brick and other decorative veneer could be put on the concrete base. And if we can raise or find the funds, we hope to install a digital sign on the concrete base and the base of the steeple. This digital sign will allow us to share information with people passing by on 5th street about what is happening at St Mark throughout the entire week. \$9000 has already been paid out to remove the steeple from the peak of the sanctuary and to patch up the roof. Our estimate to complete the building of the base, lifting the steeple into place, and adding a digital announcement board is \$15,000-\$24,000

### **AREA 4-AIR CONDITIONING UNIT REPLACEMENT**

There are a total of 7 outside air conditioning units located in 3 places outside of the church building. Four of them have been replaced in the last 5 years, the other 3 are weakened or unusable. The AC unit that serves most of the north wall of the building has gone out and needs to be replaced as soon as possible. The persons effected by the lack of AC include the quilters, the Western Iowa Synod Staff, and the Lutheran Services in Iowa staff members.

**CONGREGATION COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION**- *is to replace the outside air conditioning unit that serves the rooms on the north wall. The cost bid is \$8500.*

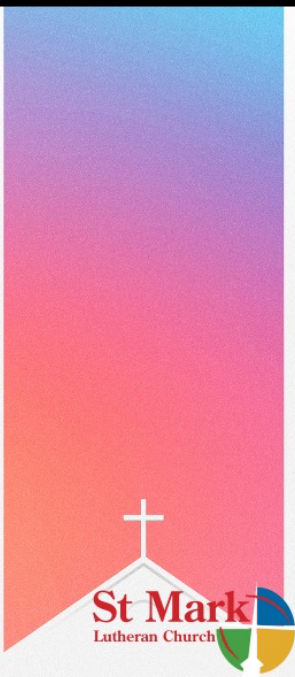
We welcome your comments and questions regarding these projects. We will share more information with you as we receive it as we get closer to our Special Congregation Meeting on August 17, following worship (@10:00 AM) in the sanctuary.

Peace to you,

St Mark Lutheran Church Congregation Council

• **Deb Mortensen • Megan Sullivan • Cindy Smith • Steve Berg**  
• **Jodi Bihrer • Joan Christen • Pastor Dave Kebschull**





## Announcement of a Special Meeting of the Congregation

will take place on Sunday, August 17, in the sanctuary following worship (@10:00 AM). The purpose of the meeting is to approve building repairs and updates to the building (*carpet, technology, air conditioning, and steeple relocation*). A link to a detailed description has been included in this week's eNEWS and a paper copy can be picked up in the Church Office and Welcome Center. A letter describing the projects will also be sent out with the August newsletter. Most of all of the funds (memorials/ savings) needed for these projects have already been received.



### Praying for one another

Prayer is one ministry that all of us can do on behalf of others and ourselves. Just letting people know that others are praying for them is one way to encourage and bless others. In addition to offering prayers for the persons on this list, please remember to offer prayers for yourself and your family members.

**PRAYERS-** we are all invited to keep the following persons in our prayers:

#### **Prayers for Healing and wholeness**

Pat Wilson, Lisa, Tatum, and Noah Shepherd; Steve Berg, Mark Johnson, Carolyn Stille (mother of Kristi Bihrer), Gladys Eddie, Ed Anderson, Donna Schulz, Steve Korner, Alex Kron, Dick Mooney, Caleb Vander Broek, Kristine Taylor, Dianne White, Tony Bodholdt, Julie Egland, Cheryl Lustgraaf, Kim Anderson, Harper Ledford (great granddaughter of Don and Carol Northrup), Cheryl Crampton, David Walker, Greg Kruse, all persons seeking healing and wholeness

### SIT, KNIT, CROCHET ETC.

Join our group of crafters on the first Thursday of the month at 1:00PM in the library of the church. Whether you enjoy knitting, crocheting, coloring, painting or you just want to join a fun group. Conversation and laughter is always a plus with this group. They will meet August 7th, at 1:00 PM.





## FRIENDS WITH FOOD IN JULY

On Thursday July 17, Friends with Food delivered to over 100+ households in our community. Thank you to EVERYONE who helped out with unloading the truck, set up and tear downs, bagging food, and delivering. It was another successful day delivering food and loving our neighbors. If you know of someone who needs food, or you would like to help, contact Di Daniels 712-299-9863, Julie Cook 712-732-4968 or Jane Hartwell 712-732-5255. *Friends with Food is a partnership of St Mark, SALUD, Western Iowa Synod- ELCA, Food Bank of Iowa, and other persons from the Storm Lake area who work together to deliver a monthly food distribution to those who are permanently or temporarily homebound and with no easy access to transportation.* The next distribution is August 21st.



## ORPHAN GRAIN TRAIN

The Orphan Grain Train is a Christian volunteer organization that provides clothing and other relief items to people in need, including those in Iowa. In Iowa, the Orphan Grain Train Iowa West branch has distributed clothing and other items to shelters and schools in locations like Fort Dodge and Storm Lake. There is also a location in Ida Grove where the organization ships items to other countries. You are invited to drop items off at the church office or contact Gloria Rohlfen or call her at 712-660-0217 for pick up arrangements.



## NAOMI CIRCLE

Naomi Circle will not meet in June, July and August so watch for information later as to a start date in September. You are encouraged to read the (June-July-August) Gather Magazine as they talk about relationships. Also, read the article on Reformation and Marriage which includes interesting facts about Katherina Bora, Luther's wife (they were married 800 years ago on June 13<sup>th</sup>). The Gather magazine is now being published every three months. Pick a copy up one in the Narthex information center.

**PARKINSON'S SUPPORT GROUP** St. Mark is reaching out to the community to offer community, encouragement, and information for all the people with Parkinson's disease (and spouses). The Parkinson's Support Group wants to thank all the people at St. Mark for allowing them to meet at the church. They will next meet on Tuesday, August 12<sup>th</sup> in the fellowship hall at 12:30pm.

## BOOK DISCUSSION

We will not meet for discussion in August. However, we did choose two books to read over the summer months and will discuss them when we meet again in September. One of the books is *White Chocolate Moments* by Lori Wick. "A character-rich journey leads Arcineh back to her grandfather's home where there are surprises, questions, and for the first time in her life, an answer to "who will love me forever?" This compelling story about a woman's hunger for acceptance and wholeness points the reader home to God's love." The other book is *Breaking Silence* by Linda Castillo. "The New York Times bestselling series hailed as "gripping" (People magazine) and "compelling" (USA Today) returns with Police Chief Kate Burkholder called to the scene of a horrific tragedy on a peaceful Amish farm." Both books are in the church library. Please watch the September newsletter for the date of our next discussion. Enjoy your summer of reading!

## SEW & DO: The women are asking for donations to make **SCHOOL KITS**

The following items are needed to create school kits for Lutheran World Relief:

- 70-sheet notebooks of wide- or college-ruled paper, approximately 8" x 10 ½"; no loose leaf paper
- 30-centimeter ruler, or a ruler with centimeters on one side and inches on the other
- Pencil sharpener
- Blunt scissors (safety scissors with embedded steel blades work well)
- Unsharpened #2 pencils with erasers
- Black or blue ballpoint pens (no gel ink);
- Box of 16 or 24 crayons ONE 2 ½" eraser

You may leave your donations in the wooden box in Room 120 \*across from church office) or in the church office.



## SLEEP IN HEAVENLY PEACE UPDATE

We want to thank all who have been involved and supportive of this ministry. You are making a difference in the lives of children in this area!

Five more beds were delivered in July to children in the area, for a total of 94 beds delivered since the beginning of this mission in the Storm Lake area. All recipients are very appreciative!

A "build day" has been set for Saturday, October 11 from 10 a.m. to noon in Sioux City.

More details about the event, registration, etc. will be shared as the event gets closer. Plans are also being made for each of the communities who are considered a "hub" of the Sioux City Chapter ( Storm Lake is one of eleven hubs in northwest Iowa and Southeast South Dakota) for a food fundraiser to take place simultaneously in each community on the evening of October 14. Again, more details will be shared as plans are completed.

Updates on this mission will continue to be posted in eNews, church bulletins and the monthly newsletter.

More information on the local chapter of Sleep in Heavenly Peace located in Sioux City can be found at

<https://shpbeds.org/chapter/ia-sioux-city/> If you would like more information about SHP in Storm Lake, please contact the St. Mark office.



## LIFE SERVE BLOOD DRIVE

On Tuesday July 1, Life Serve Blood Drive was at St. Mark. Life Serve extends their gratitude to everyone for donating and helping to save lives. If you would like to give blood at the next drive Tuesday, August 5th, you can register online or text LIFESERVE to 999-777 to make an appointment to Give Blood. If you would like to know any other info about donating blood, contact Jane Hartwell in the Church Office.



## CARING PAWS RESCUE- a note from Sue

I am sure that many of you know who we are, but maybe some more information will be helpful. As of July 1, 2025 we have been a nonprofit organization for a year. Our mission is to help stray dogs and cats and our goal is to build an animal shelter in Storm Lake. Through the generosity of St. Mark Lutheran Church, we have found a home, a place to hold meetings both the volunteer group and the Board of Directors. Additionally, our recycling bin is at the base of your parking lot.

Our next big step is to start a Capital Campaign to raise a million dollars to build a shelter. We are constantly trying to be present in Storm Lake by fundraising at Puff's Bar; having a table at the 4<sup>th</sup> of July and at Wood, Wine and Blues festivals to sell items. Give information and take donations; a donation box at VeSo's and running a TNR program for stray cats.

What is a TNR program you ask. It is called Trap, Neuter and Return (TNR) and it is a national program to try to reduce the stray cat population. A cat caregiver will call us and we will review the site and the problem cats and we will trap them, take them to Lake Animal Hospital for spaying/ neutering, vaccinations and microchipping, then 24-36 hours later we will return the cat to the place that we caught it. Through Lake Animal Hospital we get a reduce fee for these services which is helping to make this an affordable project. The cost is covered by the cat caregiver; our group makes the appointments and picks up the trapped cats and returns them. Through these efforts we hope to reduce the stray cat population over time.



Educating the public is another aspect of our mission. Proper care of pets is important, so to affect that change we provide free children's books on the subject to school-age children in hopes that the parents will read the books, too.

Donations from the public, recycling, sales of T-shirt and dog and cat charcuterie boards have been our avenues of funding so far. If you have any questions or concerns, please call me, Sue Lyngaas at 304-646-6120. I am always happy to hear from anyone caring about animals.



# CONGREGATION COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

July 9, 2025 6:30 PM

Those in attendance: Joan Christen, Deb Mortensen, Cindy Smith, Megan Sullivan, Jodi Bihrer and Pastor Dave. Steve Berg was unable to attend.

1. Approval of Agenda –Deb reviewed the agenda and it was approved.
2. Prayer Concerns & Devotions - Pastor Dave shared a music piece to help with personal prayer time. He also shared prayer concerns and updates on members' health.
3. Reports –
  - a) **Secretary Report** – The May council minutes were reviewed. Megan made a motion to approve and Joan seconded. Motion approved.
  - b) **Treasurer's Report** – Joan reviewed the financials. Expenses for the year currently exceed receipts by about \$29,000. Giving has been much better since last month.
  - c) **President's Report** – Deb shared her thanks allowing her to attend the Synod Assembly. Her report on the event included the theme "God's Love Made Real" which she believes St. Mark carries out with all the services we provide. Electing a new bishop was a very interesting process and she was glad to be able to be a part it.
  - d) **Outreach** – Cindy reported beds continue to be delivered for Sleep in Heavenly Peace. Local fundraisers are being planned for fall. She will have more information next month. Generous donations continue for UDSM.
  - e) **Children and youth** – Not a lot to report – more information on fall Sunday School and activities will be shared in August.
  - f) **Congregation life** – No report.
  - g) **Property** – Jodi shared he and Bob Rohlfen have been painting the lines in the parking lot and hope to have them all completed soon.
  - h) **Endowment** – Pastor Dave referred to the minutes of the latest endowment meeting which were in our handout materials. The committee was generous in helping with camperships.
4. **Unfinished Business**
  - a) Improvement projects
    - 1) Carpet – More samples were dropped off by Marcus Lumber. They will be displayed in the Welcome Center for members to see and give input. Once a final bid to include new carpet in the library and specific material for the entries is received, the committee will meet to finalize a recommendation.
    - 2) Technology –Pastor Dave visited with SLPD about security to help determine what is adequate for St. Mark. He is following up with Brandon at Zone to finalize the plan and costs.
    - 3) Steeple – Pastor Dave shared 3 engineer drawings from ISG of options for the steeple. Council chose one and Pastor Dave will get costs from the engineer on that option.
    - 4) Decision Making Process –
      1. Congregation council is nearing completion of projects' description and costs.
      2. Congregation council will be making their recommendations to the congregation for a special meeting which we hope to have by mid-late August. The special meeting will be called so the

council can share the projects and the recommendations for raising and spending funds to complete those projects.

3. Congregation is informed about the projects and has opportunities to ask questions.
4. Congregation meets to approve. Upon approval, projects are completed as funds are available.

- b) SMLC Website and Church Administration Software (transition) – the data conversion was successful and looks good. Pastor Dave and staff will be visiting with the vendor consultant on the giving piece of the new software.
- c) Personnel Policy – Church Mutual Insurance Company is asking for a policy requiring background checks for everyone working with children. Pastor Dave presented a rough draft a policy for this.

## 5. New Business

- a) Lutheran Lakeside would like to come to a meeting to talk about fundraising for the camp.
- b) The North wall air conditioning unit has quit. Aronson Plumbing and Heating recommends a new outside AC unit. Cost is \$8,400-8,700 to replace.

6. **Pastor's Report** – Pastor shared that he enjoyed his break with family – he spent time biking; saw his children and siblings; and rekindled some friendships through music. He and staff are moving ahead with the software conversion; Julian and Jane have been great help in this process. The roof is now done and looks good. Progress is being made with the various project recommendations that will be made to the congregation; his supervision of the intern is going well; and the newly elected bishop Scott Dalen has reached out to him. He and Leslie will be taking some time in the fall to help their daughter and husband move to Brainerd, MN.

The council will meet on 8/13/25 at 6:30 p.m. Joan made a motion to adjourn. Cindy seconded.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:37 p.m.

*-Minutes submitted by Cindy Smith*

## CONGREGATION TREASURER'S REPORT FOR JUNE

Receipts for June- \$28,049 up \$7,995 from May

Expenses for June- \$32,154 up \$2,814 from May

Expenses exceeded receipts - \$4,105

Expenses exceeded receipts for the year \$29,322

Operating Balances

Unrestricted Funds

Checking account -	\$66,145.66
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Savings account -	<u>\$170,704.91</u>
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Total -	\$236,850.57
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Designated (Memorial) Restricted Funds	\$109,344.68
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Month End Balance-	\$127,505.89
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*Respectfully Submitted – Joan Christen SMLC Treasurer – July 8, 2025*

## AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

8/02 - Kenneth Strouse  
8/04 - Mandi Aronson  
8/04 - Don Northrup  
8/05 - Jeremy Deitering  
8/06 - Stan Bochtler  
8/10 - Gloria Lyster  
8/11 - Stephanie Zinn  
8/11 - John Steig  
8/11 - Pam Berg  
8/11 - Nora Woodke  
8/13 - Sharon Wilson  
8/14 - Wyatt Caboth  
8/15 - Megan Sullivan  
8/15 - Anna Hughes  
8/19 - Taylor Ripke  
8/22 - Aric Aronson  
8/22 - Elijah Hernandez  
8/22 - Merrick Frank  
8/22 - Rosemary Jorgensen  
8/24 - Shea Peterson  
8/24 - Kathleen Britten  
8/25 - Hadley Newhouse  
8/26 - Noah Shepherd  
8/26 - Tatum Shepherd  
8/26 - Nora Frank  
8/26 - Sue Gutz  
8/27 - David Stanton  
8/30 - Aiden Deitering  
8/31 - Steve Ellis

## WEEKLY SCHEDULE

For individual events and for the most up to date schedule look at the weekend bulletin, eNEWS sent out each Friday by email and on Facebook. Or to [Saint Mark Website](#).

### Sundays

7:30 am Proclaim radio FM 101.7  
9:00 am In-Person Worship & via [Facebook Live](#)  
10:00 am Coffee and Fellowship time  
10:15 am Bible Study with Pastor Dave

### Thursdays

12:00 pm AA

**Office Hours** are 9:00-5:00 M-F.

**Secretary Hours** are Monday-Thursday 9:00-12:00 and Wednesday 1:00-4:00

**UPPER DES MOINES FOOD CART:** Any food and other items are always need at Upper Des Moines. The grocery cart continues to stay in the Narthex for those of you who want to donate. The grocery items do not change much. This food list doesn't change. These items are always a necessity at Upper Des Moines:

***Cereal, oatmeal, canned fruit & vegetables, beans and rice, spaghetti sauce and pasta. Meat is very much needed (lunch meat, hot dogs, ground beef, ground pork, chicken). Freezers are available at Upper Des Moines, please drop refrigerated and frozen food items at Upper Des Moines. Other items needed are: laundry soap, dish soap, shampoo, body soap, toothpaste, toothbrushes, toilet paper, paper towels.*** Thank you! Your donations are greatly appreciated.

## ELCA YOUTH GATHERING 2027

The dates and place are set for the 2027 ELCA Youth Gathering. June 28-July 2, Minneapolis. Students and parents, put the dates down on your calendars. Information will becoming soon on their new website at <https://www.elca.org/gathering>





## SERVICE NAVIGATORS IN BV COUNTY

*"Building connections with community and resources"*

The Service Navigators of BV are grateful for the working space and the support that St. Mark has given them. We are establishing office hours at St Mark on M, W, F afternoons, but a lot of our work happens out in the community. As Community Health Workers (CHWs) we connect people to the services they are looking for. We also keep our BV county Resource Repository updated and accessible. Our team is growing as at least 5 more people from Storm Lake will be taking the CHW (Community Health Worker) training this fall. The Service Navigators of BV County are: Ana Sanchez, Emilia Marroquin, Selynna Butler, Andrea Taylor, and Di Daniels. You can contact them by- Email- [servicenavigatorsfbv@gmail.com](mailto:servicenavigatorsfbv@gmail.com) Phone- 712-730-3045 and on Facebook. [Facebook.com/ServiceNavigators.bv](https://www.facebook.com/ServiceNavigators.bv)

## LUTHERAN SERVICES IN IOWA

LSI proudly serves Iowans in all 99 counties through our services of Mental Health, Early Childhood, Foster Care & Adoption, Global Greens, People with Disabilities, and Immigrant & Refugee Community Services. We serve individuals of all ages, from families with newborns navigating the early stages of parenthood, to Refugee and Immigrant elders, as well as children at every stage of development. Our heart beats for the people we serve. We empower families and communities by recognizing and honoring the strengths and gifts of every individual.

*You are invited to join us on October 17<sup>th</sup> as we celebrate 160 years of faithful service and community impact through LSI! We are marking this incredible milestone with a special community celebration, and everyone is welcome. Friends, families, supporters and congregations alike! If you would like to*

*purchase tickets or for more information please contact Deborah Whitford, LSI's Senior Director of Philanthropy and Church Relations at [Deborah.Whiteford@LSIowa.org](mailto:Deborah.Whiteford@LSIowa.org) or 563-676-2065*

**BACK TO SCHOOL  
SUPPLY DRIVE**

**FOUR OAKS/LSI ARE NOW COLLECTING  
SCHOOL SUPPLIES FOR CHILDREN/TEENS IN  
IOWA FOSTER CARE.**

**LIST OF SUPPLIES NEEDED:**

CRAYONS/MARKERS	FOLDERS/BINDERS
COLORED PENCILS	KLEENEX'S/ CLOROX
HIGHLIGHTERS	WIPES
BLUE, RED, & BLACK	ERASERS
PENS	T9 CALCULATORS
#2 PENCILS	NOTEBOOKS WIDE &
BACKPACKS	COLLEGE RULED

**AMAZON  
REGISTRATION  
LINK: [HERE!](#)**

**LSI**  
LUTHERAN SERVICES IN IOWA  
FOUR OAKS

**ST. MARK LUTHERAN CHURCH**

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