



St. Mark's Lutheran Church

# Messenger

Spokane, WA

November 2020

Vol. 2020, No. 6



Come one, come all to the ...



**St. Mark's ADVENT PARADE on Sunday, November 29, 3:00-4:00 pm, St. Mark's parking lot, entered from 25th Avenue.** Come reconnect with your church community and celebrate the beginning of the Advent season from the socially distanced comfort of your own automobile! We're going to help you get all set up for Advent.

- Pick up materials to make an Advent wreath
- We'll have Christmas Eve service candles and holders for your worship at home
- Mark the days with your own Advent calendar
- Refresh your Godly Play supplies with Advent Booster Packs
- Turn in your stewardship pledge card
- Drop off your contribution for the Virtual Tree of Giving
- Enjoy some yummy Christmas cookies

There will be something for everyone! We hope to see you all there!

Any questions? Contact Ann Benson at (509) 954-9819 or [annmbbenson@gmail.com](mailto:annmbbenson@gmail.com)



## MESSAGE FROM MARTIN WELLS

Liturgically, we're approaching the "endings and beginnings" of God's time and the church's calendar. Some have called this a "begending" to try and capture the dual focus of the days. Soon we're into the apocryphal (revealing) readings for the end of the church year and beginning the hope of another Advent. Advent 1 is November 29, but before that was All Saints, a magnificent day of remembering those we have loved and now lost to God's bosom. Without the opportunity for funerals and memorial services during COVID-19, there was a built-up gravity around All Saints this year. Some of you may be having a tough time "starting again."

But every ending comes with a new beginning, something all of us wish we knew at the entrance to the birth canal when, our mothers in labor, contractions heavy, we began our journey into the world of time. The light at the end of the tunnel was our birth into enfleshed time, incarnation, and it has been and is in these days of life that we witness and participate in God's creation. In a great act of trust, we were baptized into God's purposes for us and we live the rest of our lives summoned and challenged by God's deep promises. To live out God's calling is the deepest meaning of our lives. The saints we lost to death this year now

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**MARTIN WELLS** *continued from previous page*

live in God's full presence and cheer us on as we negotiate our days under God's call.

In the next two months we will begin one of the signature pieces of our Vocation Planning Team's efforts to support us in our callings, our vocations. In this Messenger you are being invited to sign up and join a small group ministry, gathering for the first time, probably online, and after the start of the new year. The group you join will be made up of other St. Mark's members and friends and will be led by a St. Mark's member who has been in training for the last eight months. After a period of reflection on what small group ministry is, you will be invited to deepen your life of faith in conversation with others who are seeking clarity about call and vocation. In our perfect imagination and hope, such conversation will help reveal your giftedness within the Body of Christ (1 Cor 12; Romans 12) and serve as a confidential, trusted forum for sorting out your questions of God's call.

This is not a "forever" commitment, but we hope you will join such a group ready to see it through an initial period of group formation. After an initial session exploring the promise of small group ministry, the groups will slowly begin to shape the agenda of your time in ways you choose. Some groups may wish to focus on reading together or using other media to stimulate conversation. Time and place will become more flexible as we hope the late spring 2021 will allow in-person gatherings. Some of you may not have access to a computer, wi-fi, and Zoom-type software that allows virtual gatherings. Please tell us how you're able to participate and what limitations you might face.

The small group leaders have been training since last spring and will have direct experience of starting a new group and seeing it through phases of growth. The groups will meet for a period of weeks or months and then there will be an opportunity to reorganize around topics, times and places, life circumstance, and interests. Some of you are already participating in a form

of small group ministry and that may suffice for your participation. Sunrise Saints and Sinners, Theology on Tap, and other groups may decide to use small group materials available through the new small groups.

We'll be finding our way together as we launch this new ministry, and we hope you'll join us in this experience of a ministry of close support and reflection. More than anything we pray that this new opportunity will give you the patient time to both support others in their callings and use others to discover your own gifts and the way God is at work in your day-to-day life. None of us knows how the future is going to open up, but we entrust to God this new portal for growth in faith and trust and hope and love! As our yearly theme says, "We are called to trust God's future!"

## **SMALL GROUPS**

*You are invited to join a small group this coming January. Why small groups?*

1. They build community. During this pandemic we need community more than ever as we are missing each other. Small groups are a great way to connect and be affirmed and encouraged.
2. We often can't see our own callings. Small group members help each other discover our unique gifts. They encourage us to listen when God is leading us in our lives. We feel energized when we figure out some of the reasons why God put us on this earth.
3. In a small group we get a chance to hear each other's stories. Small groups are a sacred place to be vulnerable and open with one another.

**[Interested? Click HERE.](#)**

## TURKEYS FOR SPEAR

SPEAR is an organization supporting families in Spokane's East Central neighborhood.

The SPEAR board is asking St. Mark's for financial support for the purchase of 15 turkeys for Thanksgiving meals. We won't be collecting food items this year, but we can gather funds to get turkeys in the hands of our neighbors. Please mail your donations, made out to St. Mark's, by **Wednesday, November 18**.

If you have any questions, please call Gina Bloom at (509) 413-8300.



## TREE OF GIVING and Christmas for SPEAR

As we have done for the past several years, St. Mark's is hoping to fulfill the gift wishes of foster kids at LCS and help Christmas be more joyful for SPEAR families. We want to provide about 90 gifts this year. While this is a smaller number than previous years, it is a meaningful way to spread love this coming season.

Instead of pulling tags off the Giving Tree in the narthex, this year there are three ways to be involved:

- Follow the link below to Amazon.com to find the LCS wish list. You'll be able to make purchases on the list and gifts will be delivered directly to LCS and gift wrapped for each child.
- Purchase an Amazon gift card in your desired denomination at your favorite grocery store and deliver it to St. Mark's at the Advent Parade on **Sunday, November 29**, or mail them to St. Mark's. We will collect your cards and do the shopping for you!
- Purchase \$20 gift cards for Walmart or Fred Meyer for giving to 20 S.P.E.A.R. families, our neighbors in the East Central neighborhood. Send them to St. Mark's by mail or deliver them at the Advent Parade. Walmart and Fred Meyer gift cards were chosen for our SPEAR families because those shopping options are easily accessible for them.

Many of these wishes are from older teens or young adults who have landed in Spokane as unaccompanied refugee minors. LCS provides support services until they reach age 21. This is why you might see more requests for household items than toys. A few of these youth are also parents, so there are a few items for babies and toddlers.

**[Click HERE for Amazon.](#)**

Please have your shopping completed or your gift cards delivered to St Mark's no later than **Sunday, November 29<sup>th</sup>**.

Questions: Gina Bloom, (509) 413-8300.



Due to the close of schools in March, we had a surplus of funds for the Bite2Go program at Franklin Elementary. Now that schools are up and running – in one form or another – the need is rising for the Bite2Go kits. At this time, Franklin has 25 children receiving kits and that number probably will rise.

Once again your support is needed for the children at Franklin Elementary. The cost to support a child for the school year is \$180. If you are willing to help out, you have several options:

- Write a check made payable to St. Mark's, include Bite2Go in the memo line.
- **[Contribute by credit card HERE.](#)**
- Send a contribution directly to Second Harvest food bank with the designation "Franklin Elementary – Bite2Go".

It has been a year of transitions and uncertainties with the only constant being a need for clarity, empathy and FOOD. COVID-19 has dramatically increased the number of food-insecure families in our area and continues to impact food banks throughout the country. As food prices continue to rise, more and more families are being pushed to food banks and that is where Second Harvest and volunteers come in.

## YOUTH NEWS

Congratulations again to all of our confirmands!

Our **WWL CONFIRMATION** fall classes (except for tenth graders) will meet on **November 11**, then take a break for the holidays. We'll start back up **Wednesday January 6, 2021**. It's been great to see everyone each week and hope you're also enjoying the worship afterwards.

You may have noticed that we have a new program, **FIRESIDE FELLOWSHIP**, happening each **Sunday at 5 pm**. As the colder winter months arrive, pull up a chair and join us for a mix of hands-on, conversations, and interactive activities. Here are the next two upcoming gatherings:

**Sunday, November 15** - Pie making bonanza! Bring your favorite pie recipe as we each make a dessert of our choosing.

**Sunday, November 22** - Did know St Mark's is in a transition time? Pastor Mark is going to talk about what this means and how churches call new pastors.

Here's the Zoom info to join us for Fireside Fellowship (use either the link or ID & passcode), see you there!

**Zoom link HERE.**

Meeting ID: 715 1962 9492 Passcode: 717639A

## PASTORAL CALL PROCESS

Toward the goal of calling another pastor for St. Mark's after the departure of Pastor Eric Dull last summer, the St. Mark's Transition Team has been formed and is currently working toward completing the St. Mark's Ministry Site Profile (MSP). The MSP is a document that defines the life and work of our ministry at St. Mark's and will reside on a database at the ELCA.

Prospective pastor candidates can access the ELCA website to review the MSP of many different congregations and to enter into conversation with their own bishop to find the right church for them to pursue.

This work is in anticipation of a call committee being formed in January 2021 and beginning to receive a list of candidates from our bishop.

As you can imagine, now is a critical time for us to update our MSP at St. Mark's and define our path forward in ministry. We need your help and input to get this done. Every single member of St. Mark's plays a vital role in defining and carrying out our ministry.

We will be meeting with existing programmatic groups at St. Mark's, and a questionnaire will be sent to all members. We value everyone's input.

Blessings!

Tim Devlin, Sue Gilman, Pastor Mark Nelson,  
Tim Olson, Shanna Peterson, and Dick Thiel

**NOTE: Currently, worship is online, Sundays at 9:30 am. The church office is closed but messages can be left.**

### ST. MARK'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

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#### OFFICE HOURS

Monday-Friday 9 am-noon, 1-4:00 pm  
(Friday 3:00 pm)

#### PASTORS

Kate LePard  
Edwin Weber  
Mark Nelson (interim)

**MISSION STATEMENT:** To share the gospel through worship and service. To be an inclusive community for justice and peace among diverse peoples.

#### MESSENGER

Published monthly September - June by St. Mark's Lutheran Church.

Newsletter submissions due in the church office by the 15th of the month prior to publication.

Newsletter editor: Hulda Bridgeman  
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## **ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS AT ST. MARK'S**

**Advent Worship Services** Sundays at 9:30 am  
Premiere on FaceBook - After also available on YouTube  
November 29  
December 6  
December 13  
December 20

### **Special Events**

Sunday, November 29 - Advent Parade 3:00 pm drive-by fun  
Sunday, December 20 - Children's Pageant during worship

### **Advent Mid-week Meditations** on Wednesdays 7 pm

Live on FaceBook  
December 2  
December 9  
December 16  
Please note - no midweek meditation December 23

### **Christmas Eve Worship** Thursday, December 24

4:00 pm Children and Family Service with candles  
7:00 pm Candlelight and Carols Service

### **Sundays of Christmas** with Carols at 9:30 am

Premiere on Facebook - available after on YouTube  
December 27  
January 3, 2021

