



MESSAGE FROM PASTOR EDWIN

Recently, I was asked by a neighboring pastor to preside at the Lord's Supper while they were away on retreat. I was glad to say yes. After all, I am called to Word and Sacrament ministry, and it would have required very little extra effort, just an hour on a weekday to do and say the same things I do most weekends at St. Mark's. More importantly, it felt like a small way to support a colleague by making space for rest and renewal.

On the morning of the service, however, I received a call. There had been a misunderstanding. In conversation with a church elder, my colleague was reminded that their congregation's practice requires formal approval before a visiting minister presides at the table. For practical purposes, that meant I could not preside that day.

I was, admittedly, a little disappointed. I had been looking forward to helping a friend. At the same time, I understood. Good church order can sometimes require us to submit to processes that feel cumbersome or limiting, even when our intentions are generous. What mattered most to me, though, was reassuring my colleague - who was deeply embarrassed by the mix-up - that there was no offense against me and no apology required. Still, he apologized, in part because he felt the tension between honoring his congregation's traditions and extending hospitality at the table.

That moment has stayed with me, because it says something important about what it means to be good neighbors in a time when cultural divides seem so strong.

Being good neighbors means honoring one another's traditions, beliefs, cultures, and mutual expectations, along with the relationships our neighbors are already navigating. That is not

continued next page

NOTE THIS !



St. Mark's is a busy place these days, offering so many opportunities for worship, quiet contemplation, learning, fellowship, and living one's faith in the world.

Inside this issue you'll find information about Lent and Easter activities, a new preschool group at Vacation Bible School (time to sign up), new members joining St. Mark's, many opportunities to serve (a great way to make new friends), a way to support refugees in Spokane, and LOTS of pictures! Read on!

TIME CHANGE

Daylight saving time begins at **2:00 am on Sunday, March 8**, when we lose an hour.

CHURCH OFFICE CLOSURES

- **Friday, April 3** – Good Friday
- **Monday, April 6** – Easter Monday
- **Monday, May 25** – Memorial Day

CHURCH COUNCIL

St. Mark's church council meets **Monday, March 10, at 7:00 pm** in the conference room.

FLOWER CHART

The flower chart for 2026 is now posted in the narthex. Please sign-up to bring flowers in memory or in honor of someone, or of a special date. The exception is during Lent, when we don't have chancel flowers.

PASTOR EDWIN *continued from previous page*

always easy work. It asks us to extend grace, to allow others to be authentic, to celebrate difference without erasing it, and to recognize when someone is simply stretched thin. In a household, this might look like giving one family member a little more space or patience. Scaling that posture up to our community, our city, our nation, and our world is far more complex.

Each of our neighbors lives a rich life shaped by experiences and assumptions that may be very different from our own. We carry different understandings of how the world works: how we communicate, how we relate to authority, how we value time, family, and identity. Because culture shapes how people interpret behavior, misunderstandings often arise not from bad intentions but from invisible frameworks we don't even realize we're carrying.

Social research bears this out. Simply sharing space does not automatically create understanding or harmony. In fact, it can deepen division when people remain in separate groups, when power is uneven, or when there is no shared purpose. Genuine connection grows instead through cooperative work, mutual investment, institutional support for dignity, and time to build trust. Loving our neighbor means more than tolerating one another's presence; it means engaging in real, shared life together.

For my colleague and me, that meant honoring both his congregation's practices and my desire to help. I did not preside at the table that day, but our differences did not become divisive. By practicing curiosity rather than defensiveness, we learned more about one another's church structures and expectations. I recognized in his experience something I know well myself: the awkwardness that sometimes comes with honoring relationships across denominational, theological, political, or cultural lines, even as we seek to do the beautiful work of ministry together.

That work, of being good neighbors, asks something of us. It requires extra steps, extra grace, and sometimes extra courage. Yet it is holy work. It reflects the richness of the diversity

God has woven into creation and into the body of Christ. And you don't have to be a pastor on the South Hill to participate in it.

Every relationship the Spirit places in your life is an opportunity: to honor difference and shared hope, to learn rather than assume, to practice curiosity alongside courage. May God bless you in that work, and may the Spirit continue to cultivate in us all the grace to live as faithful neighbors, together.

MONEY MATTERS

December 2025 Giving	Year-to-date 2025 Operating Budget			
	Giving	Expenses	Budgeted Expenses	Net YTD
\$ 102,495	\$ 872,878	\$ 841,499	\$ 875,514	\$ 31, 379
January 2026 Giving	Year-to-date 2026 Operating Budget			
	Giving	Expenses	Budgeted Expenses	Net YTD
\$61,543	\$ 61,543	\$ 68,795	\$ 75,063	\$ -7,252



Thank you for your support of St. Mark's ministry. We started December down by almost \$10,000 but once all the generous Christmas gifts had been counted, we ended the year ahead by \$ 31,379. *Our community is incredibly generous!*

There are many ways to give at St. Mark's: by mail, through our website, www.stmarks-spokane.org (click on the "offering/giving" tab), texting the word "give" to 509.612.7647, or using the QR code. One of the simplest ways to give is automatic giving. Contact the office to set this up. If you give digitally, a withdrawal from checking or savings costs us significantly less than when using a credit card.

The fall stewardship drive resulted in 89 commitments made by submitting pledge cards, plus another 65 households currently enrolled in automatic giving.

Contribution statements for the 2025 calendar year were sent by email in late January. If you prefer a paper copy, email me at the address below or call 509.747.6677. We'll print and send your contribution report as soon as possible.

We started the new year a little short on funds. I'm confident that folks will step up and the deficit will disappear before too long.

Loris Stupel, Financial Secretary, 509.747.6677
finance@stmarks-spokane.org

Youth

Lutherhaven in Idaho to connect with other youth groups and grow in our faith. We sang camp songs, cooked marshmallows on an open fire, and played an epic, all camp game. Several of our youth put on a fantastic performance at the annual lip-sync contest singing a song from the movie "Frozen 2." The weekend was a wonderful opportunity to dig into the Bible and talk about faith and the Apostle's Creed.



Greetings from St. Mark's youth! We've had an exciting start to 2026 for the youth group. Between the continuation of our Wonderful Wednesday programming and the annual "Building Youth Groups" retreat up at Camp Lutherhaven, there's been a lot going on. Also, we've been busy with our weekly Sunday Cool meetings between first and second service, as well as our Sunday afternoon youth programming

By the time you read this, we'll have just wrapped up our second year of Wonderful Wednesdays. This inter-generational potluck, games, and social time ran concurrently with the fall and winter confirmation sessions. Over the course of the year we shared great food, played Gaga Ball and 9-Square in the Air, crafted clay sculptures, solved a jigsaw puzzle, and played dozens of board games. Many thanks to everyone who participated this year. If you are interested in similar programming, keep your eyes out for our Splendid Sundays brunch potlucks in the spring and the summer.

In late January we took a group up to Camp

wonderful opportunity to dig into the Bible and talk about faith and the Apostle's Creed.



We've been having a blast in the youth room every week with Sunday Cool, playing games, and even setting up the triple-decker couch for a movie afternoon where we watched the film My Neighbor Totoro.

Peace,
Calvin and Rachel Moore
Youth Program Leaders

Lent and Easter at St. Mark's

LENTEN and EASTER WORSHIP

- **Midweek Lenten Worship** – Wednesdays at 7:00 pm February 25 through March 25, Holden Evening Prayer
- **Palm Sunday** – March 29, 8:30 am and 10:45 am (10:45 am live-streamed)
- **Maundy Thursday** – April 2, at 7:00 pm
- **Good Friday** – April 3, at 12:00 noon and 7:00 pm
Good Friday Afternoon - April 3, 4:00 – 5:30 pm. The Way of the Cross: A Spokane Pilgrimage. Good Friday reminds us that we are called to die to all forms of sin, including the violence around us (Romans 6). Join us as we walk to places in Spokane where violence is imposed, such as the county courthouse, and we consider our response to it. We will begin at Salem Lutheran Church at 4:00 pm and gather for song and communion at Riverfront Park at 5:00 pm.
- **Easter Vigil** – Saturday, April 4, at 7:00 pm. This service starts outside and is just under two hours long.
- **Easter Sunday** – April 5, 8:30 am and 10:45 am. The 10:45 service will be live-streamed.

BAPTISM INVITATION

In baptism, God saves us from the forces of the world that defy God, puts our sinful ways to death, gives us a new birth, adopts us as God's own children, anoints us heirs of God's kingdom, and makes us members of the one body in Christ. What a great gift God has given us in the waters of baptism!

At St. Mark's, we welcome all people to the font, whether making that choice for yourself or bringing with hope and expectation your children to the waters. Because of the new life we experience in Christ, the Easter Vigil is set aside as the best time for baptisms and for the whole community of faith to renew our baptismal covenant with those being baptized.

If you are not yet baptized, or have children in your care who you'd like to be baptized, please consider this an official

invitation to come to the waters! We would love to baptize you or your children at this year's Easter Vigil. Or if that date doesn't work well for your family, we can find another time. See Pastor Gretchen.

MIDWEEK LENTEN WORSHIP, SOUP SUPPERS

Lenten soup suppers start on **Wednesday, February 25**. We will gather at **6:00 pm** each Wednesday of Lent for a light meal and fellowship. Please think about signing up to bring something to contribute to the supper (soup, bread, veggies or cookies) or to help clean up. We have many people who are willing to help, and are **looking for someone who can coordinate** each week.

After the meal, we'll continue with Holden Evening Prayer in the sanctuary, starting at **7:00 pm**. This is a wonderful midweek break to help prepare for Holy Week.

MORE FOR OTHERS Lenten Project

For Lent this year, our St. Mark's community will join Stewards of Creation and our other community outreach teams to collect both food and funds for the hungry in our area.

In this electronic age, giving can sometimes be unconscious or not occur. We hope to encourage thoughtful giving to our neighbors this Lent by gathering funds in a Feed Our Neighbors bucket, as well as bringing in actual cans of food and building a Castle of Cans.

Here are some triggers to help you remember!



- **When you come for Lenten soup suppers**, bring an extra can of chili or soup for our Castle of Cans, and a few bucks for our Feed our Neighbors bucket.
- **When you come for worship**, bring the same!
- Take home a **Lenten Giving Box**. Have your family members empty their pockets and drop coins into the box. These funds will also go to Second Harvest food bank.

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More for Others, *continued*

Volunteers are needed for this project.

If you can be available in between worship services to help kids build our Castle of Cans, we need you.

Then, every couple of weeks we need a volunteer to disassemble the castle, count the cans and report the number, then deliver them to Second Harvest.

Please contact Janet Farness at janet.farness@gmail.com if you can help.

Instead of thinking "Less for me" this Lent, think "More for others!"

EASTER FLOWERS FOR THE CHANCEL

Look for envelopes in the pews if you are interested in contributing to the flowering plants that adorn our chancel on Easter Sunday. You will have an opportunity to honor a loved one with this gift by filling out the information.

THANK YOU

Dear St. Mark's Members,

Thank you very much for your generous donation to the Mozambique School Lunch Initiative. Your support will allow us to provide over 2,000 nutritious, freshly cooked meals to vulnerable children attending school in rural villages of Mozambique. For many kids, this is their main meal of the day and is their favorite part about coming to school. Thank you for helping us serve more kids, even in faraway places like Mozambique!

Blessings,
Cara Myers,
Co-Founder, Director of Development and Innovation

Dear Jane and our friends at St. Mark's,

Thank you for this beautiful monetary gift for our teens at Crosswalk. We are so thankful for your continued care and kindness! It truly strengthens our work and we appreciate you being a part of it more than you know. ❤️

Sending joy
Sherrece Scott

Volunteers

A note to St. Mark's Volunteers and especially, this time, to Wayne Rall and Sande Paulson, for many years of faithful service.

"You will be enriched in every way for your great generosity, which will produce thanksgiving to God through us, for the rendering of this ministry not only supplies the needs of the saints but also overflows with many thanksgivings to God." 2 Corinthians 9:11-12 NRSVUE

CIRCLE

Saints serving,
In a beautiful cycle of generosity.
Recognizing one's God hewn gifts, skills, talents,
Sharing them in all ways,
Sometimes seemingly small (but no gift is ever small),
Sometimes extravagantly (but never with boast)
Sometimes unseen (but never truly unnoticed),
Sometimes routinely (but always with good purpose),
Sometimes with cost (but surprisingly, without burden),
Filling needs of others
And a need inside of ourselves.
So, we wrap the gratitude,
The love kindled round and round and around
Each other, wealthy in blessing, finally
To Praise the One from whom all Goodness flows.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Birth

Blessings on the birth of **Jack William Lee Dice**, grandson of Collette Dice.

Funeral

The memorial for **Billy Earl Sachse** took place on January 9.

St. Mark's Welcomes New Members



**EMILY CARBAUGH,
WILL MURPHY, ELLA
and EVERLEE**

Emily, Will, Ella and Everlee are transferring from First Lutheran Church in Ellensburg, Washington. Emily works as a Business Manager at WSU and Will is a Report Developer at WSU.

They have two daughters, Ella, who is 4 years old and Everlee, who is 3 years old.



**EMILY, RYAN,
GEORGINA and
HARRISON HUGHES**

Ryan moved to Spokane from Nine Mile Falls; his family has been in and out of Spokane since 2012. Emily was born in Puerto Rico and grew up in the Caribbean.

Ryan and Emily and their children previously lived in Saudi Arabia and Jordan where they were doing international development. Ryan now owns the Nexus Planning Services business and Emily is the development director at Manzanita House. Their family likes to travel, enjoy the arts, and the children are in sports. Emily enjoys tennis and gardening, and Ryan is active in biking and running.



**JUDY and GARY
JENSEN**

Judy and Gary recently moved here from Stevenson Washington, where they attended Shepherd of the Hills Church. They are now

living at Touchmark Senior Living. Judy is a retired postal worker and Gary worked at Hecla Mining as a maintenance mechanical manager. Judy enjoys writing, reading and quilting and Gary's interests include golf and jigsaw puzzles.



**BRUCE and
YVONNE HILLE**

Bruce and Yvonne have been married for 68 years. They both grew up in Ritzville and lived in Stonehurst recently and attended St. Luke's Lutheran Church. Last June, they moved to the South Hill Village and transferred to St. Mark's. Their daughter Heidi and son-in-law Scott Rudy also attend St. Mark's. Bruce and Yvonne enjoy going to St. Mark's and appreciate the van service.

DON SCHELLING

Don recently moved back to Spokane from Arizona where he lived for 14 years. Previously he lived in Spokane for 30 years and operated seven dry cleaning stores, one on Grand Blvd. and 30th Ave., just down the street from our church. He is recovering from a leg fracture and hopes to soon get back to his interests in gardening and fixing things in his shop. He would like to redo his backyard. He is a fan of the Seahawks and Bulldogs.



ANNAMARIE WALSH

Annamarie has lived in Spokane for 14 years. She previously attended Westminster church and was



drawn to St. Mark's because of its gender-affirming ministry. She is a retired Air Force veteran and provided carpentry and production control services in the military. Church and Holy Communion are very important to her, and she comes every Sunday that she can. She enjoys shopping and her past interests were golfing and working in a woodshop.



JOHN BECK

John previously attended Central Lutheran Church in Spokane. He grew up in Kenosha, Wisconsin and has lived in Spokane since 1988. He is a retired educator and enjoys orienteering.

DONNA MILLER

Donna was born in Leavenworth, Washington and grew up in Spokane. She was a member of Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church before transferring to St. Mark's.



Her life has focused on caregiving as she enjoys working with people of all ages. She had a variety of occupations that demonstrated this passion: dental assistant, in-home caregiver, nursing home caregiver, preschool teacher, Sunday School teacher, youth group leader, care provider at Shriners Hospital and providing day care for her grandchildren. She also worked at JC Penney and an auto parts company. Her recreational activities are reading and walking, visiting friends, family, and nursing home residents. She has a dog and cat who both enjoy her attention.

DUANE FLADLAND

Duane has lived in Spokane for 15 years and was originally from Grand Forks, North Dakota. He retired from the Washington Small Business Center at WSU where he was the state director. He enjoys fishing, hiking, and camping.



Not pictured:

DON ROWBERG

Don grew up in Spokane and graduated from University High School, attended Pacific Lutheran University, medical school at the University of Washington, and then did his residency in internal medicine at the University of Wisconsin. He was in private practice in Spokane Valley for 12 years and then worked for the Veterans Administration Medical Centers in Walla Walla and Albuquerque. He retired after 21 years of practice. After retiring he went on two 14-month tours to Arusha, Tanzania providing volunteer medical care at the Selian Lutheran Hospital. Currently he runs an NGO that helps provide funds and medical supplies for the hospital, where 90% of the patients are Masai and a large number are Lutheran. For enjoyment, Don bikes and conveniently lives in a house next to the Centennial Trail.

THANK YOU

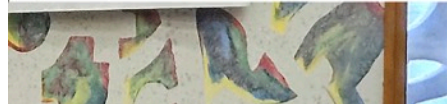
Dear Patricia (Manz) and SPEAR Board of Directors,
It is a great honor and truly humbling to receive your gift of SPEAR assets. For years I can remember welcoming SPEAR campers – I can even picture some of their faces. Claudia Holz was a dear friend and past SPEAR president. We will make sure these funds go to making sure other campers get to experience camp, in the spirit of the SPEAR program. SPEAR impacted so many kids and will continue to do so. Thanks be to God for your service! With thanks and praise for you all, and for all kids!
Rebecca Smith
Executive Director, Lutherhaven Camp



CHARLIE WAGNER, one of our youth, has been selected to join a group from our synod to visit in June the people of our companion synod, the Ulanga Kilombero Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania.

It's customary to bring small items to share with children in the schools and churches they will visit, so Charlie recently led a workshop for a large group of members to make bookmarks, many

Bega kwa Bega
(shoulder to shoulder)
Mungu Yu Pamoja Nawe
(GOD IS WITH YOU)
Pamoja Kama Kitu Kimoja
(together as one)
Mungu Akubariki
(GOD BLESS YOU)



adorned with Swahili phrases, to present as gifts.

We wish him the best on his trip!

Charlie will also join Pastor Edwin to represent St. Mark's at the synod assembly held April 24-26 at First Lutheran Church in Kennewick.

Our synod includes eastern Washington, Idaho, and a small part

of Oregon. In-person assemblies are held every three years, with online gatherings occurring in the two off years.



VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL 2026
Rainforest Falls
June 22-26, 9:00-noon

Beneath a canopy of chattering birds and howling monkeys, kids plunge into a life-long adventure, discovering the nature of God, and exploring what it means to be rooted in relationship with their creator, a safe place in life’s storms.

New This Year: A Preschool Group at VBS! We’re delighted to welcome our preschoolers into Vacation Bible School this summer in a thoughtful, age-appropriate way. They’ll join the fun of music and skits at opening and closing each day, then enjoy crafts, games, snacks, and Bible stories in a small-group, Montessori-style setting that feels just like Godly Play Sunday School. Pre-K space is limited to twelve children, with early registration offered to St. Mark’s families. Register early to secure a spot for your preschooler!

Register Today! <https://vbspro.events/p/events/st-marks>

THANK YOU

Dear St. Mark’s Family,

We absolutely love serving as your VBS co-directors. Hard to believe our arms had to be *gently but firmly twisted* back in 2022—

because now we’re all in. VBS has burrowed so deeply into our hearts that we feel a little bereft when it ends... and then immediately start scheming for the next year. It’s a lot of work, but it’s the kind of work that fills our cup and connects us with so many of you who show up so faithfully for our community.

And thank you for the wonderfully thoughtful massage gift cards after VBS 2025. Truly the perfect remedy after a week that is somehow both delightfully exhausting and wildly energizing. We felt so loved—and our shoulders felt so much better.

With gratitude,
 Kate Bassett & Kendra Chapman

FAITH FORMATION MINISTER

St. Mark’s call committee and congregation council continue their prayerful discernment in the search for a faith formation minister. At the recommendation of the call committee, the congregation council has approved a widening of this search to include non-deacon candidates.

While the congregation initially sought to call a deacon from the ELCA roster of Word and Service, the council has now authorized the committee to consider qualified lay candidates as well. This adjustment provides greater flexibility in the search process and allows St. Mark’s to engage a broader pool of potential leaders beyond the formal synodical call process.

From the beginning, lay leadership was named as a possible path for this role; however, the congregation first focused its efforts on calling a deacon. Given a limited candidate pool, the call committee and council now believe it is faithful and timely to widen the search.

Please continue to pray for the members of the call committee and congregation council as they engage in this important work of discernment, and for the faith formation minister whom God is already preparing to serve among us at St. Mark’s.

Social Ministry

Opportunities to Serve

SHALOM MINISTRIES DINING WITH DIGNITY



Lean on Me
Saturday, March 14, 2026
9:00-10:15 AM
The Event Center at the Summit
Rockwood Retirement Communities
2903 E 25th Ave, Spokane, WA 99223

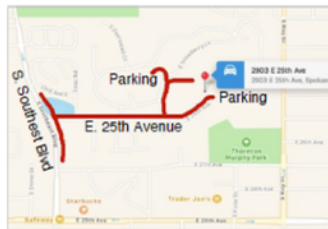
St. Lucy's Breakfast

Shalom Ministries Benefit

To reserve your place, browse our website, www.shalommeal.com, to connect to Auctria, or use the QR Code below. Or, if you prefer, email Traci Stensland, tspoonstensland@gmail.com, or call her at 509-869-9539. Seating is limited; reserve your place at the table today!

Breakfast is Rockwood's gift; your gifts to Shalom give dignity, support, and hope!

Keynote Speaker: Judge Mary C. Logan
Spokane Municipal Court Judge, 2009-Present



Register at
the Auctria
website

32 Years of
Dining with Dignity!

In 2025 Shalom provided more than 84,000 meals to those in need through Dining with Dignity, and currently serve breakfast Monday through Friday and dinner on Monday.

We also, during our meals, have partnered with CHAS, providing medical care and outreach, the Spokane Regional Health District extending their harm prevention programs, Range Community Clinic/WSU staff, and volunteer nursing students who provide foot care to our diners. We also coordinate with

representative of Frontier Behavioral Health for health and addiction services, Catholic Charities and a number of local churches and organizations that supply volunteers and services for our diners.

We continue to sponsor the Connections Poetry Workshop for our diners every other Thursday, and are in the process of compiling poems written in the workshop into a published anthology.

The year 2026 is going to be one of significant challenge. The cost of providing meals with dignity and compassion only grows as other services and funds become more uncertain. Meeting our budget goal will be dependent upon a growth in both individual giving and institutional assistance from St. Marks and all the area faith communities.

An additional challenge was just revealed to us when the owner of the building, New Community Church, advised us that they were placing the property on the market. With God's guidance, we are taking every step we can identify to plan for a future that may involve us staying where we are or moving to a new facility. Our greatest chance of continued success is to be financially sound and to continue to integrate our services with those other services currently being provided throughout Spokane. Members of the board, our staff and our essential volunteers are spearheading this effort.

Please do everything you can to support our continued operations. Upcoming events include the St. Lucy's Breakfast on March 14, 2026, and our Gala Fundraiser on October 17, 2026.

Volunteers to assist in the services provided daily, our fundraising activities or in leadership positions are always needed.

BITE2GO

Because St. Mark's members were so very generous in the fall, we were able to support 37 youth at Franklin Elementary with a kit of food every Friday during the school year.

Thank you, St Mark's!

more Social Ministry next page

LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF

Personal Care Kits

We'll start collecting these in April. One of the many ways members at St. Mark's give back is to gather items for Lutheran World Relief's Personal Care Kits. These kits are distributed throughout the world where the need is greatest. Our Eat, Pray, Laugh group along with others from the congregation will package the items appropriately and get them ready for shipping.



EACH KIT COMPRISES:

- ONE light-weight bath-size towel, (between 20" x 40" and 27" x 57"), dark color recommended, Target often has these on sale. **We always need many of these; this is our highest need item!**
- TWO or three bath-size bars of soap equaling 8 to 9 oz. total, in original wrapping.
- ONE adult-size toothbrush in its original packaging OR multi-packs of adult sized toothbrushes (we will package)
- ONE sturdy wide-toothed comb, packaging removed.
- ONE metal nail clippers - attached file optional.



GLOBAL NEIGHBORHOOD THRIFT

GNT runs a large thrift and vintage store in Spokane to provide refugees with job training and employment, English classes and career development.

A collection box for your donations sits at the back of the St. Mark's parking lot. *continued*

You can support them by donating gently used household items, although they cannot accept car seats, baby cribs, auto parts, paint, chemicals, used mattresses or box springs, "old style" TVs and computer equipment, exercise equipment, or furniture that is not in excellent condition.

NOTE: They do accept textiles for recycling which are not in resalable condition - think clean but torn, stained or otherwise unsuitable. These should be bagged separately and clearly labeled.

For more information: gnthrift.com.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Baptisms

Baptized January 11 is **Emerson Love Bjerkestrand**, daughter of Hailey Lauren Bjerkestrand and Eric Silas Bjerkestrand. Sponsors are Paula and Tyler Gates.

Baptized on February 15 is **Eleanor Jane Merrell**, daughter of Jon and Lindsey Merrell. Sponsors are Denise Burningham, Janet Farness, and Amber Swim.

Baptized on February 15 is **Ivy Jude Pratt**, daughter of Tara and Logan Pratt. Sponsors are Natalie Gates and Jaden Gorder.

Sympathy

Prayers for the family of **Eldine Purcell**, wife of Chuck Purcell, at the time of her death.

Prayers for the family of **Sandy Burda**, at the time of her death.

Prayers for the family of **David Weingart**, brother of **Mary Ann Tupper**, at the time of her death.

Prayers for the family of **Pat Gianotti**, mother of **Katie Kadlec**, at the time of her death.

Prayers for the family of **Lisa Therrell**, synod council vice president, at the time of her death.

Prayers for the family of **Billy Earl Sachse**, at the time of his death.

Prayers for the family of **James Bennett** at the time of his death.

Prayers for the family of **Connie Walker** at the time of her death.

Prayers for the family of **Chris Huck**, brother of Donna Huck, at the time of his death.

RICS: Refugee and Immigrant Connections Spokane is one of several organizations in town which support these newcomers to our community. They provide services for youth, elders who arrived here later in life, new mothers and those giving birth in a strange new place, orientation to Spokane for new arrivals, English and digital literacy help, and much more.

Two upcoming events will give you more information:



SUNDAY, MARCH 15, 10-12 noon

Online fireside chat on immigration, legal statuses and rights. Come away feeling more confident to confront misinformation.

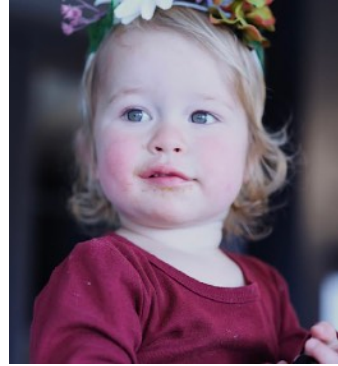
SATURDAY, JUNE 20, WORLD REFUGEE DAY is a multicultural celebration

involving several support groups in Spokane, and includes a swearing-in of new American citizens. Location: Spokane Community College. Pictures from previous celebrations below.

HOW TO HELP RICS: Special volunteer needs include driving instructor for program participants, providing transportation for elders to and from the program (St. Mark's member and RICS volunteer Hulda Bridgeman can tell you more), driving participants on field trips, assisting with youth program, and donations. For more information or to sign up for the informative newsletter click [here](#) or go to the website www.ricspokane.org. Then come celebrate on June 20!

World Refugee Day Celebration





THREE WAYS TO SHARE YOUR TALENTS

DO YOU QUILT OR CROCHET?

Projects are in the works to support two different programs in which St Mark's is involved. Contact Gail Lancaster through the church office for more information.

- Our synod representatives who travel to Tanzania in June will be taking table runners as a gift to our Tanzanian sister synod. We need some quilters to make these.
- Imagine sleeping on the ground, often concrete. We are looking for people (youth and adults) to make sleeping mats out of recycled plastic newspaper bags. No previous crocheting experience required!

CONSIDER SERVING ON RIVERVIEW RETIREMENT COMMUNITY'S BOARD

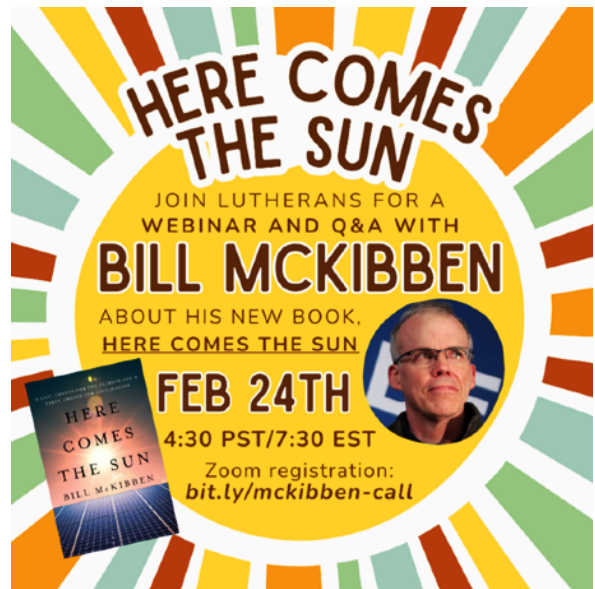
Riverview Retirement Community is seeking individuals who feel called to serve on its board of directors. Since 1959, Riverview has served older adults, families, and the wider Spokane community in a caring, Christ-centered environment, grounded in Lutheran values and open to people of all faiths.

Board members help guide Riverview's mission and future through strategic leadership, financial stewardship, and thoughtful governance, working in partnership with the President and CEO. This is a meaningful opportunity to support high-quality, resident-centered senior living, strengthen a trusted nonprofit ministry, and serve alongside dedicated leaders who care deeply about compassion, integrity, and community.

Board service includes several meetings each year, committee involvement, and engagement with Riverview's ministry and community partners. Experience in areas such as nonprofit leadership, finance, healthcare, ministry, or community service is helpful. But most important is a heart for service and a commitment to Riverview's mission.

If you are curious, discerning, or simply want to learn more, please speak with Pastor Edwin, who would be glad to answer questions or help you explore whether this might be a good fit for you.

STEWARDS OF CREATION



Join Lutherans Restoring Creation and our synod's EcoFaith Action Network as Bill McKibben discusses his new book on **February 24**. Best known for his environmentalism, Bill McKibben is an author, journalist and founder of climate justice organizations like 350.org and Third Act. His newest book, "Here Comes the Sun: A Last Chance for the Climate and a Fresh Chance for Civilization," calls us to harness the power of the sun and rewrite our future. In addition to a presentation by Bill McKibben, we will have Q&A moderated by eco-theologian Rev. Dr. Barbara Rossing. Register by clicking here or visiting: bit.ly/mckibben-call.

EcoAnxiety Cafes

Come explore your anxious feelings about climate change at Manito United Methodist Church with a qualified, talented team from **10 am to noon on Saturday March 7, April 4 and May 2**. Contact Janet Farness for more information.

Coming Up

April 26, Homegrown National Park 2.0. Last year we gathered after worship on Earth Day Sunday to plant a beautiful perennial box in the children's garden (photo next page). This year, in addition to pizza and other activities in the Fellowship Hall, we will plant another garden box adjacent to the first. *continued next page*

Stewards *continued*



These pollinator projects support helping our campus enhance the biodiversity of creation for the wellbeing of all.

Saturday May 16, 10:00 am-noon. We will plant our BGEM garden boxes. Would you like to work with our gardeners to grow healthy food for hungry people? If interested, come see what we are doing and get your hands dirty. We have a dedicated group who could use a few more members. We enjoy learning and growing together and invite others to join us. Contact Janet Farness to learn more.

Things to Think About

During the Sunday Forum on February 1, a panel of St. Mark's members discussed their experiences with the installation of solar. Participants included Fred Stahl, Kate Bassett, Bob Palrud, Dan Heinen, Janet Farness and Rick Young, with moderator Pastor Edwin. A recording of the event will be available soon on the church website. Here are some highlights from their discussion:

1. Among the panelists, there were many approaches: old construction, new construction, stand alone, do it yourself, community solar.
2. Panelists were able to take advantage of tax incentives, payment for energy generation and solar energy bank opportunities.

3. Solar can be scaled – you can start small and add to your system.
4. High satisfaction to have solar support electric car charging to greatly reduce everyday transportation costs.
5. Reasons for choosing solar were largely based on love for the environment, being more sustainable, reducing the use of natural gas and saving energy costs by generating energy!
6. Questions from the audience included: “As we look to the need to replace St. Mark's roof in a few years, what would it cost to add solar?” We'll be researching this.

In the spirit of Bill McKibben's new book, “Here Comes the Sun!”, we are hoping to raise the possibility of more solar installations in our homes and neighborhoods. In his book, Bill McKibben reports:

- Clean energy is surging into the world's energy supply.
- China is developing 3 gigawatts of solar power capacity per day (the equivalent of building a coal-fired power plant each day).
- On most days, California (fourth largest economy in the world) generates more than 100% of its electricity needs in renewables and is using 40% less natural gas this year than 2 years ago.
- Solar will be the world's primary source of energy by 2035.

Amazing Numbers

In four years of washing our reusable glass communion cups, we've prevented disposal of approximately 40,000 plastic cups.

Want to Get Involved?

All are welcome! Stewards of Creation continues to meet the first Monday evening of the month at 6:00 pm by Zoom. We will be planning for our education events and ways to support our faith community and beyond. Your ideas are welcome. Please bring your Stewards of Creation heart to all of our St. Mark's community! For the zoom link, contact Janet Farness or the St. Mark's office.

Christmas at St. Mark's

TREE OF GIVING 2025

The Tree of Giving at St. Mark's this year supported Lutheran Community Services' efforts to bring Christmas joy to teens and young adults who have settled in Spokane as unaccompanied refugee minors. This year we supported 18 youth from countries around the world.

Thank you, St. Mark's members, for your generosity to the LCS giving tree. We were hoping to give these young people each a gift card for \$100, but, because of your greatheartedness, we were able to give them each a \$250 gift card in addition to a warm, long sleeved shirt.

This year we added a new program by supporting the World Relief coat drive. We were able to give coats to around 22 individuals, including youth who also received a toy.

A special thank you to **Susan and Todd Hagen**, who so ably orchestrated this important program here at St. Mark's. Another special thank you to **Barb and Gerry Wigren**. **Barb** made twelve fleece tied blankets that we gave along with coats and additional gifts to World Relief.

To Susan Hagen and all those at St. Mark's,

Thank you for donating gifts to our youth once again! It means so much to our program that you have continued to support us during the holiday season for many years now. We wish you all a happy holiday season and a happy New Year!

URM Team
Lutheran Community Services Northwest

CHRISTMAS PAGEANT



The all new Christmas pageant, *The Mystery of Christmas: A Godly Play Pageant of Wonder and Light*, was written and directed by **Kendra Chapman**. Thirty-one children, from age three through eighth grade, participated.

Special thanks to **Norilee Kimball**, the accompanist, to **Randy Belstad** and **Roger Chase** who built the stable, to **Kevin Benson**, **Rachel** and **Calvin Moore**, **Bryan Stanfill** and **Sarah Yount** for comedic relief through their guest appearances, and to **Pat Manz**, **Cara Strickland**, **Ann Benson**, and **Kate Bassett** who kept it all running smoothly.

Thanks also to the church for new costumes and set pieces which thrilled the children, and which can be used in years to come.

And thanks to all who attended and gave their support to our students.



CHILDREN'S CHOIR



SMORGASBORD



CAROLING AT RIVERVIEW RETIREMENT



STARS OF HOPE



Cynthia Moore, a retired art teacher from Spokane Public Schools, spent two afternoons with our Eat, Pray, Laugh women's group teaching us how to make these beautiful stars

We used old, discarded books, a nod to our Stewards of Creation reusing efforts. Cynthia, along with **Sue Connelly**, spent the better part of a day placing them around the sanctuary to coincide with our Advent theme, "What do you fear? Insisting on Hope."



Faith and Fellowship Groups

We use the church office telephone number, 509.747.6677, for all our groups; this is to avoid scam texts. Those who have a directory can phone leaders directly.

TWO NEW GROUPS ARE FORMING:

For those approaching retirement or newly retired, and perhaps empty-nesting, this group will meet **the third Sunday of each month, beginning February 22, at 3:00 pm** at a different brewpub to deepen relationships, share about this stage of life, and reflect on what it's like to be a Christian in this season. **Questions:** Cynthia and Kelly Moore, or Barb and Randy Belstad.

Grief and Loss Support Group led by retired psychologist and St. Mark's member **Dr. Pat Gunderson.** Whether you've lost someone recently or long ago, grief is one of the hardest things we go through. It can affect us for years. We may need a safe place to talk and feel supported. If interested, speak to Pat or the church office.

VINYASA FLOW YOGA AT ST. MARK'S

Mondays 4:30 – 5:30 pm, in the Fellowship Hall
Questions: church office

This yoga class is for **everyone!** Our instructor, Kendra Mauer, has been practicing yoga for more than a decade and still considers herself a beginner. Bring your mat (if you don't have one, Kendra will have a few extra), your joy, and a friend or two. A free will offering is suggested. Hope to see you soon!

STEWARDS OF CREATION

Mostly first Monday of the month, 6:00 pm by Zoom
Questions: Janet Farness,
(jkftahiti@comcast.net)

This small group meets to learn more about care of the earth and our divine calling to be good stewards of creation.

See pages 14-15 for more information.

SCRIPTURE & COFFEE

Every Tuesday, 10:30 am, conference room

This group meets for a Bible-based conversation with a pastor to study the scripture texts for the following Sunday. **All** are welcome.

EAT, PRAY, LAUGH

First Tuesday of the month, March 3, 7:00 pm

Questions: Pastor Gretchen

Eat, Pray, Laugh meets in the conference room. **All women** are invited to this fellowship group for conversation, laughter, prayer and refreshments.

THEOLOGY ON TAP

Third Tuesday, March 17, at 7:00 pm

Questions: Pastor Edwin

This group has great conversation and fellowship with **adults in their 30s**, rotating through local brewpubs and wineries. For our next gathering, a special edition, we'll meet in the conference room at St. Mark's to celebrate Aaron and Kerri Danowski with an informal baby shower. Come share the joy and offer your congratulations! Your presence is the real gift – no presents required. If you would like to contribute something, their registry is tinyurl.com/BabyDanowski. Check the calendar or the Sunday Bulletin for more details.

SUNRISE SAINTS & SINNERS

Second & Fourth Wednesdays, March 11 & 25, 7:00 am
Questions: Dave Troyke

This **men's group** meets at The Chalet Restaurant, 2918 S. Grand Blvd. In this group you'll have lots of laughs, interesting discussions about a variety of topics, plus a good breakfast. All men are welcome, saints or sinners!

ST. MARK'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

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SERVICES

Sunday 8:30 and 10:45 am
Saturday 5:30 pm
Nursery provided all services

OFFICE HOURS

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

PASTORS

Gretchen Olson
Edwin Weber

MESSENGER

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by St. Mark's Lutheran Church

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hulda.bridgeman@gmail.com

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