



*Our Mission
To Proclaim the Gospel
To Make Disciples
To Embody Christ's Love*

A GRATEFUL FAREWELL

Several people, in acknowledging my retirement, have said things like, “Good for you! You couldn’t pay me enough money to take that job!” It’s true what former Bishop Bolick still says, “90% of this calling as bishop is marvelous and fulfilling, but the remaining 10% can sometimes feel overwhelming.” I’m old enough now to know that anything worth doing, worth living for, is going to have a significant element of “hard.” It’s hard to be a parish pastor, or school teacher, or medical professional, or construction worker, etc. It’s hard to be in a relationship, and hard not to be. It’s hard being a follower of Jesus and putting aside the more natural and cultural priorities of self-gratification, of me first, of power over.

As I’ve said before, I do believe any true calling is hard. Will there be some things about this season of calling that I will gladly walk away from? You bet! Maybe even some things that make me long for one of those little flashy-thing neurolizers from “Men in Black” that make you forget certain things. Yet I am profoundly grateful for the trust you placed in me and the season we shared of my serving as bishop. I am equally grateful for Bishop-elect Emily Hartner and for her upcoming season of leading our ministry together. As cliché as it can sound, we really are stronger together than we are apart. Yes, congregations are the basic expression of church. AND synods and churchwide organizations are immensely valuable in enhancing our collective ministry and embodying the Gospel for the sake of the world.

Speaking of our Bishop-elect, I pray and trust you will show her the same grace you’ve shown me and more as she transitions into this new role. When I was elected, my bishop in Georgia said to me, “Welcome to the world of no longer being a person but an event.” Or an office. I get what he meant. Bishop Michael Curry worshiped regularly when at home in Raleigh at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, in part because he simply couldn’t just show up in an Episcopal congregation and NOT be the Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church USA. I kept my social media accounts all together (work and personal) because I didn’t want to lose myself in this office. I am a person—a flawed one at that—who served as bishop. I have feelings, family, and physical, emotional, intellectual limitations as well as gifts.

I simply remind you of what the current female bishop of Montana said to her synod regarding her male successor: A new bishop is a real person with all that entails, and most of all they are a precious child of God striving to live out that identity as best they can in the context of the current season’s call. Encourage Bishop Hartner, support her, respond to her, pray for her—yes, as your bishop, but as a person called to a big, wonderful, hard job.

Lastly, I want to thank the synod for the significant financial gift presented to me at Synod Assembly upon my retirement. Wendy and I are honored, humbled, and a bit overwhelmed at your generosity.



ST. MARKS NEWSLETTER AUGUST 2025

We plan to put it to good use, including a \$5,000 gift to the Choir Tour Scholarship Fund that dear Ms. Maxine Amos established this spring in my name at Lenoir-Rhyne. We’ll also use it to wrap up our pledge to the Lutheridge 75th birthday campaign, take a trip to Portugal to see our daughter’s family, who have now moved there, and as a down payment toward a car since I’ll be turning the synod’s Tim-mobile over to Bishop-elect Emily. I have no way of knowing who gave toward this gift or who gave what, so I’ll just say thank you for this gift. More than that, thank you for the privilege of serving as your bishop for 10 years.

Walking with you toward a different season,

Tim

NC Synod Bishop



Lutheridge Birthday Celebration Weekend 75 Years

Friday, August 15 – Sunday, August 17, 2025

Come for a weekend of fun for the whole Lutheridge family! Our time together will include favorite camp activities like crafts, games, sing alongs and a special Saturday night campfire and vespers service. Staff reunions and outings are also being planned. Stay onsite for the whole weekend or commute.

Come on your own or bring your family. Stay for the whole weekend or come for the day on Saturday. Stay on-site (lodge and cabin housing options are available) or commute.

We hope you spread the word about the Lutheridge Birthday Party Weekend. We can’t wait to celebrate 75 years of faithful ministry with you and all our camp friends!

For a weekend schedule, information, cost and registration use the link below.

[Note: You will be asked to log in or create an account to register. If you need help, call our Registration Office at 828-209-6302.]

https://lutheridge.org/fall_spring_programs/lutheridge-birthday-celebration-weekend/



The newsletter team visited Norman Morrow a couple of weeks ago and presented him a plaque recognizing his years of service on the newsletter team. He was doing great and looks fantastic!



Norman celebrated his 98th birthday on July 2nd.



Youth Community Activity Tuesday, August 5th 9:30 am - 1:00 pm

Meet at the church at 9:30 am.
We will walk together
to Mt Calvary and spend
the morning with assisting the
Seniors Morning Out program.

Following this we will walk
to the Claremont Café for lunch.
Bring money for lunch.

Youth ‘Pay It Forward’ Activity Highways and Hedges to pack grocery bags for clients. Sunday, August 17th 3:00—4:00 pm



One In Christ

Community group will
host the annual
Back to School Bash
at the Hickory Fairgrounds
Saturday, August 2nd
from 9 am - 12 pm.



This event provides back packs and
school supplies for children in the area.
County organizations also provide
other items including clothing, toiletry
items, winter items and more. Bingo
and other games are set up to make
this a fun family event.

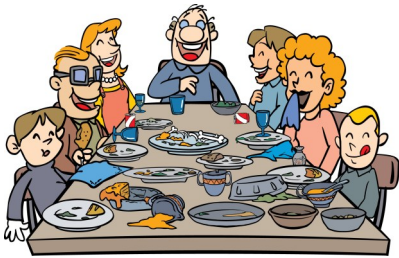
If you would like to volunteer,
please contact Wendy Hefner at
828.270.6008 for more details.

Bookbag Blessing Sunday, August 24th



Students of all ages are invited to bring
their backpacks
for a Blessing and Special Gift during
the worship service.

End of Summer Social and Lunch Sunday, August 24th 12:00 noon in the FLC



Hamburger Steak/Gravy
Mashed Potatoes
Green beans
Roll and Dessert

All St Mark’s members and guests are
invited. Please make **RESERVATIONS**
by marking your attendance card or call
the church office (828)459-2161 with the
number attending
BEFORE AUGUST 17TH!

Youth Gathering Lego Creations and Pizza Friday, August 1st 5:00—6:30pm

St. Mark’s Youth will be participating in an ELCA
sponsored Lego building contest. We will meet on Friday,
August 1st at 5:00pm to create a Lego design that depicts
our Faith. The creation will be submitted online and
judging will take place later in August.



PRAYER LIST—MEMBERS and EXTENDED FAMILY & FRIENDS

Members:

Mike Baker
Libby Brown
Gail Carpenter
Gary & Susan Carpenter
Jan Carpenter
Eva Cloninger
Alanna Dotson
Bill Dotson
Kathy Gibson
Rachel Hall
Jo Marilyn Hewitt
Linda Hewitt
Bill Hollar
Tammie Hoyle
Ken Isenhour

Pat Kale
Miriam Keisler
Rudy Little
Gaye Morrison
Kelly Morrison
Norman Morrow
Betty Powell
Kathy Ray
George Setzer
Carolyn Sherrill
Carolyn Sigmon
Hal Sigmon
Johnny Sigmon
Elaine Simmons
Larry & Judy Smyre
Betty Williams

Tony Williams

Family & Friends:

Brittany Bailey
Caleb Beatty
Mike Benfield
Barry & Sheila Brake
Jo Ann Fox
William Hampton
Forrest Huret
Mike & Alice Lawson
Tonya Lawson
Rita Ledbetter
Nicole Nimrod
Dana Roberts
Mark Sepulvador

Kathleen Sigmon
Loretta Stephenson
Michael & Rachel Swink
Jo Carol Thomason
Emory Addison Woods
Danny Young

Active Military:

Matt Hall
Bryant Helvie
Davis Tucker

Saint Mark's Lutheran Church
Ministry Financial Analysis June 30, 2025

6/30/2025	Month	Year
General Fund		
Expenses		
Balance		


June's Noisy Offering was \$234 and will support Rising Hope Farm. July will go to fund scholarships for Bunker Hill Football FCA Summer Camp.

Special donations received:

~In memory of Hazel Setzer to the Quilt Mission by
Teresa Broome
Linda Setzer
Shirley Harwell
~In memory of Hazel Setzer to St. Mark's by
Libby Brown
Jim & Betsy Williams
Sue Karen Falls
~In memory of Ginger Carpenter to St. Mark's by
Libby Brown
Sue Karen Falls
Susan & Tony Williams
~In memory of Glenn Morrison, Fannie Belle Sigmon,
and Gloria Sigmon by Sue Karen Falls

June-July 2025
Worship Attendance

	Present	YouTube
June 22	74	7
June 29	86	8
July 6	77	7
July 13	76	8
Total	313	30
Average	78	8



Rising Hope Farms

July 8, 2025

St Mark's Lutheran Church,
Thank you so much for your generous donation of \$234.00 to Rising Hope Farms. Rising Hope Farms has served our special needs community for 18 years. It is amazing seeing how God's hand moves through this ministry using volunteers, donors, horses, parents, and children. Thank you for supporting this ministry. We invite your group to visit the farm for a tour of our facilities. Rising Hope Farms is a 501-C3 organization that offers therapeutic riding for the special needs community. Rising Hope Farms does not charge for its services, and we have no paid staff, instead, we depend on individuals, organizations, grants, and community support to maintain our programs.

Our ministry provides programs such as:

Therapeutic Riding - The three-dimensional motion of the horse provides the rider hip and back movement that simulates natural walking. Riding relaxes and strengthens muscles, improves body tone, posture, balance, joint mobility, and coordination.

Senior Saddles - Medical studies show that spending time with horses can improve the quality of life for individuals with Alzheimer's and Dementia.

Hoofs for Hospice - In this program, we continually collaborate with Hospice and counselors to assist with children and teenagers who have lost a parent or sibling. Also, children and teens suffer from life threatening diseases. This program incorporates the use of horses to help facilitate the grieving process. It is amazing to see how God is healing power works through the silent language between a child and a horse. Again, thank you so much, your donation will touch a child's life. No goods or services were exchanged for this donation.

Peace, Joy, and Blessings

Gail Wartner

Gail Wartner, Executive Director
Phone: 828-638-0879
www.risinghopefarms.com

CONGREGATIONAL STEWARDSHIP

We are a church that shares a living, daring confidence in God’s grace — our congregations are evangelical mission centers where courageous and wise stewards are grown.

Congregational stewardship begins with a healthy understanding of gratitude and generosity. We have first received and therefore we give.

Developing a culture of gratitude and generosity is the focus for growing stewards in many congregations. Through the study of Scripture, we develop a trust in God’s abundance and strive to be faithful disciples and stewards. The formation of these stewards is a lifelong journey, and one in which we accompany each other.

<https://www.elca.org/our-work/congregations-and-synods/stewardship/congregational-stewardship>

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Gail Wartner
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Phone: 828-638-0879
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Claremont, NC 28610
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P A I D
Claremont, NC

<u>Church Staff</u>		<u>Congregation Council</u>		
Pastor Quentin Surace pastor@smarklc.org Wendy Hefner: Family Ministries Director wendy@smarklc.org Emily Schuttenberg: Minister of Music emily205@icloud.org Maria Wright: Preschool Director mw9268@gmail.com Randyl Abernathy: Preschool Director mimab@charter.net Deanna Butcher: Finance Secretary deanna@smarklc.org Patricia Hoke: Administrative Assistant secretary@smarklc.org Larry Smyre: Church Sexton		<u>2025</u> Jean Cloninger Terry Hefner Jonathan Ray Nicky Setzer	<u>2026</u> Carol Schaefer Matthew Watkins Nobia Summers Cathy Sigmon	<u>2027</u> Tim Carpenter Judy Craig Jerry Herman Susan Williams
	(704) 280-9921	<i>*The year denotes rotation off Council.</i>		
	(828) 270-6008	Congregation Council meets on August 18th at 6:30pm The next newsletter mailing will be August 20th.		
	(706) 248-3323	<u>Church Office Hours</u> Monday - Thursday, 9:00am—2:30pm		
	(828) 234-5943	<u>Follow Us Online</u>		
(828) 781-1702		St. Mark's Lutheran Church....Claremont, NC		 www.smarklc.org
(828) 459-2161		 YouTube St. Mark's Lutheran Church, Claremont NC http://www.youtube.com/ @st.markslutheranchurchclar6483		
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Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.