



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

ST. MARKS NEWSLETTER MARCH 2026

From The Pastors Desk

Grace and Peace Friends of St. Mark's Lutheran Church,

I pray you were able to stay warm during the snowy days at the end of January. While the roads may have frozen over, the life of the church did not. Even when we could not gather in person on January 25 and February 1, we remained connected in worship online and in prayer for one another. Thanks be to God for a congregation that continues to show up with faith and love.

February gave us beautiful reminders of where God is at work at St. Mark's.

Because of the weather delay, our Faith Challenge Kick-Off moved to February 8. Even so, the Spirit was not slowed down. We began with \$8,924.40 toward our goal of matching a \$35,000 gift to strengthen the life and ministry of our congregation by May 10. What a faithful beginning. Thank you to our Council, Stewardship Team and Deanna Butcher for their leadership in helping us grow in generosity and trust. Our Faith Challenge will be active through the months of March, April, and May. I invite you to pray where God is calling you to join us in our appetite for ministry.

In February we also entered the season of Lent together. On Ash Wednesday, we gathered to pray, to sing, and to remember who we are before God: "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return." It was a heartfelt service rooted in hope. Thank you to our Worship Team and Altar Guild for preparing such a meaningful beginning to this holy season.

As we turn toward March, there is much to look forward to as we continue our Lenten journey.

I invite you to join us for our Wednesday Lenten Services in the weeks leading up to Easter. We will gather for a simple soup and salad meal at 5:30 p.m., prepared by members of our congregation, followed by worship at 6:00 p.m. in the sanctuary. We will also welcome guest preachers from Lutheran congregations in our conference to lead us in worship. These evenings will offer space to slow down, pray, and grow together.

If you are looking for ways to serve, our Gifts from the Heart ministry is preparing a March event that will be shared in the bulletin soon. This will be an opportunity for us to love and serve our neighbors in tangible ways. We have also been invited again to lead the crafts table for the City of Claremont's Easter event on March 28. It will be a joyful and meaningful way to connect with families in our community. I invite you to reach out to Wendy Hefner for more information and to sign up!

March will be full. It will also be fruitful.

As we continue through Lent, I encourage each of us to ask: Where is God inviting me to come and see? Where is God calling me to live out our mission — to proclaim the gospel, make disciples, and embody God's love?

Thank you to our staff, volunteers, and lay leaders who faithfully serve behind the scenes and in front of the congregation. And thank you, friends of St. Mark's, for the many ways you worship, serve, give, and love together.

Peace and Blessings, Fraternally Pastor Quentin

NCWELCA Spring Retreat

April 10-12, 2026

Coastal Retreat Center

2101 Palm Blvd.

Isle of Palms, SC

You may have heard of the "Five Love Languages" but you've NEVER experienced them like this! Come prepared to learn about: Words of Affirmation, Quality Time, Gifts, Physical Touch and Acts of Service.

In ways that will transform your life. Through six thoughtfully planned sessions of Bible study, discussion, games, crafts, music, encouragement, and worship, this weekend will equip you to Speak Love so that you can better Serve Christ.

Registration deadline is April 1st. Forms available on entry tables or see Tamarah Hefner.



"We Stand for Her"

2026 Spring Conference Gathering
For Blue Ridge and Catawba
NC Women of the ELCA



April 18th 8:30-11:30am
Mt. Zion Lutheran Church
4420 County Home Road
Conover NC 28613

This program, chosen in memory of Maxine Amos, will support our efforts in educating ourselves in standing for and bringing justice to Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women everywhere. This gift is written by the director of the documentary "We Ride for Her." Prairie Rose Seminole will stand with us and guide us through her documentary, so that we will learn to stand for her—missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. We stand for her because we are sisters and as a community of women, it is what we are called to do.

To register email Sharon Wilson at hilmer1966@outlook.com

Registration deadline is April 10th. Cost up to \$12.

Happy St. Patrick's Day
Tuesday, March 17th

Don't forget to wear **GREEN!**



Save the Date
Saturday, May 2
11 o'clock - 1 o'clock
Our ladies day in honor of Mothers Day!
More information to come !!!

Woman of the Year !!!

It's time to shine the light on a special lady in your life: someone who has shown love, greatly impacted your faith, inspired you thru leadership and service, and so much more!!! These are just a few examples of why this person is deserving of the 2026 Award!!! Please send a written letter to Elaine Simmons or the church office by April 15 with your nomination.

**Gifts from the Heart – Easter Event
Saturday, March 21st TBA**

We are planning for our annual Easter Egg hunt for the special needs community and are expecting at least 100 participants, families and staff. We are in need of the following:

- Easter Eggs filled with candy or prize items
 - Plastic eggs or candy (we can fill them)
- Cookies, individual chip bags
- **VOLUNTEERS!!!!**

If you can help, please see Nobia Summer or Wendy Hefner - or sign up at the table in the church.



**Claremont Easter Egg Hunt
Saturday, March 28**

St Mark's will be hosting the craft table again this year at the Claremont Easter Egg hunt. If you would like to volunteer to assist between 10:30 am and 2:00 pm, please let Wendy Hefner know. No craft experience necessary!

Preschool Highlights

Science Center Visit



Temple Talk with Pastor Quentin



Groundhog Day

He saw his shadow



Stretch N Grow



**Preschool Wish List
Updated List**

- Tissues
- Paper Towels
- Disinfectant Spray
- Disinfectant
- Wipes
- Baby Wipes

Thanks to all those you have given supplies to our Preschool

PRAYER LIST—MEMBERS and EXTENDED FAMILY & FRIENDS

Members:

Mike Baker
 Libby Brown
 Gail Carpenter
 Gary & Susan Carpenter
 Jan Carpenter
 Alanna Dotson
 Bill Dotson
 Kathy Gibson
 Rachel Hall
 Jo Marilyn Hewitt
 Linda & Willie Hewitt
 Tammie Hoyle
 Ken Isenhour
 Pat Kale
 Rudy Little
 Gaye Morrison
 Kelly Morrison

Norman Morrow
 Betty Powell
 Kathy Ray
 Evelyn Setzer
 George Setzer
 Carolyn Sherrill
 Sandy Sherrill
 Carolyn Sigmon
 Johnny Sigmon
 Elaine Simmons
 Larry & Judy Smyre
 Tony Williams
Family & Friends:
 Zane Albert
 Carolyn Anderson
 Brittany Bailey
 Caleb Beatty
 Jerry & Wanda Bolick

Barry & Sheila Brake
 Jo Ann Fox
 Tom Graybeal
 Carson Hollar
 William Hampton
 Forrest Huret
 Julie Jones
 Loretta Kiesler
 Mike & Alice Lawson
 Tonya Lawson
 Rita Ledbetter
 Bill & Laura McBrayer
 Betsy Roberts
 Dana Roberts
 Mark Sepulvador
 Jason Sharpe
 Kathleen Sigmon
 Loretta Stephenson

Rich Surace
 Jo Carol Thomason
 Phil Williams
 Emory Addison Woods
 Baby Adaline Yang
 Danny Young
 Dylan & McKenzie
 Child with brain tumor

Active Military:

Davis Tucker

**Saint Mark's Lutheran Church
 Ministry Financial Analysis January 31, 2026**

1/31/2026	Month	Year
General Fund Offerings	18,691.40	18,691.40
Expenses	(32,178.42)	(32,178.42)
Balance	(13,487.02)	(13,487.02)

**January-February 2026
 Worship Attendance**

	Present	YouTube
January 18	62	14
January 25	Cancelled due to ice	
February 1	Cancelled due to snow	
February 8	76	9
February 15	71	0 down
Total	209	23
Weekly Average	70	12

January's Noisy Offering was designated for The Blessing Box and totaled \$269.00. February's Noise Offering was for Gifts from the Heart Easter Event and totaled \$179.00. Here is a list of the 2026 monthly Noisy Offering recipients:

- March—Youth Mission Trip
- April—Quilt Mission
- May—Highways and Hedges
- June—Pregnancy Care Center
- July—Hickory Soup Kitchen
- August—Preschool Scholarship Fund
- September—Sipes Orchard Home
- October—Safe Harbor
- November—Rising Hope Farm
- December—Christmas meals for needy families

MEMORIALS:

*In memory of Marlene Epps to the Quilting Group given by Sassy Stitchers Quilting Group.

Easter flowers orders will be taken through Sunday, March 8th.

Lilies and Geraniums are available for purchase to decorate our sanctuary for Easter Sunday. Cost is \$13.00 each.

Order forms on the entry tables.



St. Mark's sends our deepest sympathies to the families of Miriam Henrietta Keisler and Mike Benfield.

**Youth Mission Trip
 June 14—19
 Charleston, SC**



16 youth and adults of the congregation will be attending a mission trip this summer in Charleston, SC June 14th - 19th.

There will be projects in and around the city for our group to take part in, Bible study sessions and time for group building.

Fundraisers are being planned, but if you would like to donate to the trip, please mark envelopes:
YOUTH MISSION TRIP

Lenten and Easter Schedule

Mar. 4	2nd Lent meal	5:45pm
	Service w/communion	6:30pm
Mar. 11	3rd Lent meal	5:45pm
	Service w/communion	6:30pm
Mar. 18	4th Lent meal	5:45pm
	Service w/communion	6:30pm
Mar. 25	5th Lent meal	5:45pm
	Service w/communion	6:30pm
Mar. 29	Palm Sunday Service	10am
Apr. 2	Maundy Thursday Service	7pm
Apr. 3	Good Friday Service	7pm
Apr. 5	Sunrise Service	8am
	Breakfast to follow	
	Easter Sunday Service	10am

St. Mark's Lutheran Church
Council Retreat
January 9-10, 2026

Day One: Friday January 9, 2026. Family Life Center.

Members Present: Terry Hefner, Tim Carpenter, Nobia Summer, Cathy Sigmon, Carol Schaefer, Judy Craig, Matthew Watkins, Susan Williams, Jerry Herman, Tim Sherrill, Jennifer Carpenter, Trey Hendren

Members Absent: None

Guest: Wendy Hefner, Family Ministries Director

6:00pm: Started with blessing, meal and fellowship

6:45pm: Bible Study and Ice breaker led by Pastor Quentin

7:20pm: Presentation by Doug Brown who covered how to read and interpret the finance reports for the church.

8:20pm: Meeting called to order by Pastor Quentin to elect executive officers. Results of election as follows:

President: Terry Hefner

Secretary: Nobia Summer

Vice President: Tim Carpenter

Treasurer: Susan Williams

After the vote, Terry discussed covenant of conduct for council members and 2026 council duties were assigned.

9:00pm: Motion by Cathy to recess until day 2. Second by Terry. Meeting adjourned with the Lord's Prayer.

Day 2: Saturday January 10, 2026. Family Life Center.

All present.

9:00: Breakfast and fellowship

9:38: Called to order from recess by Pastor Quentin and briefly discussed the constitution.

Ministry team discussion:

No longer have Memorial team. This is managed by council.

Witness/Social teams have merged into Outreach.

Need to reinstate safety/security team

Discussion regarding policies:

Columbarium Operation and Care reviewed. Team currently consists of Terry Hefner and Bob Busbee.

Needs another member as policy states there is supposed to be three members

Funeral Instructions discussed: Need to take out specific individual names as most are not current.

Family Life Center Use Form discussed. Need to update some areas of policy regarding pricing, etc.

Other policies reviewed regarding Lay Staff, Memorial Fund policy, Pastor's Discretionary Fund and Little Free Library.

10:30: Discussion of Goals and Challenges.

Reviewed last year's goals which include the following:

Update Webpage: Ongoing.

All electronic communication tools under oversight of office administration: Done

One Call Training/Cleanup: Done

Revisit Ministry Teams: Still needs work.

Discussed current and ongoing challenges:

Roof leaking continues

Financial challenges

Parking lot repair/re-striping

Lack of response to commitments this year

Worship service

Playground trees

Wedding policy

2026 Goals:

Strengthen ministry teams (Tim Sherrill, Nobia, Trey, Tim Carpenter, Cathy Sigmon, Pastor Quentin)

Property needs support

Consolidate/Condense teams

Update Current Policies (Judy, Jerry, Jennifer, Susan, Carol, Terry, Pastor Quentin)

Update current policies

Finalize marriage/wedding policy

Webpage Management/Social Media (Trey, Matthew, Carol, Pastor Quentin)

Who runs it?

Who updates it?

11:15 January Council Meeting (see council minutes)

Respectfully Submitted,
Nobia Summer

St. Mark's Lutheran Church
Church Council Meeting Minutes
January 10, 2026

Meeting held in Family Life Center.

Called to order at 11:15 pm by Terry Hefner

Opening prayer led by Pastor Quentin Surace

Present: Terry Hefner, Nobia Summer, Tim Carpenter, Tim Sherrill, Trey Hendren, Jerry Herman, Carol Schaefer, Jennifer Carpenter, Judy Craig, Susan Williams, Cathy Sigmon, Matthew Watkins. Wendy Hefner also present.

Absent: None

December 2025 minutes approved.

Pastor's Report: Written report available and Pastor Quentin reviewed.

Family Ministry Report: Written report reviewed.

Team Reports: Available reports reviewed.

Personnel: No report

Finance: No report available. Waiting on ending numbers for December 2025.

Technology: No report. Working on a way for church to have sole possession of webpage.

Worship and Music: No report. Will meet January 11 after service to discuss Lenten services and Holy week.

Property: No report. Ongoing issue with roof leaking.

Stewardship: No report. Meeting January 12. Struggling with getting people to commit. Have not decided noisy offerings for 2026 yet.

Fellowship: No report.

Outreach: No report.

Executive Team: No report for January as executive team was just elected. Officers as follows:

President: Terry Hefner

Vice President: Tim Carpenter

Secretary: Nobia Summer

Treasurer: Susan Williams

WELCA: No report. Christmas party at Deb Crawford's home was January 4 and was well attended.

Preschool: No report. Jonathan Ray will continue to go to meetings and report. Still need council liaison.

Discussion and Q&A about upcoming Faith Challenge.

Old Business:

Little Free Library (LFL): Motion to appoint Marlene Stewart as the steward. Motion by Cathy Sigmon. Seconded by Matthew Watkins. All approved.

City request to add handicap parking next to Connor Building:

Dale spoke with Thrivent team and they are willing to relocate their current parking.

City is not willing to re-strip/repair the rest of our parking lot due to cost (this was suggested at last church council meeting to request).

Need to decide how we want our existing handicap parking spaces marked.

Postcard invitation to mail to residents in Claremont postal region will be voted on in February meeting after getting more information on pricing.

New Business:

Adam Lincoln and family visiting since December are seeking full membership. Motion to approved membership by Tim Sherrill. Seconded by Trey Hendren. Motion carried. They will be recognized with other new members at recognition service later this month.

Council Liaisons for ministry teams appointed:

Property: Jerry and Trey

Stewardship: Matthew

Worship and Music: Nobia

Finance: Susan

Personnel: Cathy

WELCA: Terry

Outreach: Carol

Youth/Learning: Jennifer

Congregational Care: Tim C.

Preschool: Cathy

Technology: Terry

Fellowship: Judy

Altar Guild: Nobia

Cemetery/Columbarium: Tim S.

Adjournment: Motion by Tim C. to adjourn. Motion seconded by Carol. Meeting adjourned at 12:36pm with The Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted,
Nobia Summer

St. Mark's Lutheran Church
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Claremont, NC 28610

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<u>Church Staff</u>	<u>Congregation Council</u>															
<p>Pastor Quentin Surace pastor@smarklc.org (704) 280-9921</p> <p>Wendy Hefner: Family Ministries Director wendy@smarklc.org (828) 270-6008</p> <p>Emily Schuttenberg: Minister of Music emily205@icloud.org (706) 248-3323</p> <p>Maria Wright: Preschool Director mw9268@gmail.com (828) 234-5943</p> <p>Randyl Abernathy: Preschool Director mimab@charter.net (828) 781-1702</p> <p>Deanna Butcher: Finance Secretary deanna@smarklc.org (828) 459-2161</p> <p>Patricia Hoke: Administrative Assistant secretary@smarklc.org (828) 459-2161</p> <p>Larry Smyre: Church Sexton (828) 459-2161</p>	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: center;"><u>2026</u></th> <th style="text-align: center;"><u>2027</u></th> <th style="text-align: center;"><u>2028</u></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Carol Schaefer</td> <td>Tim Carpenter</td> <td>Jennifer Carpenter</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Matthew Watkins</td> <td>Judy Craig</td> <td>Terry Hefner</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Nobia Summers</td> <td>Jerry Herman</td> <td>Trey Hendren</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cathy Sigmon</td> <td>Susan Williams</td> <td>Tim Sherrill</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>*The year denotes rotation off Council at year's end.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Congregation Council meets on March 16th at 6:30pm. The next newsletter mailing will be March 18th.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Church Office Hours</u> Monday - Thursday, 9:00am—2:30pm</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Follow Us Online</u></p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="text-align: left;"> <p>f St. Mark's Lutheran Church...Claremont, NC</p> <p>YouTube St. Mark's Lutheran Church, Claremont NC http://www.youtube.com/ @st.markslutheranchurchclar6483</p> </div> <div style="text-align: right;"> <p> www.smarklc.org</p> </div> </div>	<u>2026</u>	<u>2027</u>	<u>2028</u>	Carol Schaefer	Tim Carpenter	Jennifer Carpenter	Matthew Watkins	Judy Craig	Terry Hefner	Nobia Summers	Jerry Herman	Trey Hendren	Cathy Sigmon	Susan Williams	Tim Sherrill
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Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.