

St. Mark's Lutheran Church
P.O. Box 550
3216 West Main Street
Claremont, NC 28610
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Claremont, NC



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

ST. MARKS NEWSLETTER
September 13, 2023

OPPORTUNITIES TO GATHER
AT ST. MARK'S

Sundays—Worship
10:00 Service in Sanctuary
9:00am Sunday Morning Learning
10:00 Drive-Up in Front for Radio
broadcast on FM 101.5

Anytime—online
www.smarklc.org
YouTube.com
Facebook.com - Links

Media
Christ in our Home devotional
Please call the church office.

A NOTE ON OUR WORSHIP
TOGETHER IN THE NAVE

MASKS ARE OPTIONAL
WE ASK THAT YOU OBSERVE SOCIAL
DISTANCING FOR THE SAKE OF
YOURSELF AND YOUR NEIGHBOR.

PLEASE NOTE:

Worship times and places are subject
to change for the sake of safety due
to COVID-19
You may view our services live on St.
Mark's Lutheran Church's YouTube
page. Become a subscriber by going
to the page and clicking on the
subscribe button. The service will
remain there after each service for
later viewing.

http://www.youtube.com/@st.marks
lutheranchurchclar6483

My Beloved Disciples of St. Mark's, 9/10/2023

As our time together is drawing to a close, I wanted to take just a few minutes to share some of my personal reflections with you about our life together these past three plus years.

First thank you for affirming my call to the Ministry of Word and Sacrament based on your vote in January of 2020. I was transitioning from the Ministry of Word and Service having served for 10 years as a Deacon. Through your call process and vote you affirmed this new ministry call, and I joined you on February 23, 2020 to begin our journey together. We celebrated my ordination on March 1, 2020, with great joy and celebration.

Unfortunately, our time to get to know one another through personal interactions was complicated by the Covid pandemic. But through Zoom calls, outdoor worship services, and phone calls we were able to make connections and begin to build relationships with one another.

It was a surprise to all of us when Pastor Gary retired. I had hoped to be able to serve with him longer but that was not to be. At the beginning of my call I was told that when Pastor Gary did retire, a full time intentional interim would come and join us as we moved into a time to discern and imagine together the future of St. Mark's and who God was calling the congregation to be and do. This person would also help me and the congregation until it was determined who would serve as the next Senior Pastor.

During this time, I took on additional responsibilities and was excited to have Pastor Roger Storm and Pastor Paul Birkedal both join us here for short periods of time. Unfortunately, however, we were not able to find nor was there available an intentional interim for St. Mark's. So it was decided last Fall to move past this hope for a full-time intentional interim, and a call committee was formed and trained beginning the formal process of calling a Senior Pastor.

I met with the call committee and shared with them my thoughts and experiences here at St. Mark's. We mutually agreed to continue to have conversation, and then after much prayer and discernment when it was offered, I agreed to be the primary candidate for Senior Pastor. Thank you to the members of the Call Committee: Melanie, Marcheta, David, Shawn, Jennifer, Maria, Tray, Elaine, and Tamarah. Thank you for the work that you did during the call process.

Part of the agreement made with the call committee and council was to continue to look for additional pastoral help and to do the work of visioning and discernment with a Pastoral Consultant and the congregation. A discernment team was quickly formed, and I want to publicly say thank you to them: Kendra, Melanie, Nicky, Dale, Matthew, Terry, and Tamarah.

Continued on page 3

Church Staff	
Pastor Heather Langan: Senior Pastor hlangan519@yahoo.com	(704-724-5991)
Wendy Hefner: Family Ministries Director wendy@smarklc.org	(828-270-6008)
Emily Schuttenberg: Minister of Music	(828-459-2161)
Rachel Isaac: Nursery/children's Church Leader	
	(828-459-2161)
Maria Wright: Preschool Director mw9268@gmail.com	(828-234-5943)
Randyl Abernathy : Preschool Director mimab@charter.net	(828-781-1702)
Deanna Butcher: Finance Secretary deanna@smarklc.org	(828-459-2161)
Debbie Smith: Administrative Assistant secretary@smarklc.org	(828-459-2161)
Larry Smyre: Church Custodian	(828-459-2161)



Congregation Council		
2023	2024	2025
Terry Hefner	Kyle Sigmon	Jean Cloninger
Denise Arndt	Hilka Cox	Blake Sigmon
Marlene Epps	Kendra Hendren	Jonathan Ray
Carol Schaefer	Aaron Carpenter	Nicky Setzer
The year denotes rotation off Council.		
Congregation Council meets on September 18th at 6:30pm The next newsletter mailing will be September 27, 2023		
Church Office Hours		
Monday - Thursday, 9:00am—2pm		
Follow Us Online		
f StMarksLutheran...Claremont, NC www.smarklc.org		
YouTube St. Mark's Lutheran Church, Claremont, NC		



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Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

<u>MEMORIAL/HONORARIUM GIFTS RECEIVED TO THE GLORY OF GOD</u>			
For St. Mark’s Preschool: In memory of Judy Little given by Connie Pope			
In memory of Charlsie Lutz & Bill Little given by Maria & Trent Wright			
In memory of Chris Sigmon & Mike Evans given by Shelia Miller			
In memory of Mike Evans given by Emma Davis			
In honor of St. Mark’s Preschool staff given by Susan Bolick			
In honor of Mia Claire Loza given by Maria & Trent Wright			
In honor of Pastor Heather given by Linda & Willie Hewitt			
Donation to the playground in honor of the preschool children: given by Danny & Randyl Abernathy			
For St. Mark’s: In memory of Chris Sigmon given by Donna Evans			
In memory of Mike Evans given by Deron & Jennifer Bumgarner, Nicky & Evelyn Setzer, Glenn & Beverly Barger, Kermit Nash, Keith Grubbs Terry & Peggy Johnson, Lew & Lorena Brandy, Rick & Linda Parker & Dr. Chris & Donna Reese			
<u>THOSE PERSON AND FAMILIES WHO ARE GRIEVING, NAMED AND UNNAMED.</u>			
Family of Mike Evans, husband of Donna Evans			
Family of Martin Pannell			
Family of Charles “Smitty” Smith			
PLEASE PRAY FOR THE FOLLOWING WITH ACUTE HEALTH CHALLENGES (Those with ongoing health challenges and extended friends and family members of St. Mark’s are listed weekly in our Sunday worship bulletin.)			
Mike Benfield Harley Brown Gary Carpenter Jan Carpenter Chris Cloninger Eva Cloninger Jackie Devlin Keegan Dixon Alanna Dotson Jerry Herman Jo Marilyn Hewitt	Celia Hollar Tammie Hoyle Forrest Huret Meredith Huret Exie Little Rudy Little Gaye Morrison Glenn Morrison George Setzer Carolyn Sherrill	Sandy Sherrill Brenda Sigmon Hal Sigmon Johnny Sigmon Ryan Sigmon Tim Sigmon Bishop Tim Smith Dee Stewart Tony Williams	Please pray for COVID victims. Please pray for all front line Covid caregivers. Please pray for all those isolated, and those in Assisted Living Homes.
 September Tabulators Kyle & Melanie Sigmon		September Altar Guild Hilka Cox, Elaine Simmons & Jan Carpenter	
			
<p>“Forgiveness does not change the past, but it does enlarge the future.”</p> <p>2 Paul Boese 7</p>			

Keep on Forgiving

Matthew 18:21-35

A P T Z U H W J E S N N M H H

A W U K G T K E S X G X Q D X

H T K G T W U S M A N Y I D B

E K A J I B F U B C G E U K G

A F S T I M E S U K O O C U W

M W K W N B O T G P E T E R A

O P E R G R E L P W W O X H T

F A D X B R O T H E R G H X E

K O N A F X S D C R Z L Q W Y

X E R S V Q J L E I L O Z R Q

E Z B G W Q D Q D V O R K P H

E N Z Y I E J P Z L M D J I O

S W U Q H V R S E V E N A C W

W L B Q L L E E I I F W C A C

H U S I N S K T D C F X M T C

PETER	ANSWERED	MANY	JESUS
SINS	FORGIVE	HOW	LORD
ASKED	TIMES	BROTHER	SEVEN

FORGIVE
ONE
ANOTHER!

Children’s Ministry Page

Each number represents a letter of the alphabet. Substitute the correct letter for the numbers to reveal the coded words

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
W	B	U	M	Y	J	E	L	F	P	S	G	V	K	C	D	Q	T	X	I	N	O	R	A	H	Z

1. 11-20-21 _____
2. 9-22-23-12-20-13-7 _____
3. 24-11-14 _____
4. 24-21-11-1-7-23 _____
5. 10-7-18-7-23 _____
6. 2-23-22-18-25-7-23 _____
7. 11-7-13-7-21 _____
8. 6-7-11-3-11 _____

FORGIVE BROTHER	SIN ASK	JESUS ANSWER	SEVEN PETER
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Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?" Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times. Matthew 18:20-22



Thank you for the work you all did with me and the consultant to listen to the Spirit, lead our congregation in asset mapping and two question and discussion opportunities, and the times as a team we met together to wonder and listen to each other’s reflections and for God’s voice.

Thank you also to everyone who has served on the Congregation council including our presidents, David and Terry, and all those who served on ministry teams over the past 3 years. You partnered with me and disciples of this congregation in the work of ministry, and I truly appreciate the work you did and continue to do.

Thank you to all those who have volunteered and worked in the church office and in worship leadership with me since my arrival: Mary, Paula, Debbie, Deanna, Wendy, Nicky, Emily, Steven, our technology team, our Praise team and choir, our newsletter volunteers, our tabulators, and many others who came to answer the phone and do odd jobs that needed attention. Thank you to our custodians for caring for our building: Larry, Keegan, and Nikki.

During my time with you, the people of St. Mark’s, since February of 2020 to now, I have had the honor and privilege of walking along side of you all in many different aspects of your lives. You have invited me to share your joys and your sorrows from baptisms, confirmations, weddings, graduations, funerals, and other events. We have laughed together, cried together, hugged one another, mourned, danced, celebrated, and shared ourselves with each other. Please know that I consider all these moments to be holy and sacred.

We have tried new things, some of which have been successful and some of which we can say at least we tried. We have had new brothers and sisters join our faith community, and we have also said goodbye to others through their moving away, death, or transfer to another community.

Through it all, I know you all have tried to remain faithful to the call of God as have I. Making the decision to step away from my call here at St. Mark’s has been a very difficult decision for me. But I do feel it is what I need to do for myself and also for the future of St. Mark’s.

Saying good-bye is never easy. But sometimes we are called to do hard things, and for me this is one of those things. I love you all just as much, if not more, than I did when I stood before you in January and thanked you for your vote of confidence in calling me to serve as your Senior Pastor. You entrusted me with this call as Senior Pastor and have supported me in many and various ways.

I know I have not always done things as some would have liked and have probably left things undone that I should not have. Yet as we pray in our confession, “please forgive me for the things I have done and the things I have failed to do, known and unknown.” I understand that there may be people who are not happy with things I have said or done. I have stated in meetings, worship, and to our congregation council that I could only hope that if there was a grievance or something that I needed to know, the people would reach out to me personally so that we could talk about these things and come to a place of reconciliation. All I can say at this point is I tried my best to be honest and follow the words of Micah 6:8, “What does the Lord require of you but to do justice and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God?” As Lutherans we understand that we are all created in God’s image and live in a broken sinful world. We go before God and ask for forgiveness and know God forgives each of us through our confession. I hope you can also forgive me. I hope that if you feel I have not affirmed you or thanked you for what you have done and given to this congregation and to me, that you hear me say now, “Thank you for answering the call and thank you for all you have done.”

There is a prayer that says, “God, you have called your servants to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untrodden, through perils unknown. Give us faith to go out with good courage, not knowing where we go, but only that your hand is leading us and your love supporting us; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen”

I did not know that my time as your Senior Pastor would be for the time it has been. But I do go with the faith and trust that it is what is right. I am sad and so sorry that some people do not like that I have made this decision. I also have learned there are some members who did not like what I wrote in my letter announcing my leave from call. My words were not meant to be hurtful or malice but instead I was sharing how I felt and the thoughts, ³ experiences, and feelings I have and have had. I was being honest and truthful from my perspective. Please know and hear me when I say, I am sorry if my words caused you hurt.

Continued on page 4

Disciples of St. Mark's, thank you again for entrusting me over these last 3 ½ years to share in your lives your joys and sorrows. Thank you to all who have worked so hard to do the work of ministry along side of me. I know that the energy and time you have given took you away from your family and other opportunities as you followed your commitment to be a disciple of Jesus. I appreciate all who answered the call for help in new and different ways. I see you, recognize you, and thank you from the bottom of my heart that you did help me to the best of our combined abilities to try to meet the needs of this congregation.

Thank you for loving me and my family. I will continue to hold each and every one of you in my prayers. I pray you will do the same for me. May we remember that as we go forth it is God who is leading us and supporting us with the unconditional love that only God can give. I hope that when you reflect on our time together you will be able to look back upon it with joy and fondness, as I will do the same.

May the Peace of Christ be with you,

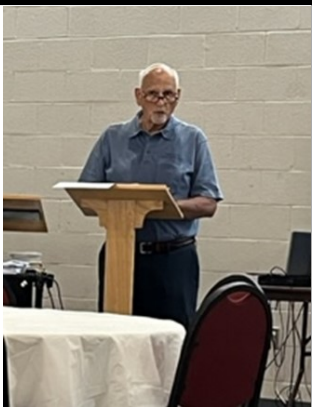
Pastor Heather Langan



Thank you to Mr. Phil Williams for sharing information about the ministry of Highways and Hedges on Sunday, September 10.

If you would like to help support this ministry, monetary donations may be made to St. Mark's for the ministry or donations may be sent directly to 910 3rd Street Place, Conover, NC 28613.

You can also find more information on their Facebook page.



Thursday, September 7th we enjoyed a concert by Shellem Cline. Shellem is a nationally recognized Christian Country/Positive Message artist who has performed on the professional level since 2012



Sunday School Teachers Needed

Assistance is needed in children's Sunday School.

You would only teach 3 - 4 Sundays a year.

Lesson plans are provided.

You choose your Sundays.

No teaching experience needed.

Contact Wendy Hefner for availability in the Fall Session.



'One' derful Wednesdays Beginning September 13th



5:15-6:00 PM Dinner
6:00 - 6:30 PM Adult Bible Study
6:30 - 7:30 PM Choir Practice
6:00 - 6:45 PM Children's Activity
Other Faith-Growth opportunities may be offered as interest is shown.

ECCCM Hunger Walk
Sunday, October 15th
2:00 PM - 4:00 PM
Newton, NC

The purpose of the walk is to raise funds for the hunger relief efforts in Eastern Catawba County, and to heighten awareness of the hunger issues within our community.



Join together with others in St Mark's Family as we

Walk A Few Miles So Others Can Eat!

**PACK THE PEWS
AND
PICNIC SUNDAY**



**Altar Flower Dates
Available**



November 5th & 19th

December 3rd, 10th, 17th, 24th and 31st.

Altar flowers are \$54.00, please let the office know if you would like to reserve one of these available dates.

Congratulations!

Nathan Sherrill received his Masters Degree in Marketing from Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore Maryland on August 3, 2023.



Pictured with Nathan is his wife Emily and son Mason. He is currently employed with Billy Graham Association in their communications group handling graphic design and print media.

Nathan is the son of Dale and Sandy Sherrill.

★ City of Claremont & St. Mark's Lutheran Church Presents ★

Summer Concert Series

FREE ADMISSION
CITY HALL PAVILION
SAT SEPT 16TH
HIGH ROAD
6:00PM-8:00PM

★  **FOOD TRUCKS**  ★
DIG-N-DOGS SUGAR COATED
5:30PM **CLAREMONT**

Help WANTED

Volunteers needed to help fold and label Newsletter's.

2nd & 4th Wednesday's of each month, 30-45 minutes. Please let the office know if you are willing and available to help with this.