



The Messenger

May 2020

St. Mark's Lutheran Church



"Turn to me and be gracious to me, for I am lonely and afflicted." (Psalm 25:16)

Dear friends in Christ,

Grace and peace to you from God our Father, and our Lord, Jesus Christ.

According to a 2018 survey of more than 20,000 U.S. adults, nearly half (46 percent) report experiencing times of loneliness. Surprisingly, the survey found that young adults (ages 18-22) were the most vulnerable and that heavy use of social media did not noticeably lessen the extent of loneliness. Now, in this time of social distancing, loneliness is an even greater health and well-being concern.

The Bible has many examples of loneliness other than David's lament seen above. Many of God's prophets were estranged from their communities as they answered God's call. Even Jesus, betrayed, abandoned, and dying on the cross, cries out, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" I find it reassuring to know that we have a God who not only knows our weaknesses but has experienced our temptations and troubles.

If you are experiencing loneliness, the first practical step is to realize you are not alone. Whether it is classmates, family members, or people in your community, others have experienced loneliness and know what you are going through. One of the suggestions that professionals give in combating loneliness is simply to take care of your physical self by eating healthy, exercising, and getting enough sleep. Another is to build a support network of family and friends. Unfortunately, for many of us, a huge part of our support group was our weekly time of worship and fellowship. Still, we might ask ourselves not only where can I find support but who might I reach out to that needs my word of encouragement? Often it is in the act of giving that we receive.

Finally, the one suggestion that intrigued me the most, especially during this time of social distancing, came from a website called lifeandhealth.org. They noted that being alone does not equal loneliness and often we may just need to change our perspective. Jesus often found it necessary to get away from the crowd to spend time with God and gain a new perspective. Time alone is also a useful time to sharpen a talent or learn a new skill.

Many pastors, including myself, are having to learn the new skills for ministering and ministry, like creating an online worship experience. For you, this may be the perfect time to take up crafting, learn a musical instrument, or learn to make bread from scratch. You might rediscover the wonders of nature as you take time to watch a bird build a nest, watch the sandhill cranes do their mating dance, or listen to the spring peepers. Maybe you will find the time to view a spectacular sunset or watch as a full moon breaks over the horizon. Perhaps you will discover a new book, reread a beloved book, or have a long phone conversation with a friend.

And last, but certainly not least, perhaps you will find time to read a word of scripture and sit and reflect in **the quiet stillness of God's presence, knowing that God who watches over the sparrow, will certainly watch over you** (Matt. 10:29-31).

God bless you on your journey,
Pastor Bob

Mission of the Month Spotlight



Mark “Missions” on your giving envelope and mail them to St. Mark’s at 140 S. Green Bay Rd to donate to our Bible Campers.

Bible Campers

Crossways Camping Ministries has three camps in Wisconsin: Pine Lake in Waupaca, Imago Dei Village in Clintonville, and Way Post in Hatley. Our youth from St. Mark’s usually attend Pine Lake in Waupaca. They are able to attend any one of the three. Crossways Mission Statement is: *Bringing People together in Christ so lives are changed and Communities enhanced.*

I got a chance to ask some of the kids what they do at camp and it is a good thing I can write fast because they were full of answers. When they first get there, each cabin performs a skit to introduce themselves to the rest of their cabin. There are camp fire sing-alongs, arts and crafts, camp games such as kickball, Capture the Flag, Hunger Games, Nine Squares in the Air, and Gaga ball.

After breakfast each day they attend church in the chapel and go swimming. They have a raft the kids can swim out to as long as they passed a swimming test. Each cabin during the week gets to set up, serve and clean up for one of the meals. They get to make homemade pretzels as well. The youth cooks hotdogs over a campfire and make s’mores. They have a canteen where there are snacks, clothing items, water bottles, etc. to purchase. They have daily Bible studies and learn how much God is a part of their everyday lives.

The older youth have a one-night camp sleepout. They do a service project in the Waupaca area, go on nature walks, go biking, and participate in archery, basketball and canoeing. Last year they built a 10-foot-high wood cross that was placed to the right of Evergreen Cabin.

On their last day, parents are able to join their youth for lunch and watch the closing ceremony in the chapel. During the ceremony, each cabin puts on a skit, sings a song, and reads a poem of their choice.

Some of our youth are hesitant about going to camp at first, but by the end of the week they don't want to leave! Many develop lasting friendships over their time there. It is so nice to see these kids come home so pumped and feeling more comfortable talking about their awesome God and singing songs they learned while there.

Our youth have been very fortunate to benefit from St. Mark’s fundraising efforts through pizza sales, Vande Walle’s candy bars, our annual basket raffle and Easter breakfast, to name a few. Due to the funds our faith members have provided through these fundraising opportunities/events, our Bible campers have been able to attend camp for free. We do ask the youth to help out at these fundraisers. We want every youth to be able to attend camp that would like to. There has been a couple of times that we needed to ask the Endowment Fund Committee to help us out. We are very grateful they were able to.

Crossways offers other programs as well. They have a Confirmation Camp that has a whole new set of fun activities and adventures geared specially for youth. Crossways Camp is not only for our youth. Several different types of retreats are offered, including family week, couples weekend, grandparents camping, a program for Autistic campers, and women's weekends, just to name a few. Come check out all that Crossways has to offer.

Thank you, to the caring, giving, supportive church family we have at St. Marks. God bless and stay safe during this time.

~ Donna Joachim

Greetings St. Mark's Friends,

I hope each of you are doing well and managing this *different life we've been thrust into*. I also hope that you've continued to find ways to stay connected with your St. Mark's family and friends, be it through Facebook/YouTube worship services, the phone ministry or by sending notes through the mail. A huge thank you to those willing to assist with our online worship services. A special thank you to Pastor Bob and Laurie Wilkinson, for all their time/talents working toward this endeavor.



At the April 17th Church Council meeting, it was decided to keep the church closed **down until further notice**. We're going to continue to monitor the government's and synod's recommendations. Pastor Bob has been attending numerous online meetings with the synod and his colleagues, where conversations have begun on what the opening back up could look like. When the time comes, we will proceed and open, but with caution. Information on that process will be posted on the website, Facebook, through email, and regular mail.

As I write this note today, Tuesday, April 21, I am grateful for the brisk, yet blue skies, days to walk my dog, Yukon; for the apple bread John baked, for the ability to connect with my Mom and Dad via a phone call, for the lemon scented candle I have burning, **and the comfy chair I'm sitting on**.

Gratitude is a positive emotional state in which one recognizes and appreciates what one has received in life. Research shows that taking time to experience gratitude can make you happier and even healthier. What are you grateful for today?

Each night, I challenge you to write down five things for which you are grateful. They can be little things or big things. But you really have to focus on them and actually write them down. You can just write a word or a short phrase, but as you write these **things down, take a moment to be mindful of the things you're writing about (e.g: imagine the person or thing you're writing about, pray for that person or thing, etc.)**. I hope this little exercise helps with keeping you happy and healthy.

PEACE,
Laurie Olson, *Council President*



Facebook Video Services



- www.facebook.com/stmarksneenah
 - Every Sunday at 10:00 A.M.
 - **Every Wednesday at 11:00 A.M. "Kids Message"**
 - Every Tuesday/Thursday 10:00 A.M. Devotional
- **DVD's are available** if you do not have Internet in your home. Please call the church office at 920-725-2828 to request copies.



MOSES MESSAGE

A Sunday School Update

Hi everyone! 'Hope everyone is staying safe and healthy during this different time in our lives. We are all experiencing something different in our lives and we need to remember that God is with us all the time. 'Hope all of you had a good Easter and remember what a special day it was. Keep your faith strong during this time. Take care and God Bless all of you. ~ Gwen Hoehne, Superintendent



Food Pantry Update ~ Karen Jordan

St. Marks Food Pantry is still open, but we have changed the way we operate. No one gets out of their car. When the people drive up we give them a number and someone tells them what meat we have available and asks if they have any preferences. Then we ask what they might need and we can try to fill their order. The order is brought to the food pantry room and we have a couple of people fill bags with their requests. Their order is then delivered to them and put into the back of their car. Mostly it looks like we're not open, because the cars line up and when their order is filled, they drive away, with few cars in



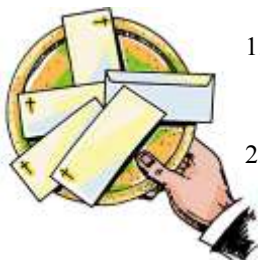
the parking lot. We have heard that some people don't think we are open because we don't have many cars visible. Tell you friends that we are open every Wednesday from 9:00 until 11:00 A.M. In these changing times we are still trying to help. If you would have any donations to help us, please call the office to see if the office is open. As always, we thank you for all your generosity.



Social Ministry Committee ~ Karen Jordan

This year we will not be able to recognize those graduating from high school, college or other types of higher education the way we did in past years. However, we still want to recognize all their hard work and accomplishments, so please call the church office at 725-2828 to let us know if someone in your family is graduating or completing a program so we can get in touch with them to honor them.

HELP NEEDED! We are in looking for interim Assisting Ministers and/or Readers for our online services during this time. Readers and Assisting Ministers need to record themselves reading the prayers or readings and send them to the church to be integrated into our online worship services. For more information, talk to Pastor Bob or call the church office at 725-2828.



1. Mail in your giving envelopes to St. Mark's: 140 S. Green Bay Rd. Neenah, WI 54956.
2. Electronic **Simply Giving/Vanco** forms on our website or in church office. Call the office at 920-725-2828 to have this form mailed to you if you prefer not to leave your house.

ST. MARK'S CHURCH COUNCIL MINUTES
March 19th, 2020

Meeting was called to order at 6:30 P. M. by President Laurie Olson.

Roll Call:

Members Present: Mary Jane Hartley, Judy Hellman Donna Joachim, Pennie Linna, Laurie Olson, Nancy Rose, Phyllis Ziemke and Pastor Bob

Members Excused: Eric Blank, Bruce Grundman, Sharyn Gawlick and Jeff Tharp

Members Unexcused: None

Guest: Joe Deckers, Rich Sczerzen

Devotions: Phyllis Ziemke led us in devotions.

The April Calendar **was not** passed around for any changes/additions.

Approval of Minutes for the February 20th, 2020 meeting. **MSC by Judy Hellman/Nancy Rose.**

Approval of Minutes for the special council meeting. MSC by Phyllis Ziemke/Judy Hellman.

Thank You Cards – There were no special Thank You's sent out this month.

At this time we let our two guests, Joe Deckers and Rich Sczerzen, address the council. KC has most graciously offered us enough carpet squares to redo our Fellowship Hall. Joe has received a bid for \$3,500 to \$4,000 to dispose of the old carpet, fill and smooth out any cracks, remove any old glue and install the squares. Due to the COVID-19 Virus they have had cancellations and are able to move our project up. Due to our church being closed because to the COVID-19 Pandemic, this would be a good time for them to be able to do the carpeting with the least amount of disturbing any other normally planned events. They are expecting to have it all done in 2 to 3 days.
MSC by Pastor Bob/Phyllis Ziemke for Property to move ahead on this project.

Financial Report:

1. Current Budget balance is \$30,753.18.
2. Building Improvement is \$5,137.82.
3. February's giving was \$12,567.09 – Spending was \$15,629.06
4. Giving needs to be around \$3,500.00 to \$4,000.00 per Sunday to meet spending.

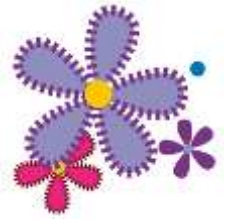
MSC by Nancy Rose/Judy Hellman.

Pastor's Report

1. Made home visits and hospital visits as needed. (Visits have been suspended due to the COVID-19.)
2. Continue to meet monthly with St. Mark's committees as needed
3. Laurie Olson and I attended a meeting at Gloria Dei Lutheran Church in Neenah, with pastors and representatives from the four ELCA churches in Neenah.
4. I presided at the Ash Wednesday Worship Service and other Wednesday evening Lenten worship service.
5. I attended a South African visitor planning meeting, held at St. Mark's and hosted by St. Mark's Partnership Committee.
6. I participated in an online Appleton Conference meeting led by Bishop Gerald Mansholt regarding the COVID-19 virus.



7. I have been working with Laurie Olson St. Mark's Council President; Olivia Boice, our office administrator; Rich Sczerzen, our custodian; and others to plan and take action in keeping our building safe during this global pandemic.
8. I met with Pennie Linna and Laurie Olson to plan an online worship experience for our members.
9. I dialed in to an online digital worship seminar offered through the East-Central Synod of WI.
10. Due to the COVID-19 virus the Appleton Conference has been cancelled.



MSC Phyllis Ziemke/Pennie Linna.

Committee Reports:

Christian Education:

1. Armor of God Rotation will start on Sunday, March 8th. Sherri Denney will teach on March 15th and Jenny Case on March 22nd since Gwen will be gone those Sundays.
2. Palm Sunday on April 5th – we will do a cluster event.
3. Easter Eggs- Gwen has purchased bags and some items for the bags. Gwen will purchase the rest of the items for the bags instead of asking the congregation.
4. First Communion – Pennie will teach First Communion again. We have two students: Ariana Hopkins and Hailie Anderson.
5. We discussed a little about Confirmation and how the students are doing.

Connection:

1. Senior Game Day has been scheduled on Ash Wednesday, Wed, Feb. 26th, 2020 from 2 – 5 P.M. A light meal will follow games before the Ash Wednesday Service. A signup sheet will be posted at church and at St. Mark's Apartments. Bingo and Bunko along with some other games will be offered. We will have prizes for the winners.
2. Refreshments include: coffee, lemonade and water, a casserole and baked beans {Jane}, Lasagna {Ellen}, Salad {Mary Jane}, Bread {Sharyn}, Fruit {Judy}, Dessert {Betty and Sandy}.
3. It has been suggested for Fellowship Sundays that if no one is signed up we will supply simple donut holes for that day and use funds from the Fellowship Account. Connections to host Fellowship on March 15th.
4. We will pass the Fellowship sheet around on Sundays to see who will like to host.
5. Our organist, LuAnn Stensburg has indicated she would like to provide music at several Eldercare facilities; Sharyn will make arrangements.
6. A Basket Raffle fundraiser for St. Mark's Campers will be held April 19th. Connections will put their basket together March 23rd.

Endowment: No Report.

Finance/Stewardship:

1. Reviewed the end of the month account balances. February giving was \$12,567.09 and expenses were \$15,629.06. Our spending was over our giving by \$3,061.97. Council reviewed the expenditures and it should be noted that snow removal was higher than originally budgeted for, storm water tax, fire protection tax, water/sewer quarterly payments were paid, and the yearly benevolence to Appleton Conference was contributed.



2. The Keith Niemuth's estate has given another gift of \$16,451.50. The finance committee is recommending:

- * \$3,290.30 {20%} be given to St. Mark's Endowment Fund
- * \$1,600.00 {\$200 to each of the {8} missions listed on the Mission of the Month

Ballot that **did not** get voted in {Fleece Blanket Project, St. Marks Youth Ministry, Fox Valley Lutheran Homes, Iris Place, Lutheran Social Service, ELCA Good Gifts and Haiti}

* \$1,200.00 {\$100 to each of the {12} Mission of the Month Ballot that **did** get picked {Bible Campers, Food Pantry, South African Partnership, Wed. Quilting Group, Christine Ann Center, Community Table, Esther, Homeless Connections, Bunk Beds for Guatemala, ELCA Disaster Response, ELCA World Hunger, and International Children's Fund}

* \$800.00 to the following {4} mission places {Food for the Poor, Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, Bethel, Alaska Mission Trip and Haiti Produce Good Fruits}

* \$9,581.20 remains undesignated. Available for upcoming needs.

More discussion to follow under New Business # 1.

3. We reviewed ways to inform members of ways to continue to give.

Memorial: No Report.

Partnership:

1. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic the South African Mission Trip has been postponed for a year.

Property:

1. Discussed decals on the doors
2. Discussed hall light switching
3. It appeared that the extra heat tape put on the roof worked.
4. Discussed the use of carpet squares in the Fellowship Hall
5. Discussed a disaster plan for the church
6. In the lounge, one of the red sofas will be given to Bruce's son. The other one will be given to one of our food pantry clients, along with a coffee table.

Social Ministry:

1. Pat Thompson will handle the Food Pantry on Wednesday for Karen.
2. We discussed Easter Giving.
3. Sent a Thank You to Judy Olson for her generous donation for the Food Pantry.

Worship and Music:

1. We discussed the Wednesday Lenten Services. Sermon themes are "Broken Hearts," "Broken Vessels," "Broken Trust," "Broken Bread," "Broken Promises," and "Broken Justice." The sermon theme for Ash Wednesday was "Broken Hearts."
2. On Palm Sunday the Sunday School kids will march in with palms.
3. We will order the leafy palms from Lutheran World Relief this year.
4. The Passion according to Matthew will be read in parts, involving several church members.
5. On Easter Morning we plan to have Worship Services at 7:00 A.M. and 10:00 A.M. An Easter breakfast will be provided between the services. The St. Mark's Singers will sing at the 10:00 A.M. service.
6. A Holy Humor Sunday will take place on April 19th.

Youth: No Report.

Committee Reports MSC by Phyllis Ziemke/Judy Hellman.



Unfinished Business:

1. The website – ran into some problems with e-mail. Working on correcting this.
2. Money Market – Closed out account and moved the money over to Thrivent.
3. Council Retreat is on hold until the Fall.
4. The Basket Raffle has been cancelled due to the COVID-19.

New Business:

1. Discussed Keith Niemuth's Estate distribution.

MSC by Nancy Rose/Phyllis Ziemke to approve the recommendations set down by Finance/Stewardship Committee report #2.

2. Discussed changing Olivia's, our Office Administrator's, hours.
MSC by Pastor Bob/Phyllis Ziemke for Olivia's hours to change to Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 8:30 A.M. until noon and to allow the Executive Committee to oversee any overtime hours.

3. In light of the COVID-19 Pandemic the following decisions have been put in place for the paid staff and St. Mark's church:

- * Judy, Delores and LuAnn, our organists, will continue to be paid through the end of April. **MSC by Nancy Rose/Pennie Linna.**

- * Rich, our janitor, will continue to be paid thru the end of April. He will be at church on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursday mornings. He will clean the bathrooms, empty waste baskets in the hallway bathrooms and the Mary Room. He will have general cleaning in the Narthex area. {Wipe down light switches, door handles, etc.} Areas of the church that are being used are restricted during this time. **MSC by Phyllis/Nancy Rose.**

- * All outside groups that meet at St. Mark's other than support groups have been cancelled till further notice.

- * Regular Church and Lenten services for St. Marks have been cancelled through Palm Sunday. **MSC by Phyllis Ziemke/Judy Hellman.**

- * Church office at the present will remain open in the morning on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday.

All of the above decisions will continue to be monitored on a regular basis as we continue to work our way through this health crisis our country is facing.

4. Our church services are up and live on Facebook on Sunday morning at 10:00 A.M. They are a shorter version of a regular service. Lenten Services are on at 6:30 P.M. on Wednesday.

5. A Special Council meeting will be held on Thursday, April 2nd @ 6:30 P.M.—hopefully through the Zoom app. This will give us time to reevaluate the COVID-19 situation and make any changes needed.

MSC by Phyllis Ziemke/Nancy Rose to adjourn at 7:55 P.M.

A special THANK YOU to Laurie Olson and Mary Jane Hartley for all the special cleaning you have done following the groups that have been meeting in the Mary Room.

We closed with the Lord's Prayer. Next meeting is April 2, 2020 at 6:30 P.M.

Submitted by Donna Joachim, Council Secretary



Please keep the following people in your thoughts and prayers this month:

Marilyn MacDonald

Doris & Victor Gilbert

Jane Hartley

Pat Wenzel

Judy Koerner

Tracy Feldman

Leah Hildebrandt



Special Council Meeting

April 2, 2020

Present: Eric Blank, Sharyn Gawlick, Bruce Grundman, Mary Jane Hartley, Judy Hellman, Laurie Olson, Donna Joachim, Pennie Linna, Nancy Rose, Phyllis Ziemke and Pastor Bob.

Excused: Jeff Tharp.

This Special Council Meeting was called to order by President Laurie Olson @ 6:38 P.M.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Governor Evers has put in place an order of social distancing. To comply with these guidelines and keep everyone safe, Eric Blank, Bruce Grundman, Mary Jane Hartley, Laurie Olson, Pennie Linna, Nancy Rose, Donna Joachim, and Pastor Bob met online through the Zoom app. Sharyn Gawlick, Judy Hellman, and Phyllis Ziemke joined us through a phone conference call.

Pastor Bob led us in prayer with a reading from The Sermon on the Mount and the Serenity Prayer.



Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic we needed to make the following decisions for St. Mark's Church:

1. Present church services: Following some discussions **MSC by Phyllis Ziemke/Sharyn Gawlick** for all church services to remain cancelled until further notice. The church service will remain available in a shortened version on Sunday Morning through the website or on Facebook.
2. Building Use: **MSC by Bruce Grundman/Judy Hellman** for the building to remain closed. There will be no outside groups meeting. The Food Pantry will reopen and continue to serve people as long as it can be safely done for everyone involved.
3. Church office will be open during regular hours, but the doors will be locked. A sign will be posted on the door stating the building is closed and that if anyone needs assistance, they should contact the church office at 725-2828.
4. Pastor has been connecting with the Synod and other colleagues on Tuesday and Thursdays through the Zoom App. The Synod is recommending that no funerals be conducted at this time either at the church or at the funeral homes. After some discussion **MSC by Phyllis Ziemke/Judy Hellman** to follow the guidelines set down by the Synod.
5. At one time there was some discussion about offering a drive-up type of Communion, possibly on Easter Morning. Everything is all contained in its own individual wrapped container. After discussing this further it just is not worth the possible risk of spreading this virus more or people dying from it.
6. Pastor and a few others are working on trying to set up where people can call in and be able to listen to the church service Easter Morning. Pennie Linna has offered to burn some DVD's and mail them out to our members.
7. The Fellowship Hall is ready to have the carpet squares be placed down. With the COVID-19 pandemic going on, so many places are closed. We will need to figure some way to get the carpet squares picked up from the KC Warehouse when it can be safely done.

Motion to adjourn by Pennie Linna/Mary Jane Hartley @ 7:27 P.M. We closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Submitted by Donna Joachim, Council Secretary



Giving through the GivePlus Mobile app is an easy and convenient way to donate to St. Mark's. It only takes a moment to set up an account:

1. Download the free GivePlus app from the App Store or Google Play.
2. Find our church by ZIP code {54956} or by searching "St. Mark's".
3. Donate!

Thank you for your generosity!

St. Mark's Lutheran Church, Neenah



St. Mark's Lutheran Church

140 S. Green Bay Road

Neenah, WI 54956



A big thank you to our newsletter editor, Judy Griswold-Fowler for editing and proofreading this month's "Messenger."



Visit Our New Website!

www.stmarksneenah.org

Monthly Newsletter

New! Google Calendar of Events

Worship Assistant Schedule

Church Forms

Pictures

Event Information

Do we have your email address?

Please send an e-mail to office@stmarksneenah.org so we can update our church records.



St. Mark's Office & Leadership Email Addresses

St. Mark's office: office@stmarksneenah.org

Pastor Bob's e-mail is still: pastorbob@stmarksneenah.org

Mary Jane Hartley's e-mail is now: treasurer@stmarksneenah.org