



The Messenger

July 2020

St. Mark's Lutheran Church

"Wait for the LORD; be strong and let your heart take courage; wait for the LORD!" (Psalm 27:14 NRS)

"I am weary with my crying; My throat is dry; My eyes fail while I wait for my God." (Psalm 69:3 NKJ)

Dear friends in Christ,

Did you happen to notice what the two bible verses listed above have in common?

They both have to do with waiting on God.

We wait for many things in life. Some of the things we wait for are trivial. We wait for the toast to pop up and we wait for the popcorn to finish popping in the microwave. Some things we wait for are more significant and potentially life-changing. We wait for a college acceptance letter to arrive; we wait for a baby to be born; or we might be wait for the results of our chest x-ray.

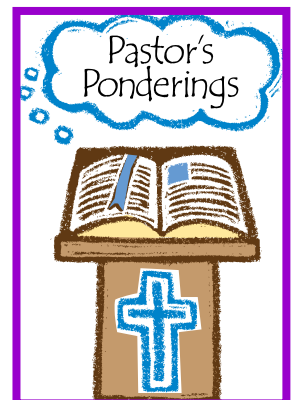
Depending on what we are waiting for, we might wait with dread and fear of the unknown, or we might wait with excitement and with great anticipation.

Waiting is not new or unique to this generation. The bible has many references to waiting, and not everyone was particularly good at the waiting game. One of the things I appreciate about the Psalms is that the psalmist expresses a full range of human emotions. Although the psalmist is confident that ultimately God is good, merciful, and worthy of praise, the psalmist is also honest and willing to express times of **grief, anguish, and doubt, even to the point of asking, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Psalm 22:1^ANRS)**

Now, in this time of the coronavirus, we wait and we wonder when will this be over? We would all like to get back to some sense of normalcy, including gathering for in-person worship. As you may know, **St. Mark's has formed a task force which is charged with determining when we will return to in-person worship and which safety precautions we need to put in place. Until then we will wait.**

Some people have managed to adapt to their new normal much easier than others. Perhaps, because of their circumstances, immediacy of family and friends, the ease of access to necessary provisions, or just their personality, some seem to be taking this crisis in stride. And still others feel so isolated that they cry out with the psalmist in distress, *"I am weary with my crying; My throat is dry; My eyes fail while I wait for my God." (Psalm 69:3 NKJ)*

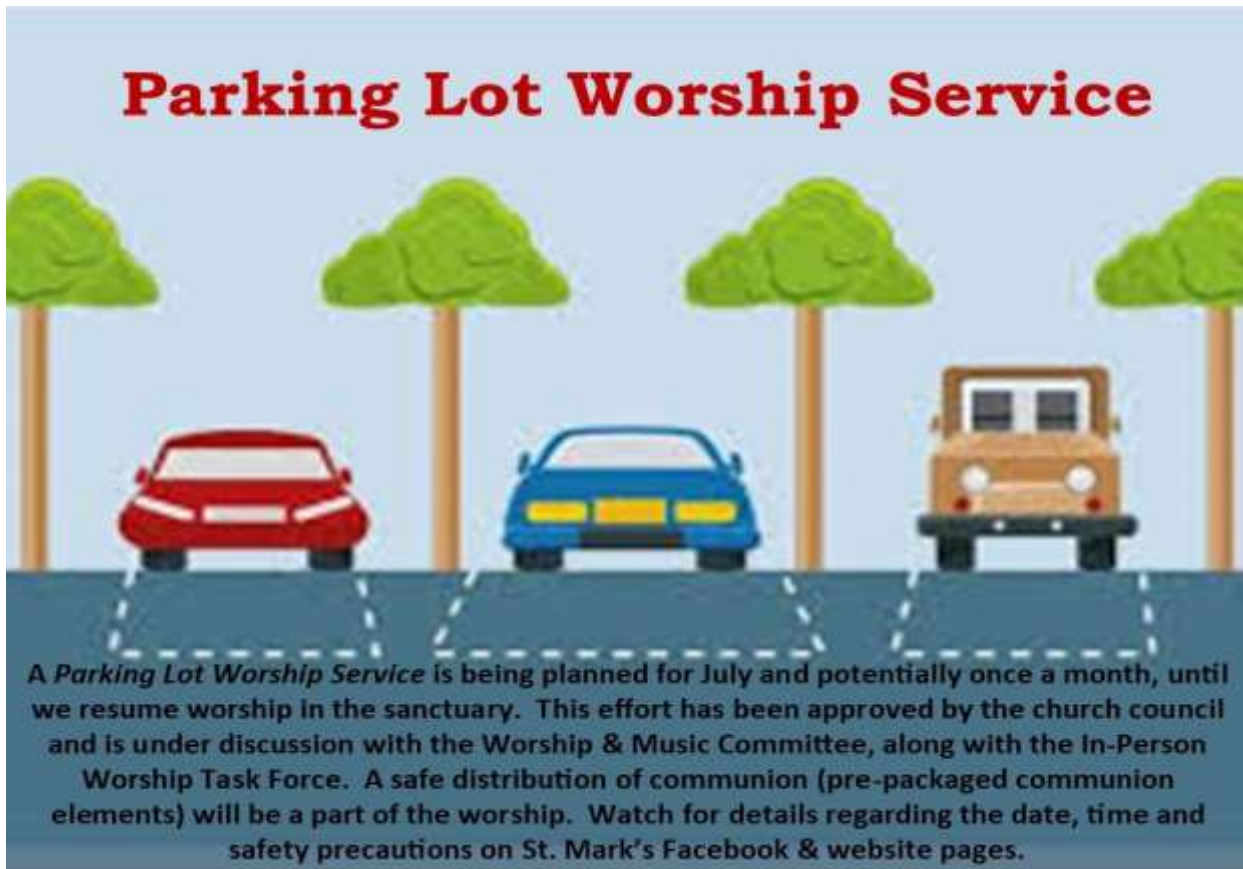
Well, maybe you don't use the words of the psalmist, but still, if you have days when you are frustrated and angry with God, I encourage you to follow the psalmist's example and share your frustrations with God. I believe that more than anything else, God wants an honest relationship with each of us. Just as a loving parent wants an honest relationship with their child, a relationship where a child is comfortable sharing both joys and frustrations, so it is with God. When we follow the psalmist's example and nurture an honest relationship with God, we too will come to know that



ultimately God is good, merciful, and worthy of praise. So, be strong and let your heart take courage as you wait for the LORD!

God's blessings on your journey,

Pastor Bob



Returning to In-Person Worship Task Force

An in-person worship task force has been formed and approved by the church council. The task force has been assigned to take in information from local and state health officials, the East Central Synod of Wisconsin (ECSW) and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). After reviewing and researching the information, the task force will then submit a plan to the council regarding what it will take to return to in-person worship.

The plan will include, but not be limited to, what sanitizing procedures will be put in place by the congregation, a recommendation on how to proceed with worship, and a template as to what criteria will need to be met before in-person worship can occur. The plan will address questions such as:

- How will offering be conducted?
- Who will ensure the congregational members are wearing masks?
- How will communion be handled?
- What environmental parameters must be accomplished before returning to worship?
(Example – Badger bounce back phase 3, decrease in local positive cases, etc.)

The task force has held an initial meeting and has attended an ECSW webinar with presentations on **health and insurance considerations, along with an ECSW church's plan of action.** The next task force meeting is scheduled for July 2.

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 Esther.



Esther is a grass roots interface social justice organization working in the greater Fox Valley. Numbers consist of many creeds and cultures. Our work begins and ends in an expression of the value and personal faith of our members. We are an organization that works to bring about systemic change. We do not endorse candidates or parties. Help support our work, especially at this time. Read more about us at <http://esther-foxvalley.org>. I'm proud to represent St. Mark's as a board member. Esther meets on the first Monday of the month and are currently meeting via Zoom. For more information, talk to me. You'll be amazed by what we do!

~ Sharyn Gawlick

Visit the East-Central Wisconsin Synod's Website at: <https://ecsw.org/> and Facebook page:

www.facebook.com/East-Central-Synod-of-Wisconsin-ELCA-139767989400097/



MOSES MESSAGE

A Sunday School Update

Hi everyone! I hope you are enjoying your summer so far. I know it is a little different than what you are used to. I hope some of you were able to do the WOW Vacation Bible School online. It sounded like it would have been a lot of fun. Everyone enjoy your summer and stay safe.



JULY STUDENT BIRTHDAYS

Braydin Messing 7/2

Mason Biese 7/4

Happy Birthday to All!!!

With God's Blessings,
Gwen Hoehne, Sunday School Superintendent



TCoL
Thompson Center on Lourdes

Walking Club

Wednesdays
9:00 AM - 10:00 AM



July Schedule:

7/8
7/15
7/22

August Schedule:

8/5
8/12
8/19

LET'S MEET HERE: THOMPSON CENTER ENTRANCE

2331 E. Lourdes Dr., Appleton, WI 54915



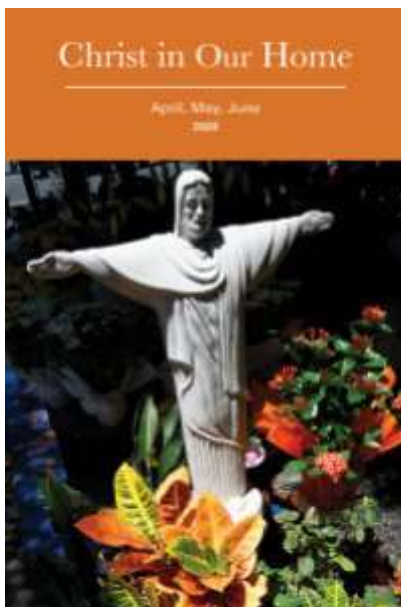
Register Today!

Online: <https://thetcol.org/calendar/>

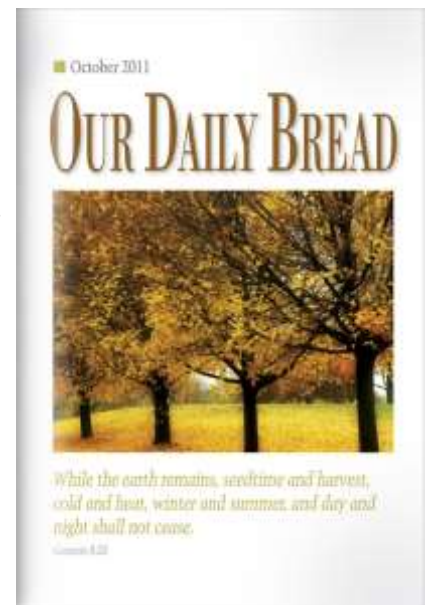
Phone: (920) 939-3088 *

- Meetings dependent upon weather
- Social Distancing will be observed
- Pre-registration is required

*If leaving a voicemail please include: Class Name, Class Date, Your Name & Phone number



Pick up your free copies of "Christ in Our Home" and "Our Daily Bread" devotionals, available in the Narthex at St. Mark's. (Psssst! - Don't forget to call the office before you come so we are there to let you in!)



Facebook Video Services



- www.facebook.com/stmarksneenah
 - Every Sunday at 10:00 A.M.
 - 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.



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 GIVING OPTIONS:

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.
3. Download the free GivePlus App from the App Store or Google Play. Find our church by zip code (54956) or by searching "St. Mark's."

God bless you and thank you for your faithful and generous support during these unprecedented times.

ST. MARK'S CHURCH COUNCIL MINUTES
May 21, 2020



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

Roll Call:

Members Present: Sharyn Gawlick, Bruce Grundman, Mary Jane Hartley, Judy Hellman Donna Joachim, Pennie Linna, Laurie Olson, Nancy Rose and Pastor Bob

Members Excused: Eric Blank, Phyllis Ziemke and Jeff Tharp.

Members Unexcused: None

Guest: Rich Sczerzen

In keeping with the COVID-19 social distancing guidelines, Sharyn Gawlick, Bruce Grundman, Mary Jane Hartley, Judy Hellman, Donna Joachim, Pennie Linna and Laurie Olson met in person at St. Mark's wearing our face masks and sat six feet apart. Nancy Rose and Pastor Bob joined us online through the Zoom App.

Devotions: Sharyn Gawlick led us in devotions with a reading that Bishop Mansholt released earlier.

Pennie Linna volunteered for devotions next month.

The June Calendar was not passed around for any changes/additions due to the building being closed.

Approval of Minutes for the April 16th, 2020 meeting. MSC by Judy Hellman/Pennie Linna.

Thank You Cards – A special Thank You to Pastor Bob and Laurie and everyone else that has been working so hard to keep posting our church service up on Facebook, DVD's, etc. Anyone wishing a DVD should contact the church office and one will be mailed.

Financial Report:

1. Current Budget balance is \$33,519.99.
2. Building Improvement is \$4,651.82.
3. April's giving was \$16,874.16 – Spending was \$14,572.59.
4. Giving needs to be around \$3,500.00 to \$4,000.00 per Sunday to meet spending.

MSC by Judy Hellman/Judy Hellman.

Pastor's Report

1. All home and hospital visits have been suspended due to the COVID-19.
2. I continued to post Tuesday and Thursday morning devotions and a Wednesday children's message on St. Mark's Facebook page.
3. I continue to work with my wife, Laurie, in assembling worship videos to upload to St. Mark's Facebook page and record onto DVD's.
4. Attended several Synod meetings, regarding best worship practices during the pandemic.
5. I participated in an online website training conversation with Mike McGraw from Packerland Websites, along with Laurie Olson and Olivia, our administrator.
6. I held two Wednesday evening confirmation classes.
7. I met with Keith Passmore and Tanya Schultz in preparation for their wedding on Saturday, May 30th.



8. I am attending the Festival of Homiletics online to fulfill continuing education requirements. The Festival of Homiletics is a weeklong conference that brings together a variety of preachers and professors of **preaching to share their insights to inspire preachers of God's word.**

MSC Mary Jane Hartley/Bruce Grundman.

Committee Reports:

Christian Education: No Meeting.

Connection: No Meeting.

Endowment: No Meeting.

Finance/Stewardship:

1. April current giving was \$16,874.16. Spending was \$14,572.59, under by \$2,301.57.

2. Finance Committee discussed having received the Paycheck Protection Program. The loan amount is \$15,815.00. This loan will be used in accordance **to the guidelines to cover Olivia's and Pastor Bob's salary** for the next eight weeks. Any leftover amount will be applied toward the utility bills. The church will need to submit utility bills with proof of payments, and proof of payments to the employees.

3. Finance committee is recommending to the church council to continue to pay our contracted employees {Janitor and Musicians} until the end of June. The employees continue to provide services at a lessor rate than when hired but in direct correlation to the COVID guidelines.

4. The Finance Committee was informed of a program through Vanco that allows us to add an online giving option to our website. As part of our partnership with them, we can add this to our website free of charge. They also have a mobile app that is called Give Plus to give members of our congregation to ways to continue to support the church while not able to attend in person.

5. Finance continues to recognize the generous giving of our members that allow us to continue to do our ministry even through our physical doors are closed.

6. Briefly discussed the current recommendations of the ELCA leadership to open slowly following the Public health recommendations.

Memorial: No Meeting.

Partnership: No Meeting.

Property:

1. Dumpster schedule will remain as it.

2. Discussed keys for the outdoor garage; everyone now has a key.

3. Garage roof to be replaced on Saturday, May 16th with brown shingles. {This has been postponed.}

4. Boilers - idle until the end of May.

5. Carpet will cost \$327. The cove needs to be reordered and replaced. { The carpet is all done.}

6. Mud jack sidewalks {Bruce is looking into taking care of this.}

7. Geraniums will be planted/mulch added by the bell, Friday, May 22nd @ 8:00 A.M.



Jeri Travis

Judy Fowler

Marilyn MacDonald

Doris & Victor Gilbert

Jane Hartley

Pat Wenzel

Judy Koerner

Leah Hildebrandt





Social Ministry: No Meeting.

Worship and Music: No Meeting.

Youth: No Meeting

Committee Reports MSC by Sharyn Gawlick/Bruce Grundman.

Unfinished Business:

1. Council Retreat is on hold until the fall.
2. The Basket Raffle is rescheduled for November.
3. Fellowship Hall Carpet has been replaced and is all done.

New Business:

1. The Synod Assembly has put a request out to area churches looking for several sites to be able to serve as a host for their upcoming Synod Assembly. They are hoping to still be able to have the Assembly and stay within the COVID guidelines of 50 people per site or less. There has been no date set. It could be for 1 - 2 days.

MSC by Bruce Grundman/Judy Hellman to support this request if we are able to meet all their needs. {Equipment, food, etc?}

2. The Kids Filthy Fun Run has been postponed to Aug. 29th. MSC by Bruce Grundman/Pennie Linna to continue to support this project as long as all COVID guidelines can be met.

3. Payroll Protection Plan {PPP} is a program from the government to help cover the cost for small business to keep operating during this pandemic. As a church we are eligible for this. This can be used to pay staff wages, utilities {gas, electric, internet, water}. Interest is 0.5%. This is also a forgivable loan if unable to repay. The first time around the money ran out. The second time we were accepted. We received **\$15,815.00**. **75% of this amount is to go toward Olivia and Pastor Bob's wages. The remaining 25% will go toward utilities.** At the end of the allotted time, documentation/proof of payment will need to be submitted.

4. In light of the COVID-19 Pandemic the following decisions have been put in place for the paid staff and St. Mark's church: **{This will be revisited monthly or sooner if needed.}**

* Judy, Delores and LuAnn, our organists, will continue to be paid through the end of June. MSC by Bruce Grundman/Pennie Linna. {Judy Hellman abstaining.}

* Rich, our janitor will continue to be paid thru the end of June. Rich will have some of the Spring Clean up projects added to his schedule. MSC by Pennie Linna/Bruce Grundman.

* **All outside groups that meet at St. Mark's will remain cancelled until further notice.**

* Regular Church services for St. Marks are available on Facebook Live.

* The church office at the present time will remain open in the morning.

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 facing our country.

5. Vanco is offering an online app for our church members to use as a way to be able to give to the church at no cost to us. They could use as a one time or set up as a regular weekly/monthly amount. MSC by Pennie Linna/Mary Jane Hartley to make this opportunity available.



6. We had an open discussion on opening up the church for worship, outside groups and church activities. The council all felt we would love nothing better than to get back to the way things were before this pandemic occurred. However, we all feel it is too soon to put peoples' lives at risk. We will continue to revisit this discussion each month or sooner, if needed. Until further notice our original decision remains in place.

7. We had a request for a small group to use our parking lot to meet in. They would provide their own lawn chairs and sit the required 6 feet apart and use mask. We do not know what our liability would be for something like this. We will check into this for future reference but at this time we are turning down this request.

MSC by Judy Hellman/Bruce Grundman to adjourn at 8:00 P.M.

Pastor closed with a prayer.

Next meeting is June 18th, 2020 at 6:30 P.M.

Submitted by Donna Joachim



AT THIS VERY
MOMENT, THERE ARE
APPROXIMATELY
125 CHILDREN
PLACED OUTSIDE
OF THEIR HOME IN
WINNEBAGO
COUNTY.



WE NEED
YOUR HELP TO
ENSURE
THERE ARE
ENOUGH FOSTER
HOMES IN OUR
COMMUNITY.

OPEN YOUR **HEART** AND HOME... BECOME
A FOSTER PARENT TODAY!

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL (920) 236-4658.



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