



The Messenger

August 2020

St. Mark's Lutheran Church

A member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

"Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind: ² "Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge? ³ Gird up your loins like a man, I will question you, and you shall declare to me. ⁴ "Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding." (Job 38:1-4)

The book of Job deals with the thorny question of whether God is just, in light of all the suffering in the world.

In the story, Job had lost everything: his material possessions, his home and family, and his own physical well-being. Still, Job refuses to believe he has done anything to deserve such heartbreak, although his friends try to convince him otherwise. Throughout the story, Job concedes that God is the source of every good and every calamity, and although Job claims God as his Redeemer, he begins to question if God is just.

Chapters 38 and 39 of Job, from which the reading above is taken, are some of my favorite verses in the Old Testament. After Job experiences misfortune and suffering, he demands a council with God, and it is in these chapters that God answers Job.

Among other things, God asks Job, "Have you entered into the springs of the sea, or walked in the recesses of the deep?" (Job 38:16) "Have the gates of death been revealed to you, or have you seen the gates of deep darkness?" (Job 38:17) "Can you bind the chains of the Pleiades, or loose the cords of Orion?" (Job 38:31)

Essentially, God shows Job that neither Job, nor anyone else, is in a position to question God's judgement. The world is far too complex, and the depth of God's reasoning is far beyond our power to comprehend.

One night this past week, I took the opportunity to search the night sky for the comet Neowise. Neowise, which was discovered by astronomers on March 27, is the brightest comet to appear in the northern hemisphere in years. With a little instruction from the internet, I had no trouble finding comet with a set of binoculars.

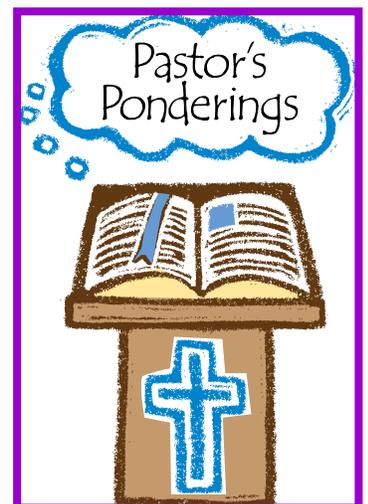
Neowise did not disappoint. Even at 64 million miles away it was quite impressive with its brilliant tail of dust and gases. Still, even more impressive was looking straight up into the heavens and being overwhelmed by the thousands upon thousands of stars and realizing that there are billions more stars that are not visible from our vantage point here on earth.

The truth is, we do have worries and concerns in this lifetime, however, when you begin to question the vastness of God, the sovereignty of God, the understanding of God, or the justice of God, then step outside on a cloudless night and look up into the heavens, and let yourself be overwhelmed by the God who might ask, *where were you when I placed Neowise in the heavens and set it on its path?* It is surprising the different perspective you get when you look heavenward.

By the way, if you missed your opportunity to see Neowise, not to worry, astronomers say it will be back for another appearance in roughly 6,800 years.

God's blessings on your journey,

Pastor Bob



St. Mark's Lutheran Church, Neenah

Parking Lot Worship Service

Sunday, August 9th at 9:00 A.M.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:

You are asked to stay in your vehicle at all times. Church restrooms will NOT be available. (Must be in a vehicle. Setting up of lawn chairs will not be an option.) Pastor and worship assistants will be outside with volume transmitted through your car radio (station number will be posted on a sign when entering the lot & in your bulletin on the morning of the service). Follow directions of the parking lot ushers. A safe distribution of communion and an offertory will be a part of the worship.



Returning to In-Person Worship Task Force: Report from the July 2, 2020 Meeting

- We opened with prayer.
- The task force discussed safety precautions for the scheduled parking lot worship services. Those precautions included spacing of vehicles in the lot, how bulletins and communion would be distributed, the necessity for those attending to remain in their vehicles, and who should wear masks and gloves.
- **We reviewed and discussed items presented on the ECSW's COVID-19 webinar.**
- Task force members were asked to continue to gather ideas from family and friends regarding safety procedures on how churches that have opened for in-person worship are proceeding.
- **Bruce Grundman and Ginny Schieck volunteered to meet and take measurements of St. Mark's sanctuary to determine how many worshipers could safely attend while socially distanced.** They will report their findings at the next meeting.
- We closed with prayer.
- Our next meeting will be scheduled for early August.
- *Submitted by Laurie Olson, St. Mark's Council President*

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 PILLARS/HOMELESS CONNECTIONS.



Pillars was formed on October 1, 2018, when Homeless Connections, Fox Valley Warming Shelter, and Housing Partnership of the Fox Cities finalized the merger of their organizations to provide all their resources under one name.

From homelessness to coming home, Pillars provides shelter, support, and solutions to address the housing need in our community.

Pillars provides over 45,000 nights of shelter each year to adults & families experiencing homeless, and provides safe, affordable homes for almost 150 households each year. Every individual that stays with Pillars receives customized case management, and group/individual counseling providing individuals with tools and resources, guiding them to financial independence and self-sufficiency.

Pillars utilizes volunteers on a daily basis; whether it be preparing and serving a hot meal, monitoring the front desk, redirecting clients and donors to where they need to be, or providing home restoration to one of the 100+ properties that Pillars owns throughout the Fox Cities. Pillars has over 25,000 volunteer hours each year, and we cannot wait to have you join the volunteer corps!

From homelessness to coming home, Pillars provides shelter, support, and solutions to address the housing need in our community. Information above was taken: <https://pillarsinc.org/>.

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/





COTTAGES AT PINE LAKE CAMP



We're so excited to be offering Scotch Pine and Len's Place as household cottage rentals at Crossways Pine Lake Camp!

With extensive cleaning protocols to take precautions for guest safety, we're happy to be able to rent these recently renovated spaces as an option for a family getaway. Both cottage spaces have two bedrooms, a bathroom, living room, and kitchen and are available for \$125/night. While camping, you can enjoy:

- **Walking Trails:** Enjoy our walking trails onsite through our Back 40 property.
- **Campfire Rings:** Several campfire rings are available to gather around or cook over. Firewood is provided.
- **Ball Field:** Throw a frisbee, kick a soccer ball, fly a kite, or cloud watch in our large grassy ball field.
- **Picnic Locations:** Dedicated areas for picnics can be found throughout our site.
- **Family Devotions:** Set aside time to do a 3-part Family Devotion with your time away.
- **Public Access on the Lake:** The lake has public access, across from camp property, for bringing your own boat or watercraft. We can direct you to the public access which is just a short drive from camp. We also have a great local company who will deliver Kayaks, Paddle Boards, and more to the public access on the lake. Visit AdventureOutfittersLLC.com or call (715) 258-0775 to make arrangements.

Local Attractions: Enjoy Hartman Creek State Park, just a 15 minute drive from camp or some family fun at our local Mini Golf locations. We'd be happy to make recommendations for restaurants, coffee shops and ice cream. Each business is still modifying their procedures, so we recommend checking closer to the date of your visit to find out current offerings.



MOSES MESSAGE



A Sunday School Update

Hi everyone!! Summer is here and hopefully everyone is having a good summer. It is sure going fast and before we know it, school will be starting again, so enjoy your August. We don't know what is going on for church, but we will keep you informed as to what Sunday School will be this fall. Take care and God Bless everyone. Stay Safe and healthy!!

With God's Blessings,

Gwen Hoehne,

Sunday School Superintendent





Food Pantry Update ~ Karen Jordan

St. Mark's Food Pantry has been doing very well. We have had a wonderful crew working to help our neighbors and friends get their supplies. We are "social distancing" and wearing masks. We have a few who come weekly, some once a month and we have a few new families most weeks. We've been having about 15 families gathering provisions for 40 to 45 people. During the second quarter of 2020 we provided food for 406 people, trying to help them stretch their food budgets. We always need paper products, juice, pasta meals, spam, tuna, mac and cheese and soaps---bath, dish and laundry. Thank you very much for all your wonderful donations. It is much-appreciated.



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.

Office Administrator's Update



It is with a full heart that I type this bittersweet “farewell” to all of my family here at St. Mark’s. From day one, I have truly felt that the Lord brought me to this church for these blessed two years of employment. It has been an honor and a privilege working here, and though I am sad to say “good-bye,” I leave with warm and fond memories of my time here at St. Mark’s. Though my life has moved me forward to another administrative position in Winneconne, I am thankful for my time here and the privilege of using my gifts to serve this wonderful parish and community here in Neenah.

It is clear that our faithful Father has, once again, provided a wonderful new administrator in bringing us Jean Memken, who will introduce herself below. I am very confident that I am leaving St. Mark’s office in good hands and know you will all extend her the same warmth and encouragement that you extended me when I started.

My last day in the office will be Friday, August 21st, but I will be attending St. Mark’s parking lot service with my kiddos on Sunday, August 9th in my gray Chevy Impala. So if you’re there and you’d like to wave or honk a “hello” to us, I would love to see you all and send love and warmth from my car to each of you!

Fondly,
Olivia Boice

Welcome to St. Mark’s, Jean Memken!

Hello! My name is Jean Memken and I am the new church administrator here at St. Mark’s. I recently moved to Neenah from Maryville, Missouri, along with my husband, Michael Rogers, who has taken a position as a professor of Computer Science at the University of Wisconsin - Oshkosh.

For most of my career, I have been a professor of housing and environmental design, teaching at the University of Nebraska, Illinois State University and Northwest Missouri State University. However, seven years ago, I became the office manager at my church, Hope Lutheran, in Maryville. I thoroughly enjoyed working for our Lord and the congregation at Hope. When my husband accepted the position in Oshkosh, I prayed that God would lead me to where He would have me serve Him here in Wisconsin. I was excited to see the job opening at St Mark’s, and I am now thrilled to be a part of your ministry here.

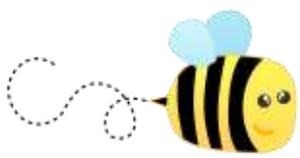
Michael and I have three children. Our oldest, Benjamin, is a professor of political science at Norfolk State University in Virginia. His wife, Yeonjoo, recently finished her Ph.D in political science and is now job searching. Our daughter Sarah is a chef apprentice in Kansas City and is currently employed in the kitchen at an assisted living complex. Our youngest, Jonathan, is a graduate student and teaching assistant in computer engineering at the University of Kansas.

In my spare time, I enjoy sewing, knitting, reading, gardening and traveling. I am fond of art, especially folk art, and I’m eager to explore Wisconsin to see what art treasures I might find.

Thank you for this opportunity to serve at St. Mark’s. I look forward to meeting you via phone, e-mail and social media now, and in person (without masks!) when we can gather again for worship.

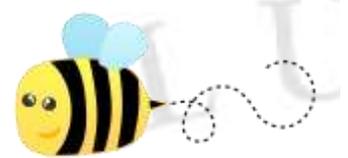
~ Jean Memken





ST. MARK'S CHURCH COUNCIL MINUTES

June 18, 2020



Meeting was called to order at 6:33 P. M. by President Laurie Olson.

Roll Call:

Members Present: Sharyn Gawlick, Mary Jane Hartley, Judy Hellman Donna Joachim, Pennie Linna, Laurie Olson, Jeff Tharp, Phyllis Ziemke and Pastor Bob.

Members Excused: Eric Blank, Bruce Grundman and Nancy Rose

Members Unexcused: None

Guest: None

In keeping with the COVID-19 social distancing guidelines Sharyn Gawlick, Judy Hellman, Donna Joachim, Pennie Linna, Laurie Olson, Jeff Tharp, Phyllis Ziemke and Pastor Bob met in person at St. Mark's wearing our face masks and sat 6 feet apart. Mary Jane Hartley joined us online through the Zoom App.

Devotions: Pennie Linna led us in devotions with a reading. Phyllis Ziemke volunteered for devotions next month.

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

Approval of Minutes for the May 21st, 2020 meeting. MSC by Jeff Tharp/Phyllis Ziemke with the following correction: In the May 21 minutes, under the Financial Report MSC was by Nancy Rose/Judy Hellman.

Thank You Cards - A Special Thank You sent to KC and all who helped make it possible for the carpet in the Fellowship Hall to be replaced. Thank you to our St. Mark's busy little beavers that replaced the mulch around the trees, planted the flowers around the church and cleaned up the courtyard.

Financial Report:

1. Current Budget balance is \$36,786.82
2. Building Improvement is \$3,210.25
3. **May's giving was \$14,263.20** - Spending was \$11,390.63
4. Giving needs to be around \$3,500.00 to \$4,000.00 per Sunday to meet spending.

MSC by Jeff Tharp/Phyllis Ziemke.

Pastor's Report

1. All home and hospital visits still continue to be suspended due to the COVID-19.
2. I continued to post Tuesday and Thursday morning devotions on St. Mark's Facebook page. The Wednesday Kids Time has been discontinued for the summer months.
3. I continue to work with my wife, Laurie, and others from St. Mark's in recording a Sunday worship service to upload to St. Mark's Facebook page and record onto DVDs.
4. I participated in several Zoom Meetings with the Synod Office and pastoral colleagues regarding best practices during the coronavirus.
5. I taught one final online make-up lesson for the 2019-2020 confirmation year.

OUR CHURCH'S
FINANCIAL HEALTH
Through
JUNE 2019
Given: \$16,082.11
Spent: \$14,628.91

6. I presided at the wedding of Keith Passmore and Tanya Schultz. This was a small outside event in Neenah on Saturday, May 30th.

7. **I presided at the funeral service of Gloria Mitchell. This was held at St. Mark's Church on June 2nd with approximately ten people in attendance.**

8. **I participated in a meeting with a newly formed St. Mark's Task Force regarding creating a plan for reopening St. Mark's for in-person service.**

9. I participated in an Appleton Conference Zoom meeting.

10. **I am participating in a book study with the youth and family ministers from St. Paul's and Our Savior's churches in Neenah. The book is "The End of Youth Ministry" by Andrew Root.**

11. I participated in the ECSW Task Force for re-opening webinar.

12. Pastor on vacation June 22 – 28. Katy Tomlanovich will be presiding during the online worship service on Sunday, June 28th.

MSC Jeff Tharp/Judy Hellman

Committee Reports:

Christian Education: No Meeting.

Connection: No Meeting.

Endowment: No Meeting.

Finance/Stewardship: No Meeting.

Memorial: No Meeting.

Partnership: No Meeting.

Property: No Meeting

Social Ministry: No Meeting.

Worship and Music: No Meeting.

Youth: No Meeting

Committee Reports {No Motion Needed}

Unfinished Business:

1. Council Retreat is on hold until the fall.

2. The basket raffle is rescheduled for November.

3. We have not heard back from the Synod in regards to their request for building use for upcoming Synod Assembly.

New Business:

1. The Synod has made a recommendation to area churches to put in place an In-Person Task Force Group that will work on what the needs of the Church and Congregation will need to be to safely reopen our doors. The following people have been asked to be part of this group: Laurie Olson, Pennie Linna, Jason Blank, Gwen Hoehne, Donna Joachim, Ginny Schieck, Bruce Grundman, Dawn Jones, **Laurie Wilkinson and Pastor Bob. This group will be called "St. Mark's Task Force."**



Jane Hartley

Doris & Victor Gilbert

Pat Wenzel

Judy Koerner

Tracy Feldman

Judy Fowler

Rich Sczerzen

MSC by Jeff Tharp/Pennie Linna that Council does endorse this group and support its needs in the upcoming weeks/months.

2. 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 July. MSC by Pastor/Jeff Tharp. {Judy Hellman Abstaining.} In July we will look at the possibility of using some pre-recorded music/songs for some of the Sundays.

* Rich, our janitor has been referred back to the Property Committee for them to **evaluate what St. Mark's needs are at this time. They will come up with a recommendation** as to what he will be responsible for doing at the church, days and length of time he will need to be there. MSC by Phyllis Ziemke/Pennie Linna.

* **All outside groups that meet at St. Mark's remain cancelled till further notice.** {Will re-examine this when we move into Phase 2 of re-opening Guidelines.}

* **Online Sunday worship services for St. Mark's 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.

3. **Office Administrative Position: Olivia has put in her notice that she will be leaving St. Mark's effective the end of August. We need to examine what St. Mark's needs for this position are going to be now and in the future.**

4. We discussed the possibility of having a parking lot church service. We looked into what we would all need to do to make this happen. We are hoping to be able to have a parking lot service sometime in July. MSC by Jeff Tharp/Pennie Linna.

5. Mary Jane Hartley has asked what our thoughts are on in regards to the upcoming craft fair. She has received some checks for reserving tables for this event. This will be placed on the agenda for our July meeting.

6. Phyllis Ziemke has informed us that in July Community Table is going back to the area churches taking back their regular serving schedule. They are only doing bag lunches to go. Phyllis has asked if a group of four people could use our kitchen long enough to assemble about 60 bags. All COVID guidelines and clean up procedures to be followed. MSC by Pastor/Jeff Tharp to approve this.

MSC by Jeff Tharp/Pennie Linna to adjourn at 7:58 P.M.

Pastor closed with a prayer.

Next meeting is July 16th, 2020 at 6:30 P.M.

Submitted by Donna Joachim



St. Mark's Lutheran Church

140 S. Green Bay Road

Neenah, WI 54956

AUGUST

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



Visit St. Mark's Website

www.stmarksneenah.org



ELCA YOUTH GATHERING UPDATE:



Next summer's ELCA Youth Gathering has been postponed to 2022 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The 2022 ELCA Youth Gathering will be held July 24-28, 2022, in Minneapolis, with the two pre-events, the Multicultural Youth Leadership Event (MYLE) and the tAble, scheduled for July 21-24, 2022.

To learn more about the postponement and the 2022 Gathering, please visit: elca.org/YouthGathering/COVID19.

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