



The Messenger

October 2020

St. Mark's Lutheran Church
A member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

"Then [Jesus] said to them, "Take care! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; for one's life does not consist in the abundance of possessions." (Luke 12:15)

I recently listened to a National Public Radio interview of a woman who had written a book on downsizing. It will come as no surprise to you, that many of us accumulate way too much stuff in a lifetime. In the interview, the woman shared how after her parents had both passed, that she and her brother had the difficult task of **deciding what to do with all their parent's possessions.**

They knew their mother's most prized possession was her set of china, yet neither one of them had room for it, nor wanted it. Although stressful, it was also a relief when they finally made the decision to simply box it up and take it to Goodwill.

It is a popular misconception that the bible says, money is the root of all evil. Although, the bible does give many warnings about storing up an abundance of goods, what the bible actually says is, *"...the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil..."* (1 Timothy 6:10^a)

Money is not a problem when we keep it in the proper perspective. There are many examples in the bible where people are financially blessed by God. However, when we are given much, God expects us to pass on our blessings to others who are less fortunate. We are blessed to be a blessing!

The concept of being blessed to be a blessing to others is demonstrated in the life of Charles "Chuck" Feeney. According to Forbes magazine, Feeney, who is 89, has given away \$8 billion dollars to charities. Charles Feeney, who was the co-founder of airport retailer **Duty Free Shoppers**, says he believes in the idea of **"Giving While Living"**.

You may have never heard of Feeney because he gave away all the money anonymously and wanted it to stay that way. Feeney, who now lives in an apartment in San Francisco with his wife, reportedly kept about \$2 million for their retirement. Feeney, who encourages people of means to follow his philosophy, is quoted as saying, **"My thanks to all who joined us on this journey. And to those wondering about Giving While Living: Try it, you'll like it."**

We may not have billions, or millions, or even thousands of dollars to give to charities, but each of us have been blessed by God in some significant way. Whether it is our time, our talents, or our possessions, we all have something to contribute.

I would encourage you to discover your blessing and share it for God's glory. If you have been blessed financially, consider ways in which you can be a blessing to others, for the world needs more people like Charles Feeney. And finally, take a second look at that old china that you never use, maybe there is someone who could use and appreciate right now?

Thank you everyone for your continued support of myself and the ministry of St. Mark's Lutheran Church. **You truly are a blessing!**

Servants together,
Pastor Bob





In-Person Worship Task Force
Minutes from September 24, 2020 Meeting

Pastor opened the meeting with prayer.

Task force reviewed *Badger Bounce Back* criteria. As of Thursday, September 23, four of the six criteria are not meeting levels which would recommend safely reopening. Documents developed by *Wisconsin Council of Churches* and the *Winnebago County Health Department* were also reviewed. The task force discussed that it might be some time before we are back to in-person worship, due to the increased number of COVID-19 numbers in the state and our area.

Laurie Olson reported that the Church Council approved the recommended funeral and outside group use procedures. It was noted that outside groups have not yet been approved by the Church Council to use the church building. Task force is recommending to the council to set the sanctuary capacity number, for funerals, at 40.

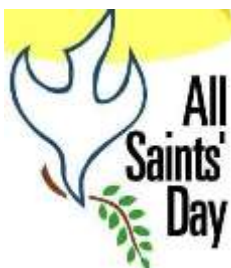
Bruce Grundman reported that the property committee approved the purchase of a sanitizing solution to be used to clean surfaces throughout the church. (The product has been purchased.) He reported that there is a unit that effectively dispenses the product and that he will be gathering information on the price. He will share his findings with the property committee, along with his recommendations.

Task force reviewed the recommendations from the sub group, who looked at sanctuary and Fellowship Hall safe distancing capacity numbers. The suggestions included safe distancing floor disks, pew closure signage and lobby signs. Floor disks will be made by Pennie Linna and Laurie Olson agreed to print off pew signs. The task force was asked to review the suggested lobby sign wording on their own time, for further discussion at the next meeting. These signs will note rules such as wearing of face masks, **maintaining social distancing, if you've been sick recently, do not enter the building, etc.** Maximum safe distancing capacity number for the sanctuary was set at 50, based on 3 per open pew or a family. Fellowship Hall safe distancing capacity numbers were set, for worship overflow once the new camera is installed, at 32-72 with 2 per table or a family. It was recommended for outside group use to allow a maximum of 36 in the Fellowship Hall, once they are allowed in to use the church.

Usher and greeter responsibilities and training will be discussed at the next task force meeting.

Meeting closed with the Lord's Prayer.

All Saints' Day Recognition – Your Help is Needed



If you had a friend or relative pass away since the last All Saints Day and would like their name read and a candle lit in their name at this All Saints Day worship service on November 1st, please call or e-mail the church office with their name.

Important Dates Coming Up at St. Mark's

October 25 – Reformation Sunday

and Confirmation

November 1 – **All Saints' Sunday**

November 8 – Stewardship Sunday

Mission of the Month Spotlight

Mark “Missions” on your giving envelope and mail them to St. Mark’s at 140 S. Green Bay Road to donate to Wednesday Quilting Group



In a normal year, the Wednesday Workshop Quilting Group would meet every Wednesday morning to produce quilts to help keep others warm. By this time of the year, we would have many boxes packed to go to Lutheran World Relief. This year, we did do some quilts for LWR, but we made 8 quilts to go to the Christine Anne Center to help those sheltering from domestic abuse. They will be delivered when the church opens up. We appreciate any help you can give us and we are anxiously waiting to get together again. Thank you. — Karen Jordan



CROSSWAYS
CAMPING MINISTRIES

Fall is a beautiful time at the camp! Come and enjoy a Fall Color Hike at Waypost on October 3rd, plan a trip to see progress at the lodge at Imago Dei Village, or find your way to a Fall Color Hike at Pine Lake Camp on October 10th.

Consider joining in the 20 Hours Outside challenge, or share your time with camp by volunteering to rake or serve. Don't

let Fall pass without making a stop at your favorite camp to see the seasons change.

Coordinate your visit with the site director or register for one of our events at:

CrosswaysCamps.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/





Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

"You who live in the shelter of the Most High, who abide in the shadow of the Almighty, will say to the Lord, 'My refuge and my fortress; my God, in whom I trust'" (Psalm 91:1-2).

Imagine you're home and you hear a knock at the door. An official tells you to pack your essentials and evacuate, as a wildfire is speeding toward you. This is the situation many of our neighbors in the western part of the country are facing right now.

Fueled by a heat wave and unfavorable winds, devastating wildfires are raging across California, Oregon, Washington and other western states. At least 20 people have died, hundreds of thousands of people are under evacuation orders and more than 3.5 million acres have burned across the three states. Some evacuees face the difficult decision of whether to stay in a shelter during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Lutheran Disaster Response is engaging with at least three Lutheran social services agencies and five synods to assess the situation and determine the best ways to respond. We expect immediate needs may include food and other necessities, as well as emotional and spiritual care for those who have been traumatized.

Your gifts will support wildfire survivors. Gifts to "U.S. wildfires" will be used in full (100%) to assist those affected by wildfires until the response is complete. Go to: <https://community.elca.org/uswildfires> to contribute. Even as we face multiple crises, together we can reflect Christ's light and hope to our neighbors in their time of need.



MOSES MESSAGE

A Sunday School Update



Hi everyone!! Hope you are enjoying your basket of goodies and the Sunday School lessons that I gave to you. This is our way of keeping you involved in Sunday School even though we can't meet as a group right now. We just want everyone to stay safe and healthy. I will be delivering a "BAG" in October sometime with some special things in it. When I do bring the bags around, please have your basket for me to pick up so I can use it in November. I will call you before I deliver your "BAG". I will see you then. Take care and stay safe and healthy!!

BIRTHDAYS

Rylen Hock – 10/1

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, RYLEN!!!

With God's Blessings,

Gwen Hoehne, Sunday School Superintendent



Food Pantry Update ~ Karen Jordan

Thanks to everyone who contributed so generously to “God's Work, Our Hands.” We were extremely blessed with so many wonderful grocery items – our cupboards look wonderful – at least for a couple of weeks. In August, we were able to help 154 people with meat, vegetables, eggs and canned goods. **It wouldn't be possible without your** help and we all thank you. We will be in need of paper products, juice and soap---bar, dish and laundry detergent, and all the regular items, but for now we are doing okay. – Karen Thompson, Food Pantry Volunteer



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

August 20, 2020



Meeting was called to order at 6:32 P. M. by President Laurie Olson.

Roll Call:

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

Members Excused: Eric Blank, Sharyn Gawlick and Nancy Rose.

Members Unexcused: None

Guest: None

In keeping with the COVID 19 social distancing guidelines Bruce Grundman, Mary Jane Hartley, 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 sitting 6 feet apart.**

Devotions: Pastor Bob led us in devotions with a reading from the Book of Galatians. Judy Hellman volunteered for devotions next month.

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

Approval of Minutes for the July 16th, 2020 meeting. MSC by Jeff Tharp/Phyllis Ziemke.

Thank You Cards – Special Thank You cards were sent to the young people that have stepped forward to do some of the readings for our Sunday online service.

Financial Report:

1. Current Budget balance is \$48,830.22
2. Building Improvement is \$3,909.10
3. **July's giving was \$20,057.99** – Spending was \$16,636.55.
4. Giving needs to be around \$3,500.00 to \$4,000.00 per Sunday to meet spending.

MSC by Jeff Tharp/Pennie Linna.

Pastor's Report

1. I have made a few home communion visits, using the individual sealed communion sets and meeting outside. All 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.**



3. I participated in several Zoom Meetings with the Synod Office and pastoral colleagues regarding best practices during the coronavirus.
4. I took a week of vacation July 27 to August 2, during which seminary student, Katy Tomlanovich, provided pulpit supply.
5. I presided at a graveside worship service for the family of Marilyn MacDonal.
6. I met with the family of Leah Hildebrandt in preparation for a funeral service to be held at Westgor Funeral Home in Neenah.
7. I participated in an Appleton Conference Zoom Meeting.
8. **I continue to record, along other members of St. Mark's Church, the Sunday worship service, which is then posted to our Facebook page and linked to our website.**
9. I presided at the funeral service of Leah Hildebrandt at Westgor Funeral Home.
10. **I presided at St. Mark's second parking lot worship with communion**
11. **I met with Judy Hellman to record music for St. Mark's online worship service.**
12. I participated in a book review with the youth and family ministers from St. Paul and Our Savior Churches in Neenah. The book was, **" The End of Youth Ministry by Andrew Root"**.
13. I met with the Worship and Music Committee and the Stewardship and Finance Committee.
14. I am reviewing the four-week Zoom series on Digital Discipleship and Evangelism provided by the Greater Milwaukee Synod of the ELCA.
15. Along with Laurie Olson, I met with Tom Goodsett, from TFG Audio Visual Solutions, to review our technological needs during the time of COVID 19. {More under New Business}



Doris & Victor Gilbert
 Pat Wenzel
 Judy Koerner
 Mary Zelewski
 Ron Brueggeman
 Tara Dieck

MSC Jeff Tharp/Phyllis Ziemke.

Committee Reports:

Christian Education:

1. Gwen Hoehne and Donna Joachim did a phone conference to discuss some ways to be able to start up Sunday School without physically meeting. Came up with some ideas. Will meet in person as soon as we can set it up.

Connection: No Meeting.

Endowment: No Meeting.

Finance/Stewardship:

1. Mary Jane reviewed the current giving for July, which was \$20,057.99 and expenditures were \$15,636.55. Our spending was under our giving by \$3,421.35.
2. Mary Jane Hartley and Jenny Blank continue to work on the finance computer program and glitches.
3. The finance committee is impressed with the continued giving of our members as we continue to not meet in person. We would like to thank the congregation for their continued support during this **trying time. We feel extremely blessed. St. Mark's would like to be good stewards of the blessings given** us from the congregation, therefore we are recommending to council that we take \$5,000 from the general fund and divide between 5 different organizations that are currently seeking funding. These organizations are: *Crossways, Food for the Poor, Synod Arise campaign, Fox Valley Lutheran Homes and Pine Ridge Center. {More under New Business}
4. Laurie Olson updated us on her contact with Associated Bank with regards to what documents need to be submitted. We were informed that our local bank will contact us with that information in the future.
5. Mary Jane continues to cleanup and follow through with task from earlier in the year. She has moved down \$8,000 dollars from the Thrivent Mutual Fund/Keith Niemuth Trust to designated funds in our checking to send out checks to the organizations that we voted on earlier in the year. The council had voted to give \$3,290 to Endowment and \$1,200 to be divided equally between the 12 Missions of the Month. \$1,600 to be divided between among eight missions at \$200 each, those being Fleece Blankets, **St. Mark's Youth Ministries, Fox Valley Lutheran Homes, Iris Homes, Lutheran Social Services, Good Gifts ELCA, and Haiti.** \$800 to the following four missions: Food for the Poor, Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, **Bethel Alaska Mission Trip {connected to St. Paul's Neenah} and Haiti Produce Good Fruits.**
6. We discussed attending Fellowship Workshops over the next several months. Laurie has enrolled the Stewardship committee members to attend virtual trainings for developing a plan of action toward our stewardship efforts.

Memorial: No Meeting.

Partnership: No Meeting.

Property: No Meeting.

Social Ministry: No Meeting.

Worship and Music:

1. Online worship service seems to be well received. Residents at the apartments next door try to watch them in a small group.
2. Our parking lot service in July was discussed. Microphones need to be checked out before the next service. Both driveways will be used at the end of the service. The bathroom on the parking lot side will be available in case of an emergency. The next parking lot service will be September 13th.
3. Thank You's will be sent out to our college and high school students who assisted with our online services.



Youth: No Meeting

Committee Reports: MSC by Jeff Tharp/Judy Hellman.

Unfinished Business:

1. Council Retreat is on hold until the Fall.
2. The Basket Raffle is rescheduled for November.
3. The upcoming Synod Assembly will be done virtually. Pastor or Laurie will set something up so Sharyn Gawlick and Jenny Case will be able to participate in this as our church representatives.



New Business:

1. Pastor brought up the subject of being able to do funeral services at the church. After some discussion it was decided to let the Task Force Group put some guidelines in place when they next meet.
2. Because 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 thru the end of September MSC by Pastor/Bruce Grundman {Judy Hellman Abstaining.}
 - * Rich, our janitor will remain at the 10 hours per week. He will continue to coordinate with Pastor as to what days and hours this will be. MSC by Pastor Bob/Bruce Grundman.
 - * **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.}**
 - * Regular Church services for St. Marks is available on Facebook Live.
 - * Church office at the present will remain open in the morning.
 - * Food Pantry program to continue, following safety guidelines.

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. A Thank You Card and gift card will be sent to Joe and Sandy Decker for all the extra work they have done at the Church.
4. Discussed the proposal submitted from Tom Goodsett of TFG Audio Visual Solutions from Pastors **Report #15. This will enable us to record Pastor's Service live, we would also be able to mainstream it into the Fellowship Hall when needed. St. Mark's would need to run the cable from the church office to the Sacristy and to the Fellowship Hall.** TFG would supply and install all the Video Streaming/recording system and the video feed to the Fellowship Hall for an estimate of about \$4,000. Cost to be covered from Technology Account and Memorials. MSC by Jeff Tharp/Pennie Linna. Bruce will contact Tom to set up a time for this to be done. Bruce will work with Property to run the cable.
5. Opened up a discussion about the Finance proposal to Pay it Forward to some groups in need of some funding Finance/Stewardship Report # 3. Upon further discussion we are expanding on this list to include Esther. We will take \$6,000 from the General Fund and distribute \$1,000 each to Cross-

ways Camping Ministries, Food for the Poor, Synod Arise Campaign, Fox Valley Lutheran Homes, Pine Ridge

Reconciliation Center and Esther. MSC by Jeff Tharp/Pennie Linna.

6. **God's Work, Our Hands** -Discussed the following suggestions/ideas.

- * Canned Food Drive during the Parking Lot Service.
- * Lay mulching at a local park.
- * Put hygiene kits together.
- * Possibly do virtual games on-line with area group homes.
- * Possibly do a on-line diversity Bible Study.

More information to come as it becomes available.

MSC by Jeff Tharp/Phyllis Ziemke to adjourn at 7:50 P.M

We closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Next meeting is September 17th, 2020 at 6:30 P.M.

Submitted by Donna Joachim

St. Mark's Lutheran Church, Neenah

Parking Lot Worship Service

Sunday, October 11th at 9:00 A.M.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:

You are asked to stay in your vehicle at all times. (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.

St. Mark's Willing Workers— There were many great opportunities to serve at St. Mark's this past month. Our "God's Work, Our Hands" food drive was a great success. And after the parking lot service on September 9, a group of our members spent the afternoon mulching the trails at Wilderness Park. Many thanks to everyone who participated in these events.

This past week, our storage building got a much needed new roof, thanks to our property committee and the many volunteers who showed up to help out. Thank you all!



Our pantry shelves are looking good thanks to your contributions!



Our roofing crew hard at work!



Our mulch crew after their labors.

Something to Think About ..

Research indicates, about adolescent development, that spirituality is the most robust protective factor against the big three dangers of adolescence: depression, substance abuse, and risk taking. Adolescents who have a personal sense of spirituality are 80 % less likely to suffer from ongoing and recurrent depressions and 60 % less likely to become heavy substance users or abusers. Girls with a sense of personal spirituality are 70 % less likely to have unprotected sex.

Lisa Miller PH.D.
The Spiritual Child.
 Picador, 2016. New York, NY.



Fellowship - Online Auction - Music - Awards

ESTHER 17th Annual "Banquet"

Virtual **Sunday - November 1, 2020 - 5:00PM**

Voices for Justice



"I speak for the lions.
And we are many!"

REV. TRACI DEVON
BLACKMON

Rev. Blackmon is the Associate General Minister of Justice and Local Church Ministries for the United Church of Christ and Senior Pastor of Christ The King United Church of Christ.

As a featured voice on many regional, national, and international platforms, Rev. Blackmon's life work focuses on communal resistance to systemic injustice. Her response in Ferguson to the killing of Michael Brown resulted in national and international recognition, gaining her audiences at the White House, the Carter Center, and the Vatican. She co-authored the White Privilege curriculum for the UCC and toured the nation with Rev. Dr. William Barber of Repairers of the Breach and Sister Simone Campbell of Nuns on the Bus, proclaiming the need for a Moral Revival in the nations.

"Until the lion tells the story, the hunter will always be the hero."
 —West African Proverb



PO Box 754 Neenah, WI 54957
920-943-9083

Co-sponsored by
**William J. and Barbara A. Schmidt
 Family Foundation**

Online Auction
 October 29th - November 1st
esther-foxvalley.org/auction

Register Now!

esther-foxvalley.org/banquet

St. Mark's Lutheran Church

140 S. Green Bay Road

Neenah, WI 54956



Visit St. Mark's Website www.stmarksneenah.org



We celebrate the anniversary of the Reformation on October 25 this year. Martin Luther has been quoted on a number of topics; here is what he says about living a Christian life.

"We should learn well how to please Christ. We do please him by dedicating our entire life with all possible diligence solely to the service of our neighbor. 'Down, down,' says Christ 'you will find me in the poor, you are rising too high if you do not look for me down there.'" — Martin Luther

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