



# The Messenger

## January 2021

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



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

One thing we, as a society, are not particularly good at, is waiting.

We wait for many different reasons throughout our lifetime. We wait with great expectation for special events such as birthdays, weddings, vacations, and holidays to come to pass, and we wait for simple mundane things like the mail to come or the toast to pop up.

We wait in lines at the supermarket and we wait in traffic jams. We even have special areas in many service industries specifically designated for waiting. And although we live in an age of microwave ovens and instant messaging, we still grow restless for having to wait.

The year 2020 was a year that truly tested our capacity to wait. We have delayed the gratification of meeting with family members for special occasions. We have reframed from going out to eat, taking vacations, and even getting our hair cut, all in an effort to help control the spread of the coronavirus.

We have even deferred many group events at church and our gathering for worship services to ensure the health and welfare of our worshipping community.

In the Hebrew language of our Old Testament there were a few different Hebrew words that were **translated as "waiting," each with a slightly different meaning, but when it came to waiting on the Lord, the clear emphasis was the need to wait for God's divine protection and restoration in times of distress.**

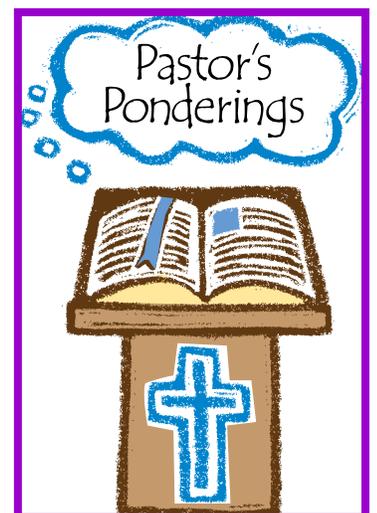
As people of God, our heritage is one of waiting — although not always patiently — for the Lord to act. The Israelites waited 430 years for God to deliver them from bondage in Egypt. Then they wandered 40 additional years in the wilderness before being brought into the Promised Land.

Later, they waited for centuries for the promised Messiah. Then, after their temple was destroyed in 586 BCE, they were taken captive once more, this time to Babylon, and again they waited 70 years to be set free.

During their time of exile, they reasoned that God could not be confined to a building and that they surely could worship God apart from the sacrifice at the temple. They learned to become people of the book, as their sacred scripture took on even greater significance. They learned patience and perseverance, if not contentment, and they marked their days with designated times of prayer and individual worship. And most significantly, they never gave up hope as they encouraged and reminded one another that God is faithful.

This March will mark one year since our last in-person worship, and we are all anxious to be gathering once more in worship and fellowship. I do believe we will soon be back to in-person worship, although for a time it will feel not quite normal, as we will continue to take precautions to keep everyone one safe.

*Continued on page 2*



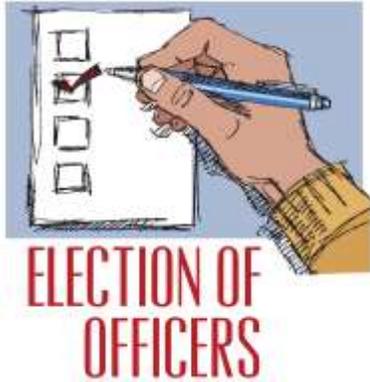
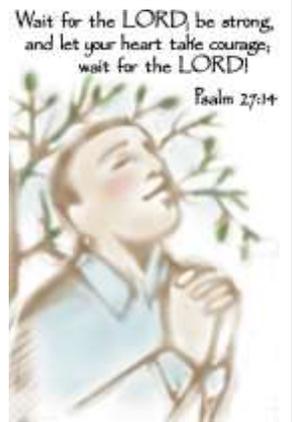
Continued from page 1

In this, our time of exile, let us continue to wait on the Lord patiently and actively, as we pray for and encourage one another. Let us devote ourselves to the study of **God's Holy Word and expand our own vision of God and strengthen our relationship with our Lord.** Let us learn the secret of contentment as we trust in **God's provision, protection, and gracious timing.**

Finally, let us take encouragement from the ancient words of the Psalmist, *"Wait for the LORD; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the LORD!"*

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Bob



### **St. Mark's Church Council Openings**

[Two positions for the church council will be voted upon at St. Mark's annual meeting in February.](#) These three-year terms will begin after the annual meeting. Two current eligible council members have agreed to throw their names in the hat. However, if anyone is interested in running, they should contact one of the nominating committee members. Contact, by the end of January, Jane Arps at 858-0503, Susan Antonneau at 729-1278 or Christina Lemmers at 858-7744. Also, nominations will be accepted from the floor at the annual meeting.



## MOSES MESSAGE

*A Sunday School Update*

Gwen Hoehne, Superintendent



Hi everyone. Hope you had a great Christmas and a Happy New Year!!! We welcome 2021 and hope that things will start to look up and will get better. Not much going on right now. Just trying to get back in the teaching mode. I will not be coming to your house with lessons and activities in January (and probably February). I will mail you lessons and some activities to do at home. Hopefully, some day we will be back to meeting in person. Until then take care and stay safe and healthy.

We also made some people very happy this Christmas. We purchased some animals, trees, garden supplies, bees, and even a fish pond through Good Gifts. I will give you a more complete list in your letter in January. Thought you might like to know that we purchased gifts for Good Gifts again.

The Christian Education Committee is having a meeting on January 6, 2021 at 6:30 pm.

Take Care and God Bless all!!!

With God's Blessings,

Gwen Hoehne, Superintendent



# 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 The Christine Ann Shelter



Christine Ann Domestic Abuse Services, Inc., is a 501 (c)(3) not-for-profit agency serving individuals and families in Winnebago and Green Lake Counties who are struggling with the devastating effects of domestic abuse. They operate a 37-bed emergency shelter in Oshkosh for individuals and families needing safety and shelter from an abusive situation. While the shelter and 24-hour help line are essential, it is their outreach services to those not living in the shelter, along with the teen/children’s programs and community education, that truly fulfil their mission—to empower individuals and families through education, safety and support, and lead our community to reduce the incidence and the effects of domestic abuse and dating violence.

The Christine Ann Shelter is the only agency providing comprehensive domestic violence programs and services to communities in Winnebago and Green Lake Counties. Launched in 1984, Christine Ann educates the community on the dynamics of abuse and how they help in the fight against domestic violence.

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/](https://www.facebook.com/East-Central-Synod-of-Wisconsin-ELCA-139767989400097/)



## Reading resolutions

Every January, many Christians resolve to read the entire Bible in one year. That’s a worthy goal, but God doesn’t require us to read a certain number of verses or chapters per day. Instead, he tells us to simply be in his Word — and thus be with him — so he can grow our faith, light our path and assure us of his love and forgiveness. God’s Word is a precious gift, but we need to “unwrap” it!

F.B. Meyer offers this helpful advice for a new year of discovering (and rediscovering!) Scripture: “Read the Bible, not as a newspaper, but as a home letter. If a cluster of heavenly fruit hangs within reach, gather it. If a promise lies upon the page as a blank check, cash it. If a prayer is recorded, appropriate it and launch it as a feathered arrow from the bow of your desire. If an example of holiness gleams before you, ask God to do as much for you. If the truth is revealed ... entreat that its brilliance may ever irradiate ... your life.”



The Food Pantry is very busy every Wednesday morning. We have been getting a few new customers every week and some are in extremely dire straits. We are very thankful for all the donations given to us. We wouldn't be able to continue without your help. We are in need of paper products, laundry and dish soap, canned fruit and peanut butter and jam and Hamburger Helper and sides. Thank you very much.



*This was just one or two carloads!*

A delightful surprise came on December 17 when the Fox Valley Retirement Village of Neenah made a very generous donation to our Food Pantry! Thank you so much for stocking our shelves right before the holidays! You are wonderful neighbors!



*What a wonderful donation!*

## Electronic Worship Opportunities

- [www.facebook.com/stmarksneenah](http://www.facebook.com/stmarksneenah)
  - Worship Service every Sunday at 10:00 am
  - Devotional every Tuesday at 10:00 am
- DVDs of the worship service 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

November 19, 2020



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

Roll Call:

Members Present: Eric Blank, Sharyn Gawlick, Bruce Grundman, Judy Hellman, Donna Joachim, Pennie Linna, Laurie Olson, Jeff Tharp and Phyllis Ziemke.

Members Excused: Mary Jane Hartley, Nancy Rose and Pastor Bob.

Members Unexcused: None

Guests: None

In keeping with the COVID-19 guidelines, everyone met in person at St. Mark's wearing our face masks and sitting 6 feet apart.

Devotions: **Phyllis Ziemke led us in devotions with a reading "Day by Day."** Bruce Grundman volunteered for devotions next month.

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

Approval of Minutes for the October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020 meeting. MSC by Jeff Tharp/Phyllis Ziemke.

Thank You Cards – A Special Thank You card and gift card {MSC by Bruce Grundman/Phyllis Ziemke} will be sent to Rich Sczerzen for all his help as our janitor. He is retiring effective December 1<sup>st</sup>. A Thank You will also go to Gwen Hoehne for all her work keeping the youth involved in Sunday School through home delivered packets.

Financial Report:

1. Current Budget balance is \$52,686.51
2. Building Improvement is \$4,662.54
3. **October's giving was \$17,043.00** – Spending was \$12,423.67.
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 some home communion visits, using the individual sealed communion sets and safely distancing. All hospital visits continue to be suspended due to the COVID-19.
2. **I continued to post a Tuesday morning devotional 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 continue to lead weekly confirmation classes on Wednesday evening for St. Mark's 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students.**
5. **I presided at a Family Prayer Service for Virginia Siebert at Westgor's Funeral Home. A Celebration of Life Worship Service will be held at St. Mark's at a later date.**

6. Laurie Olson, Laurie Wilkinson and I met with Becky Szymonski and LuAnn Gorecki to discuss and **share ideas on how they might want their Mother's memorial money to be used.**
7. I presided at an Affirmation of Baptism Ceremony for Mykayla Tharp. The ceremony was attended by **Mykayla's family and sponsors, then included in our on-line Reformation Sunday Worship video.**
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 a funeral service for Perry Lou Stolla held at Green Lawn Memorial Park.
10. **I met with our church musicians and others to record worship music for St. Mark's on-line worship video.**
11. **I continue to meet with St. Mark's Committees as needed or by request.**
12. I attended the East-Central Synod of Wisconsin Theological Conference, which was done through Zoom technology. The presenters were Dr. Andrew Root and his wife, Reverend Kara Root. Their **presentation was titled, "The Pastor in a Secular Age, and "Pastoring Communities that Trust in Transcendence."**
13. **Together with St. Mark's Stewardship and Finance Committee, I attended two Zoom Meetings on "Beginning a Culture of Generosity."**

MSC Judy Hellman/Pennie Linna.

Committee Reports:

Christian Education:

1. Gwen Hoehne continues to distribute bags to the homes of the Sunday School children that contains a story lesson to read, games to play, crafts to assemble, along with some type of a sweet treat to make. These can be made up by themselves or shared as a family togetherness time.

Connection: No Meeting.

Endowment: No Meeting.

Finance/Stewardship: No Report.

Memorial: No Meeting.

Partnership: No Meeting.

Property:

1. Jasmin from Tesch Chemical talked to us about the new sprayer for disinfecting the Sanctuary.
2. Sherry Busche donated a snow blower to the church.
3. New snowplow guy is Brad Malchefkis {1-920-470-7445}. Jason will touch base with him for every snowfall.
4. Property committee has the okay to clean up around the garage.
5. Jason has the boilers on and running to maintain 60 degrees.
6. Christmas Tree will be put up November 16<sup>th</sup> or 17<sup>th</sup>.
7. Cable run for Audio/video feed will be done by Bruce and Jason. {This has been done}
8. Richie will be resigning his custodial duties as of December 1<sup>st</sup>. We will be looking for new person. Notice will on Facebook and in the Newsletter.



- Doris & Victor Gilbert
  - Pat Wenzel
  - Judy Koerner
  - Tracy Feldman
  - Brett Gawlick
  - Tom Ashman
  - Judy Fowler
- Josh, friend of Jeri Travis

## Social Ministry:

1. Because of the Covid-19 pandemic, we will not be able to send cookies tins to our shut-ins this year. I urge all who are able, to please send Christmas cards to those in nursing homes. I guess we are all shut-ins to some degree. Hopefully things will improve in 2021.

## Worship and Music:

1. Our next parking lot service will be November 8<sup>th</sup> – weather permitting. It is also Stewardship Sunday. **Donation and Pledge Cards will be collected. We plan to “honk” our car horns in honor of the veterans.**
2. November 1<sup>st</sup> – **All Saints’ Sunday. Names of the deceased will be read, candles will be lit, and a bell will rung for each deceased person.**
3. Christ The King Sunday is November 22. Pastor Karen Ressel will be the pastor that day. Pastor Bob will be on vacation.
4. Thanksgiving Eve Service will be done with the Appleton Conference pastors. Advent will begin on November 29<sup>th</sup>. Pastor Bob is checking out several Advent series.
5. Christmas Eve and Christmas Day Service were briefly discussed. No definite plans have been made at this time.

## Youth: No Meeting

Committee Reports: MSC by Jeff Tharp/Pennie Linna.

## Unfinished Business:

1. Council Retreat is on hold till further notice.
2. The Basket Raffle is hold till further notice.
3. **Laurie Olson delivered our collected Daily Need Items/Canned Goods to St. Paul’s for a “12 Days of Christmas” project that area churches are handing out to ones needing some extra help.**

## New Business:

1. Any building use is on hold until further notice. The Covid numbers need to go way down.
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 thru the end of December.

MSC by Phyllis Ziemke/Jeff Tharp. {Judy Hellman Abstaining.}

\* Rich, our janitor has resigned effective December 1<sup>st</sup>. Notice to be put on Facebook and in the Newsletter.

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

\* Regular Church services for St. Marks are 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 thru this health crisis facing our country.



3. Life Screening has requested to use our building.

MSC by Sharyn Gawlick/ Judy Hellman that no outside groups will use the building until we are able to reopen for regular Sunday Worship.

4. Council Member Terms that are up in February are Donna Joachim, Sharyn Gawlick, Pennie Linna and Nancy Rose. Those able to run for another term are Sharyn G., Pennie L., and Nancy R. Sharyn and Pennie have expressed interest in doing so. Nancy was not present to ask at this time. Due to change in our Constitution, we will only need to fill two positions in February.

5. **A basket for Esther Banquet was donated by St. Mark's.**

6. Our Audit Committee members serve for a three-year term. **Pam Lowenhagen's term is up this** February. She has most graciously volunteered to serve another three-year term.

**MSC by Jeff Tharp/Judy Hellman to accept Pam's offer. Thank You, Pam.**

7. **Community Table has requested to use the kitchen to make a hot meal to be handed out at St. Paul's.** There will be for 4-5 people preparing the food. They must use face masks and practice social distancing.

MSC by Judy Hellmam/Jeff Tharp.

8. Church Windows Support Contract is up for renewal. As Jean is new to the secretary position, it was felt the additional support would be beneficial to her. The cost is \$230 for the year.

MSC by Bruce Grundman/Jeff Tharp to renew this for the year. Cost to possibly come out of Technology.

9. Due to Covid-19, we need to re-examine how we will need to hold our Budget Hearing and our Annual Meeting. More to come next month.

10. All committees need to submit their budget request in for 2021. Mary Jane needs these to put together a rough draft for Council to look at our December meeting.

11. Committee reports need to be submitted to the office so Jean can start to work on them for our Annual Meeting.

12. AMAZON Smile Program gives a .5% rebate on eligible items to qualifying non-profit organizations. Laurie is going to investigate what paperwork that needs to be submitted for this.

MSC by Phyllis Ziemke/Pennie Linna.

MSC by Jeff Tharp/Phyllis Ziemke to adjourn at 7:35 P.M

**We closed with the Lord's Prayer.**

Next meeting is December 17<sup>th</sup>, 2020 at 6:30 pm.

Submitted by Donna Joachim

## When will we get to worship in our sanctuary? In-Person Worship Status

At the December church council meeting, it was decided to begin consideration of in-person worship once the sanctuary camera system is operating. This will be completed once the additional camera components have arrived, hopefully in January. This camera system will allow the worship service to **be live streamed onto St. Mark's Facebook page and later recorded onto DVDs.** The service will also live stream into the fellowship hall on the large screen, allowing worship attendees, who may not be able to fit into the sanctuary due to capacity limitations, to sit socially distanced and see and hear the live service. Additionally, **St. Mark's Church Council will consider the community COVID-19 status** when they discuss and make their decision on returning to in-person worship.





Throughout the year, and especially during the holidays, St. Mark's receives thank you notes from a variety of sources. Some come from non-profit missions and agencies we support through "Mission of the Month" and other mission outreach efforts. Some are grateful for our prayer support, our food pantry, and the care we show our neighbors. Here is a partial list of the notes of thanks we have received recently.

- \* Linwood Place—Supportive Independent Living for Seniors
- \* Pine Ridge Reconciliation Center — Lutheran Lakota Shared Ministries
- \* ESTHER Faith Communities United for Justice Banquet Committee
- \* Christine Ann Domestic Abuse Services, Inc.
- \* Tracy Feldman
- \* Sandi S.



St. Mark's is looking to fill a part-time custodian position. At this time, the position is 10 hrs per/week and will increase to 20 hrs per/week once back to in-person worship and normal building use resumes. Pay is \$12.50 per/hr. For more details on the position and for an application, please contact the St. Mark's church office. Applications will be accepted until position is filled.

# Weather Permitting

## St. Mark's Lutheran Church, Neenah

### Parking Lot Worship Service

## Sunday, January 10 at 9:00 A.M.

### WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:

You are asked to stay in your vehicle at all times. 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. Check e-mail and Facebook for updates about this service.



# Visit St. Mark's Website

[www.stmarksneenah.org](http://www.stmarksneenah.org)

"The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others." —Mahatma Gandhi



Do we have your email address?

Please send an e-mail to [office@stmarksneenah.org](mailto:office@stmarksneenah.org) so we can update our church records.



**St. Mark's Office & Leadership Email Addresses**  
St. Mark's office (Jean): [office@stmarksneenah.org](mailto:office@stmarksneenah.org)  
Pastor Bob's e-mail is still: [pastorbob@stmarksneenah.org](mailto:pastorbob@stmarksneenah.org)  
Mary Jane Hartley's e-mail is now: [treasurer@stmarksneenah.org](mailto:treasurer@stmarksneenah.org)

**St. Mark's Lutheran Church**  
**140 S. Green Bay Road**  
**Neenah, WI 54956**

