



The Messenger

May 2021

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



"Do not remember the former things or consider the things of old. I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert." (Isaiah 43:18-19 NRSV)

Dear friends in Christ,

The people of Israel have two great stories of deliverance. The first is the story of Moses, and God deliverance of the people from bondage in Egypt. Then, roughly 900 years later, the people of Israel are once more in exile, this time in Babylon. It is to these people that the Prophet Isaiah writes, saying essentially, "Don't dwell on God's previous grace, because if you do, you may miss what God is about to do in this day."

Soon, God delivers the people once more, and they return to their land where they begin to rebuild the temple, their homes, and their lives.

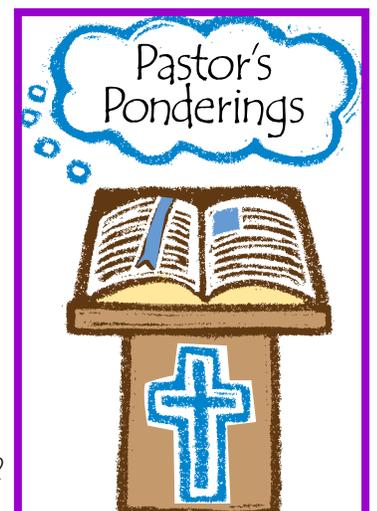
As we turn our calendars to the month of May, I could not help but think that for many, this is a time of new beginnings. Several of our young friends and family members are graduating from high school or college and beginning a new chapter of their lives. May is also the start of the wedding season, when many couples will start a new life together with a shared purpose and commitment. For area farmers and our gardening friends, May is the month when plants and flowers take root for a summer of beauty and a fall harvest.

And finally, I could not help but think of St. Mark's Mission and Action team, because May will be the month when they will begin tabulating the results of our recent survey which will help St. Mark's, as a church, bring clarity to our shared values and set a course for the future.

As Christians, we continue to celebrate what God has done for us, and for the world, through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ – after all, it is the center of our faith and life together – however we must also be sensitive to the wonderful new things God is doing in our lives and in the world around us.

A rearview mirror in a car serves a vital purpose. We look at it from time to time as we drive, so that we do not lose our perspective of where we are on the road in relation to those around us. A quick look in the mirror may also help us to identify something we did not fully recognize moments earlier as we passed by. However, there is a reason that the rearview mirror is so small compared to our windshield, because what lies before us is the most important.

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Pastor's Ponderings

Continued from Page 1

Sometimes, both as individuals and as a church, we get preoccupied with where we have been, especially if the road before us looks uncertain. But when we trust the one who makes a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert, we avoid the obstacles along our path, and we begin to recognize the road makers that guide our way.

Wherever you are on your life journey, stay alert for new beginnings, because you never know when God is *about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?*

God's continued blessings during this season of Easter!

Pastor Bob

Electronic Worship Opportunities

- www.facebook.com/stmarksneenah
 - Worship Service every Sunday at 10:00 am
 - Devotional every Tuesday at 10:00 am
 - **Children's Message every Sunday morning**
- 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.



MOSES MESSAGE



A Sunday School Update

Hi everyone! Hope everyone had a good Easter. Sunday School is coming to an end. I will be sending you something in the mail in the next few weeks. **Remember that May 9th is Mother's Day to do something nice for your mom.** Hope everyone has a great summer and hopefully we will be able to meet together in September.

With God's Blessings,

Gwen Hoehne, Sunday School Superintendent





ST. MARK'S CHURCH COUNCIL MINUTES

March 18, 2021



Meeting was called to order at 6:34 pm by President Laurie Olson. Laurie welcomed our two new council members, Sherri Denney and Mykayla Tharp.

Roll Call:

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

Members Excused: None

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 six feet apart.

Devotions: **Phyllis Ziemke led us in devotions with a reading "A Faith that will not Fail."**

Pastor Bob volunteered for devotions next month.

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

At this time Election of Officers was held:

President- Floor was open for nominations. Bruce Grundman/Phyllis Ziemke presented Laurie Olson name. With no other names presented, we needed to refer to our Constitution because Laurie has already served two terms as President. Under Chapter 11{Officers C11.03 No elected officer shall be eligible to serve more than two consecutive terms in the same office, without majority vote of the congregational council.} MSC by Pastor Bob/Phyllis Ziemke. Laurie Olson is our new President.

Vice President- Floor was open for nominations. Pastor Bob/Jeff Tharp **presented Pennie Linna's name. With no other names presented, MSC** by Phyllis Ziemke/Mary Jane Hartley. Pennie Linna is our new Vice President.

Secretary- **Bruce Grundman/Pastor Bob presented Judy Hellman's name.** With no other names presented, MSC by Mary Jane Hartley/Phyllis Ziemke. Judy Hellman is our new Secretary.

At this time the council discussed having a recording secretary to take the monthly minutes. MSC by Judy Hellman/Phyllis Ziemke to have Donna Joachim fill this spot. She is a non-voting part of the council.

A special THANK YOU to Mary Jane Hartley for all of her hard work as our Treasurer for St. Mark's.

Approval of Minutes for the February 18th, 2021 meeting. MSC by Mary Jane Hartley/Judy Hellman.

Thank You Cards - Joe and Sandy Deckers for all their hard work and Jean Memken for redoing our mailboxes.

OUR CHURCH'S
FINANCIAL HEALTH

**For the month of
March 2021**

**Given: \$20,752.37
Spent: \$17,082.21**

Financial Report:

1. Current Budget balance is \$71,691.02
2. Building Improvement is \$7,884.54
3. **February's giving was \$12,147.23** – Spending was \$11,280.01.
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. I have been fully vaccinated for the COVID-19 virus and have begun making some home visits to members who are homebound and have been vaccinated.
2. **I continued to post a Tuesday morning devotional on St. Mark's Facebook page.**
3. In preparation for our mid-week Lenten Worship services, I recorded **several dialogues from our "Overheard" Lenten Worship series with various members of St. Mark's Church.**
4. I continue to offer weekly confirmation classes on Wednesday evening for St. Mark's 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students on line. We are presently taking a short break during Easter.
5. I continue to work with my wife, Laurie, in assembling worship videos to upload to St. Mark's Facebook page and to record onto DVD's.
6. I continue to meet with our church musicians and a few others to record worship music for our worship services.
7. **I continue to meet with St. Mark's Committees as needed.**
8. I met with Jared and Christi Gipp in preparation for the Baptism of their daughter, Isabel.
9. I had several on-line meetings with church members and church leaders in our community and attended the monthly meeting of the pastors of the Appleton Conference.
10. I have begun recording dialogues and scripture readings for our Palm Sunday and Good Friday worship services worship service, as we return to in-person worship and live streaming our worship service to Facebook.

MSC Jeff Tharp/Judy Hellman.

Committee Reports:

Christian Education:

1. Lessons packet for April will include the Easter Story Sticker Book, Easter cross to make {supplies **included**}, **coloring cards to color and send out to St. Mark's shut-ins and elderly.** They will each receive a goodie bag of treats.
2. EASTER BAGS FOR EASTER SUNDAY- Pastor Bob will check with council about giving bags out on Easter Sunday to the children that come to church. {Council is okay with this}.
3. Year End- Gwen will purchase \$5 Gift Cards from Culver and send a card to all the students.
4. First Communion kids will be meeting on March 6, 14, 20 and 27th. Pennie Linna is teaching this class. Haile Anderson, Ariana Hopkins, Morgan Lefeber, and JT Rose will receive their First Communion on Maundy Thursday, April 1st @ 6:30 P.M.



- Doris & Victor Gilbert
 - Pat Wenzel
 - Judy Koerner
 - Tracy Feldman
 - Brett Gawlick
 - Ron Forrest
 - Judy Fowler



5. Confirmation- Pastor Bob is thinking about having confirmation in October. This gives the kids more time to finish their class requirements since they did miss some class time due to the pandemic. Three of the churches are thinking of a Retreat in June at Memorial Park. They are still working on this.
6. Returning to Sunday School – We will not be returning until there is no social distancing and no mask mandate. The kids have enough while in school. Would rather have them come to church with the parents. We will just wait and see what happens.

Connection: No Meeting.

Endowment: No Meeting.

Finance/Stewardship:

1. Mary Jane reviewed the current giving for February, which was \$12,147.23 and expenditures were \$11,280.01. Our spending was under by \$867.22.
2. Pastor Bob inquired about the year to date deficit and then the monthly numbers not matching. The committee reviewed the documents and it was determined that we are not certain that the same numbers from the reports are being transferred each month. Mary Jane and Laurie will review and look over what numbers have been used in the past and determine what numbers from the reports will give the council the best overview of our finances at each monthly meeting.

Memorial:

1. Pastor and Laurie Olson have been working with LuAnn Gorecki and Becky Sysmonski to determine what course they would like to take in using the money given to the Memorial Fund in memory of their parents, Bob and Karen Thompson, and Art and Joyce Chase. After meeting with other members from churches in our area that work with our youth, they have decided to use the money for some youth activity in the community at some time in the future.
2. Went over the existing memorial accounts and transferred several of the balances over to cover the **cost of updating the technology for our Sanctuary and Fellowship Hall. Thank You's have been sent out to the following families.**

Beverly Guyant	Clark Anderson
Ginny Sievert	Gloria Mitchell
Jim Brechlin	Leona Borofka
Marilyn MacDonald	Perry Lou Stolla
Sam Mayo	Wilma Lieber
General Memorial Fund {Undesignated memorial fund}	

Partnership: No Meeting.

Property:

1. Lounge fireplace will be inspected on March 16th. {Has been fixed}.
2. Cross Connection done by Ogden Plumbing.
3. Menards charge card with church tax exemption.
4. **North doorbell isn't ringing.**
5. Furnace room door leading to the basement needed new hinges put on.



Social Ministry:

1. Update on Food Pantry Account
2. 446 people have been helped so far this year.
3. Who to help for Easter- have a few to mind- will send gift cards.



Worship and Music:

1. **The Wednesday Lenten services were discussed. The Lenten series "Overheard" appears to be well received.**
2. We discussed the future of in-person services. All music will be prerecorded. There will be communion on the first and third Sundays. Responsive Psalm readings will be part of the service on the second and fourth Sundays of each month.
3. Services for Holy Week were discussed. On Palm Sunday, there will not be the typical processional of the palms. However, church members attending will still be given real palms.
4. On Maundy Thursday, we will be having First Communion. There will be a service on Good Friday. Both of these will be at 6:30 P.M.
5. Easter Sunday there will be two church services. One at 8 A.M. and the other at 10 A.M. This is the first time we will have real flowers since the start of Covid. Church members are encouraged to donate potted spring flowers.

Youth: No Meeting

Committee Reports: MSC by Phyllis Ziemke/Bruce Grundman.

Unfinished Business:

Custodial Update – There is an interested party in the custodian position. There are a few things to work out before this can be finalized.

New Business:

1. In light of the COVID-19 Pandemic the following decisions have been put in place for St. **Mark's** church.

This will be revisited on an as needed basis.

- * **All outside groups that meet at St. Mark's remain cancelled till further notice.** { Council has given their okay to proceed forward to see how we can meet the needs of the different groups. The Task Force will be looking at this and giving their input.
 - * Regular Church services for St. Marks has re-opened and is now available on Facebook Live. Now that the camera is up and able to mainstream into the Fellowship Hall we do not need to limit our church worship service attendance.
 - * Church office is presently open in the morning. {Tuesday, Thursday and Friday} 8:30 A.M. to noon.
 - * 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.

2. Committee Positions were filled at this time:

Partnership-Laurie Olson	
Christian Education – Sherri Denney	Property-Bruce Grundman/Jeff Tharp
Connections- Mary Jane Hartley	Social Ministry- Phyllis Ziemke
Finance/Stewardship-Pennie Linna	Worship & Music- Judy Hellman
Memorial-Phyllis Ziemke	Youth- Mykayla Tharp/Jeff Tharp

3. Discussed opening the use of the building to outside groups. MSC by Sherri Denney/Jeff Tharp to **have the Task Force figure out room's size, number of people allowed per room, etc. to make this happen.**
4. Aging and Disability Act would like to have people fill out a short survey. This will help them understand what needs are there in this area and are people aware of what services are presently available to them.
Set up guidelines for them to follow. Who's responsible for clean up?
5. **St. Mark's received a letter informing us that we can nominate someone or a group for a Selfless Samaritan Award in the local area.** MSC by Sherri Denney/Judy Hellman to nominate The Food Pantry. They rose above the Covid Pandemic to find ways to help keep our community supplied with nutritious food. And keep everyone safe.
6. Discussed the flowers that are on the Altar each Sunday. We presently get them thru Memorial Flowers. They want a standing weekly order. The cost is \$30. Question is? If we do not have people sign up each week where is the money going to come from to cover this. We could cancel Memorial out and let people bring in their own from their gardens or like from Walmart. They would then have to do their own set ups. Some people like handing over the \$30 and say take care of it. We will be monitoring this over the next few weeks and make a decision.
7. Installation of Council will take place during the church service on April 11th.
8. Discussed we have two youth attending Crossways camp this coming summer. Laurie is going to do up an informational piece on Crossway to put on Facebook and to let anyone interested know there is financial help if they need it.

MSC by Jeff Tharp/Phyllis Ziemke to adjourn at 8:10 P.M

We closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Next meeting is April 15th, 2021 at 6:30 pm.



The Food Pantry has been doing a brisk business, as usual. In the first quarter of 2021 we have been able to supply food to help 600 people have something to eat. We are very hap-

py to be able to help so many people. In April the Boy Scouts held their can drive and they gave us a generous supply of canned goods. Thanks to everyone who contributed to this wonderful program. With so much bounty, we won't ask for anything this month. Thanks for all your help. — Karen Jordan

Calling all Graduates in the Class of 2021!

The Social Ministry Committee is making plans on how we will honor our graduates this year. If someone in your family will be graduating from high school or higher education, could you please call the church office and let us know?

Thanks!

Karen Jordan



"It is beyond the realm of possibilities that one has the ability to out-give God. Even if I give the whole of my worth to him, he will find a way to give back to me much more than I gave."—Charles Spurgeon

SUMMER CONFIRMATION RETREAT

We are Created in the Image of God

This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it. Psalm 118:24

JOIN US AS WE EXPLORE!

Open to Neenah ELCA Church Youth & their friends who completed 6, 7 or 8th grade.

(Gloria Dei, Our Saviors, St. Mark's, & St. Paul's)

Held at Memorial Park Tullar Rd. Shelter, Neenah

COST: \$10 Includes a snack each day,
t-shirt and an explorer backpack.

Bring a labeled water bottle
each day.



Evangelical Lutheran
Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

Register at
your home
church by May
27th!

**Wednesday, June 9 from 5:30-8 pm &
Thursday June 10 from 5:30-8 pm**

{With optional early afternoon service projects on Thursday —Details will be
provided, once interest has been determined.}

Participants are welcome to arrive at
5:00 pm, on one or both dates, and
join retreat staff and others for a
bring-your-own brown bag meal.



MISSION & VISION

The Mission & Vision Team met on April 5 & 26. A recap of these meeting, along with additional team work outside meeting dates, includes:

- ⇒ Preparation of the congregational survey, weekly devotional packets and processes for posting reflections on the devotions.
- ⇒ **Began the consideration of St. Mark's core values and review of the relevance of our current mission statement, *Grow in Faith, To Love & Serve.***

The next team meeting is Monday, May 10 at 5:30 pm at which time GSB, our consulting firm, will present survey results.

St. Mark's Mission and Vision Team: Tara Dieck, Mary Jane Hartley, Sara Hopkins, Dawn Jones, Pennie Linna, Ellen LaMarche, Nancy Maslow, Laurie Olson, Jeff Tharp, Tom Wenzel, and Pastor Bob Wilkinson.



The Mission of the Month for May is our Summer Bible Campers. Mark "missions" on your giving envelope and bring or mail it to St. Mark's at 140 S. Green Bay Road to support this Mission of the Month.

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.*

According to Donna Joachim, who coordinates this youth activity, 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.

With the exception of the candy bar sales that take place in the church office (We still have a few left! Only \$1!), we have not been able to do any fundraising for this mission in over a year. Please consider making a donation so our young people can experience summer camp this year.

Returning to In-Person Worship Task Force

Review of the April 7, 2021 meeting:



Outside groups to begin meeting in the church the week of April 12. Task Force provided precautionary procedures for the groups. Task Force noted that groups are to follow the approved outside group use guidelines, established in August 2020.

- ◆ Masks will be required
- ◆ Follow Social Distancing
- ◆ Cleaning after meeting – spray bottles with cleaning directions in each meeting room
- ◆ No communal food – bringing of their own individual drinks and snacks will be allowed.
- ◆ Room Capacities: Mary Room-12, Library- 4, Lounge-10, Fellowship Hall – 36

NOTE: Bathrooms and common areas will be cleaned by St. Mark's

Singing in worship with use of hymnals will begin Sunday, May 2. Pastor Bob will include this in his worship announcements and inform people that if they feel uncomfortable with the singing in worship, that the fellowship hall is an alternative space, allowing more opportunity for greater social distancing. Masks will continue to be worn.

Task Force will continue to take on the ushering and greeting duties through April with regular teams resuming these duties, beginning May 2. Counting teams will also resume their duties on May 2.

No one has participated in the parking lot system attendance option, since returning to in-person worship. Therefore, it was decided to discontinue this option.

Task Force will meet in early May, to review how things are going and to discuss beginning Fellowship Time (after worship).



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:

- * Mail in your giving envelopes to St. Mark's: 140 S. Green Bay Rd Neenah, WI 54956
- * 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.
- * 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.



Don't forget! We are having a church spring cleaning day on Saturday, May 1. Even if you didn't sign up, come and help out for an hour or two, starting at 8:00 am. Come when you can and spruce up our church.



WELCA Fall Retreat Planned

**Are you a BAG Lady?
(Blessed And Gifted)**

The Women of the ELCA will be holding their fall retreat at Imago Dei Village, a Crossways Camp near Clintonville, WI, on September 18-19. The theme this year is Are you a BAG Lady? Blessed and Gifted?, based on 1 Corinthians 12: 4 – "Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit . . ."



The Reverend Judy Deckert will be the retreat leader. Registration will be available this summer and is due by September 7. Scholarships are available. For more information you can check the Synod website or contact Carol Cleveland at cacleveland50@gmail.com.



Visit St. Mark's Website

www.stmarksneenah.org



“If at first you don't succeed, try doing it the way mom told you to in the beginning.”

–Unknown



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 (Jean): office@stmarksneenah.org

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

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

St. Mark's Lutheran Church

140 S. Green Bay Road

Neenah, WI 54956

