



The Messenger

July 2021

St. Mark's Lutheran Church

A member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



"For you were called to freedom, brothers and sisters; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for self-indulgence, but through love become slaves to one another. For the whole law is summed up in a single commandment, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'" (Galatians 5:13-14 NRSV)

Dear partners in ministry,

As a child growing up on a dairy farm, other than the morning and evening chores, we typically took off each Fourth of July to celebrate. Looking back, when I think about Independence Day, images of **small-town parades, cookouts, and fireworks, come to mind. At the time, I didn't give much thought to the freedoms we all enjoy as set forth in our Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and the subsequent Amendments.**

These past few years, I have become increasingly aware of people, or groups of people, who aggressively claim their rights and freedoms as United States citizens. Whether it is the right to bear arms, the right to free speech, the right to marry whom you choose, the right to protest, everyone has a right they are willing to fight for.

Freedom of speech, freedom of religion and expression, freedom from discrimination, and many others, are fundamental rights that need to be protected. And yet our rights and freedoms have limits. The Supreme Court of the United States continues to debate and set limits to establish where one person's right starts to infringe on another person's freedom.

When chaplain Peter Marshall, prayed before the U. S. Senate on April 25, 1947, saying, "May we think of freedom, not as the right to do as we please, but as the opportunity to do what is right." I believe he was looking at our freedoms through a Christian lens.

In the verses above from Galatians, the Apostle Paul is clearly stating that Christian freedom is not to be abused. Even though, through faith in Christ, we are set free from sin, and human rules and doctrine, we are to use that freedom to love and serve our neighbor.

Martin Luther explores the concept of Christian freedom in his 1520 theses, *On the Freedom of the Christian*, and pens these two seemingly contradictory statements:

A Christian is an utterly free man, lord of all, subject to none.

A Christian is an utterly dutiful man, servant to all, subject to all.

Imagine how much better citizens we would be if we all viewed our rights and freedoms as **U.S. citizens through the Christian maxim of "...love your neighbor as yourself."**

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Pastor's Ponderings

Continued from page 1

Let us continue to enjoy our rights and freedoms, even as we respect the rights and freedoms of others and look to serve them in Christian love.

We have much to be thankful for as citizens of these United States, and yet we know the efforts to form a more perfect Union must continue with each generation, **until Thomas Jefferson's words that "all men are created equal," indeed become self-evident for all people.**

God's blessings to all,
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**
- Please call the church office at 920-725-2828 if you would like a DVD of any worship service.



Do you have the gift of hospitality? If so, our Connections Committee could use some help with our Sunday morning Fellowship Hour. Please consider signing up for a Sunday (or two!) and then bring a baked good or snack to share with everyone after the Sunday morning worship service. There are detailed instructions on how to set up for Fellowship, and members of the committee can be there to help you out.

If you would like to bring a cake or something to share to celebrate a special occasion, that is also possible. You can serve it yourself or members of the Connections Committee (or another volunteer) can serve it for you. You can call the church office for more information or talk to any member of the Connections Committee. Please consider helping us out by signing up for Fellowship on the table in the narthex.



MOSES MESSAGE

A Sunday School Update



Hi everyone!! Hope you are having a good summer so far. Wanted to give you a heads up for VBS this year. Three churches in the community are getting together for Vacation Bible School this year, from August 1-5 at Gloria Dei Lutheran Church. A flyer and registration form will be coming to your house in the next week. I hope you will all to attend. Have a great summer!!!

With God's Blessings,

Gwen Hoehne, Sunday School Superintendent





ST. MARK'S CHURCH COUNCIL MINUTES

May 20, 2021



The meeting was called to order at 6:32 pm by Vice-President Pennie Linna.

Roll Call:

Members Present: Mary Jane Hartley, Judy Hellman, Pennie Linna, Mykayla Tharp, Jeff Tharp, Phyllis Ziemke, and Pastor Bob.

Members Excused: Sherri Denney, Bruce Grundman, and Laurie Olson.

Members Unexcused: None

Guest: 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: Pastor Bob led us in devotions with a reading from Matthew 5:35, Praying for Peace. Phyllis Ziemke volunteered for devotions next month.

The June Calendar was not passed around for any changes/additions.

Approval of Minutes for the April 15th, 2021 meeting. MSC by Mary Jane Hartley/Judy Hellman.

Thank You Cards – Ginny Schieck.

Financial Report:

1. Current Budget balance is \$77,367.10
 2. Building Improvement is \$9,301.14
 3. **April's giving was \$16,401.62** – Spending was \$14,946.33.
 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 met with Jared and Christi Gipp and the baptismal sponsors in preparation for the baptism of Isabel May Gipp.
2. I took a week of vacation 4/19/21 - 4/25/21.
3. **I continue to post a Tuesday morning devotional to St. Mark's Facebook page.**
4. **I record and post a Sunday morning children's message to our St. Mark's Facebook page.**
5. I have discontinued meeting with church musicians and members to record music now that we are singing again at our worship services.
6. I am working with Gloria Dei and St. Paul Lutheran Churches in Neenah, along with members of **St. Mark's Church to plan a Confirmation Retreat for our confirmation age youth. This will take place from 5:30 p.m. until 8:00 p.m. on June 9th and 10th. Activities will take place at Gloria Dei Lutheran Church and Memorial Park in Neenah.**
7. I met with the family of Ginny Siebert in preparation for her memorial worship service.
8. **I attended St. Mark's Spring Clean-up Day.**
9. I met with non-members, Robby Miller and Taylor Diemel, in preparation for their June 4th wedding.



10. Confirmation classes for our 6th and 7th graders are now finished until this fall. I will continue to work with our 8th graders in preparation for their Affirmation of Baptism in October.

11. I met twice with St. Mark's Mission and Action team.

12. I have begun doing more home communion visits at more of our members are vaccinated and restriction guidelines are beginning to loosen.

13. I continue to meet with St. Mark's committees as needed.

14. I attended the East-Central Synod of Wisconsin's Virtual Synod Assembly on May 14th and 15th .

15. I listened to several speakers through the on-line presentation of Festival of Homiletics.

16. 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.

MSC Jeff Tharp/Judy Hellman.

Committee Reports:

Christian Education: No Meeting.

Connections:

1. We talked about the Craft Sale and decided to hold it on October 23, 2021. Cost for a table will be \$35.00. Contact will be Sandy Mathenia for details on craft sale. We talked about selling a snack bag at the Craft Sale. All items will be in wrapped and we will sell water and have coffee.
2. We purchased cookies for the New Member Sunday; we packaged them on Saturday and they were distributed on May 2, 2021.
3. We talked about fellowship and when we can resume having refreshments. We agreed the Connections committee will be divided into groups of three, and each will serve a simple snack. The committee will have a sign-up sheet for members to sign up for fellowship. We encourage members to sign up and when a Sunday is open, the Committee will fill in when needed.
4. We plan to meet on May 23, 2021 at 12:30 pm to sort tablecloths in the movie room and label bins better so we can find them. We talked about the size of the tablecloths. Now with some small tables that were donated, we need to discuss getting smaller round clothes. Discussion will continue about cost.

Endowment: No Meeting.

Finance/Stewardship:

1. Mary Jane reviewed the current giving for April giving which was \$16,401.62 and expenditures were \$14,946.33. Our spending was under our giving by \$1,455.29.
2. The committee reviewed financial documents with no questions.

Memorial: No Meeting.

Partnership: No Meeting.

Property:

1. Snow plow guys will be looked into this fall.
2. Call lawn guys about rolling lawn.



- Doris & Victor Gilbert
 - Pat Wenzel
 - Judy Koerner
 - Tracy Feldman
 - Brett Gawlick
 - Ron Forrest
 - Judy Fowler
- Tom & Gwen Hoehne
 - Lori Brehm
 - Todd Hellman



3. Windows on court yard need to be scraped and pointed. Bruce will get a couple of estimates.
4. Ritchie will meet with Ginny Tuesday morning.
5. Lawn mower is ready for Donnie.
6. Lights at the entrance to church need to be painted or replaced.
7. Clean up around garage—Bruce will call Jeff Lee
8. Sign—rerun electric wires. Jason will take on this job.
9. Joe will get Red Mulch for around the church and Bruce will get mulch for tree along Green Bay Road.

Social Ministry:

1. We are planning Graduate Recognition Sunday, which will be on May 30. We hope some will attend.
2. We were nominated for the Selfless Samaritan Award and our Food Pantry won a \$25.00 gift card.

Worship and Music:

1. The Worship & Music Committee discussed Holy Week services. First communion was held on Maundy Thursday. On Easter Sunday, we had two services with communion.
2. Holy Humor Sunday was held the Sunday after Easter. It was well received by all. Pastor Bob reported there were over 200 views of the service.
3. May 2nd was new member Sunday. New members were Terry Stillman and Jan Gray. Hymn books were back in the pews and everyone could sing with their masks on.
4. **May 9th was Mother's Day. Carnations were ordered from Pic & Save for all ladies attending worship that day.**
5. May 23rd is Pentecost. All people are reminded to wear red that day.
6. May 30th is Holy Trinity Sunday. It is also the day we honor all graduates.

Youth: No Meeting

In- Person Task Force Meeting:

Task Force will meet the first week of June, to discuss resuming after worship fellowship time and other opportunities.

The Mission & Vision Team:

The Mission & Vision Team met on May 10 with a presentation from GSB, our consulting firm, on the results of our survey. It was noted that 64 surveys were completed. A brief discussion on the results followed the presentation. Team members were asked to review the survey results further and read through the comments, on their own time and prior to our next in-person meeting. Our next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, May 25 at 5:30 pm. The team, based on the survey, will begin the development **of St. Mark's core values and review the relevance of our current mission statement, Grow in Faith, To Love & Serve.** Our next virtual meeting, in addition to the May 25 meeting, is scheduled for Monday, May 24 at 6:30 pm. In-person meeting option will be in the Fellowship Hall.

Committee Reports: MSC by Judy Hellman/Phyllis Ziemke.

Unfinished Business: None

New Business:

In-Person Task Force will meet on June 1st to discuss the continuing wearing of masks at church.

Mission & Visioning Committee: Surveys are in and they will be going over them.

Synod Assembly: The key note speaker for the 2021 Synod Assembly was Rev. Dr. Anna Madsen. She used her most recent book, **"I Can Do No Other"**, as the basis for her presentation.

There were four resolutions that came before the assembly, all of which passed, although none of them unanimously:

- Resolution #1: asked congregations to be proactive in opening the way for women, people of color, and LGBTQIA candidates for rostered ministry.
- Resolution #2: asked congregation to support ELCA World Hunger efforts by promoting, and **participating in "Souper Bowl Sunday", "Good Gifts", the "40 Days of Lent"; and by** educating and encouraging members about other resources and information that is available regarding World Hunger.
- Resolution #3: asked leaders within the congregation to promote and encourage the women members to participate in Women of the ELCA.
- Resolution #4: asked congregations to provide opportunities for members to have conversation and discussion about becoming anti-racist.

MSC by Jeff Tharp/Phyllis Ziemke to adjourn at 7:20 pm.

We closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Next meeting is June 17th, 2021 at 6:30 pm.

Submitted by Recording Secretary,
Donna Joachim

Dear Friends at St. Mark's,

"Thank you everyone for the cards and prayers during my illness. I still have a ways to go for complete recovery. Thanks again for the prayers.

With God's Blessings,
Gwen Hoehne



All Aboard for VBS!

Vacation Bible School is fast approaching! Be sure to sign up and get your ticket for a fun-filled experience on the Rocky Railway. There will be Bible stories, songs, games, treats, and lots of adventures. The dates are August 1-5 from 5:30-8:00 pm each night. The place: Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, 1140 Tullar Road in Neenah. Sign-up forms are available in the church office.



Are you ready for some fun? We are going to have a church picnic after the worship service on July 11! All are invited and all food and drink will be provided. The only thing you have to bring is yourself and maybe a lawn chair if you want to sit outside and watch the fun and games going on outside after we eat. So come to worship at 10:00 am on July 11th and plan to stay for some fun and fellowship at our first church picnic of the season!





The Mission of the Month for July is our very own St. Mark's Food Pantry. Each Wednesday, from 9:00 –11:00 am, our food pantry is open to anyone in need of food in this community. Much of the food for our pantry is **purchased from Feeding America**. We also have faithful St. Mark's members who regularly contribute food and other groceries to the pantry. But each week our Food Pantry volunteers go grocery shopping for the pantry and need our support to buy these necessary items.

During these unprecedented times, our pantry has been especially busy as many people found themselves unemployed because of the pandemic. If you would like to donate to our food pantry, please check the "Mission" column on your giving envelopes and mail them to: St Mark's Lutheran Church, 140 S. Green Bay Rd., Neenah, WI 54956, or bring them with you and put them in the fish bowl when you attend worship anytime in July. Thank you for supporting our Food Pantry!



Food Pantry Receives Grant

Our food pantry was blessed with a gift card from Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin. The gift card was the result of a grant that Feeding America got from Scheiber Foods to support local grocery stores and community programs. The designated store in our area was the Piggly Wiggly on Murdock Avenue in Oshkosh. The card, which is valued at \$935, can be used solely to purchase food from Piggly Wiggly (no paper products, cleaning supplies, etc.).

Pat Thompson, one of our dedicated Food Pantry volunteers, went to Piggly Wiggly on June 2nd to pick up the gift card. She is in the photo to the right on the far right. Many thanks to Schreiber Foods for supporting our Food Pantry!





Notes from the In-Person Task Force Meeting

The In-Person Task Force met and reviewed the current recommendations from the CDC, regarding masks, along with other Neenah church procedures. After discussion, it was decided to make the wearing of masks optional. It was further decided to allow outside groups to have coffee and food. Outside groups should continue to clean table tops after use. Church door signs have been updated to reflect the change. Laurie Olson will work with Jean in the church office to ensure outside groups are informed of the changes. We will continue to abide by the following procedures: Do not attend in-person worship or enter the church building if are sick or have recently been sick. Maintain social distancing between family groups (6-feet). There will be a maximum of people per pew or a family. At this time, we will not shake hands or hug during the sharing of peace. Pre-packaged Communion elements will be used on Communion Sundays.

With the success of the graduation reception, it was decided to resume weekly after-worship fellowship on June 13 with the following procedures in place:

HOSTING FELLOWSHIP DURING COVID-19

Place fellowship snacks/treats on individual serving plates/bowls.

Put a plastic eating utensil with each plate/bowl.

Place on stainless steel tables for individual pick-up.

Just before worship is concluding, pre-pour regular coffee & decaf and water & juice. These go on the brown tables against the wall. The host should pour additional cups of beverages, as needed.

Tablecloths will not be used at this time.

The Task Force agreed to meet in a few weeks to review COVID-19 status/data and make further procedure changes, as needed.

Our Sunday Servants

Date	Assisting Minister	Reader	Greeters	Ushers	Counters	Altar Guild
July 4	Jean Memken	Tara Dieck	Nancy Maslow Evie Peterson	Team 9	Jeff Tharp Susan Antonneau Kim Wallmuller	Ginny Schieck
July 11	Bruce Grundman	Pennie Linna	Pat Thompson Phyllis Ziemke	Team 1	Jane Arps Ellen LaMarche Emil Leppiaho	Ginny Schieck
July 18	Jeff Tharp	Bruce Grundman	Joy Case Jenny Case	Team 2	Doug Sebestead Renie Sebestead Fern Fuhrman	Ginny Schieck
July 25	Judy Hellman	Jeri Travis	Nancy Bricco Karen Jordan	Team 3	Bruce Grundman Lois Kemp Judy Olson	Ginny Schieck

Our Approachable Lord

There is not a hint of one person who was afraid to draw near Jesus. There were those who mocked him. There were those who were envious of him. There were those who misunderstood him. There were those who revered him. But there was not one person who considered him too holy, too divine or too celestial to touch. There was not one person who was reluctant to approach him for fear of being rejected. Remember that. — Max Lucado, *God Came Near*



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.

Linwood Place Announces Concert Series

Linwood Place, at 425 N. Linwood Avenue in Appleton, will be having a concert series **this summer**. St. Mark's is a co-sponsor of these free outdoor concerts. Concert goers are asked to bring a lawn chair and a free-will donation will be gathered to help defray the costs. There will also be a 50/50 drawing.

All the concerts will be at 2:00 pm on the Linwood place lawn. In case of rain, concerts will move inside to the Linwood commons and cancelled to the general public due to space constraints.



Here is rundown of concerts this summer:

July 11 — The Maroszek Brothers (Polka Band)

August 8 — Voices of Peace (Southern Gospel)

September 19 — Prince of Peace Spirit — (Bluegrass Band)

Come and enjoy some great music and fellowship!

Timely Words . . .

We still remain true to the faith of our fathers who established religious liberty when the nation began. We must remember, too, that our forebears in every generation, and wherever they established their homes, made prompt and generous provision for the institutions of religion. We must continue their steadfast reliance upon the providence of God.

No greater blessing could come to our land today than a revival of the spirit of religion. I doubt if there is any problem in the world today — social, political or economic — that would not find happy solution if approached in the spirit of the Sermon on the Mount. — Franklin D. Roosevelt, 1938



St. Mark's is the *volunteer sponsor* of this event!

St. Mark's logo appears on event publicity materials, including the back of the 850+ participant t-shirts. A St. Mark's info sheet will also be included in participant bags.

**Held on Saturday, July 17 at
O'Hauser Park, Neenah
7:00 am - Noon**

15 Volunteers Needed

Volunteers needed for registration, parking, obstacle course stations, etc. All volunteers receive a t-shirt.

Sign Up Sheet is on the table in church narthex.

We 9 volunteers signed up so far. Please consider helping out with this community event!

Confirmation Retreat a Fun in the (Hot!) Sun

On June 9th and 10th, confirmands from St. Mark's, St. Paul's, and Gloria Dei Lutheran Churches in Neenah gathered for a retreat at Memorial Park. It was hot, but everyone had a great time and enjoyed the activities and lessons that the pastors from each church (along with a few adult volunteers) prepared for them.



Here are the confirmands, along with some of the leaders and volunteer helpers.



Left: Participants take respite from the hot summer sun for one of their lessons.

Right: Pastor Bob leads the singing!





Visit St. Mark's Website

www.stmarksneenah.org

"If you want to touch the past, touch a rock. If you want to touch the present, touch a flower. If you want to touch the future, touch a life."—Author 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

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140 S. Green Bay Road

Neenah, WI 54956

