



The Messenger

September 2021

St. Mark's Lutheran Church

A member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



"For I am the LORD your God who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, Do not fear; I will help you." (Isaiah 41:13)

Dear Friends in Christ,

As you know, St. Mark's COVID Task Force recently made the decision to require masking once again during our Sunday morning worship services. On the one hand, this was a difficult decision to make as we are all tired of masking and physically distancing, and none of us want to go back to more restrictions. Still, when we looked at this objectively and simply looked at the data and the advice of local health officials, there was no other clear alternative.



The list of reasons that warranted this decision are many and I won't attempt to share them in this forum. However, it was not just data and professional medical advice that drove our conversations, and swayed our decision, but also several personal reports of people (both vaccinated and unvaccinated) who have been bedridden or hospitalized with the Delta Variant. Ultimately, our main concern is keeping our members safe and not contributing to the growing problem in our community.

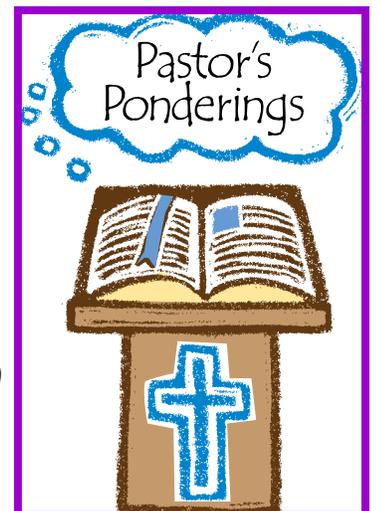
During any difficult time, one of the most challenging things for a Christian to comprehend is how God is at work within the chaos. This can be true for personal disappointments, community tragedies, and yes, even during this time of a worldwide pandemic.

The Bible verse above comes from what biblical scholars call Second Isaiah. Beginning in chapter 40 of Isaiah, a new prophet (Second Isaiah) brings words of comfort to a nation living in exile in Babylon. The prophet assures the people that God will set the captives free and return them to their land. In 538 B.C.E., the Persian ruler Cyrus captured Babylon and allowed the exiles to return home to rebuild their lives and their temple in Jerusalem.

In chapter 45 of Isaiah, God says, *"I have aroused Cyrus in righteousness, and I will make all his paths straight; he shall build my city and set my exiles free..."* (Isaiah 45:13)

God uses actual people to serve God's intentions. In this case, God used the foreign ruler Cyrus, the king of Persia, to set God's chosen people free and to bring them home once more.

(Continued on page 2)



Pastor's Ponderings

(Continued from page 1)

It is still the same today. God uses men and women to serve God's purposes. I believe this is true with the fight against the COVID virus. God has used scientists to develop a credible vaccine that has saved countless lives. God has used doctors and nurses to administer the vaccine and to care for patients who have become hospitalized. God uses friends and neighbors to bring people to vaccination clinics, to care for those who are homebound, and to encourage those who are discouraged.

Let's us continue to do our part to be a positive influence in the community during this difficult time. And when you see someone in need who is discouraged, may you be moved to say, "Do not fear; I will help you." After all you never know when you may be serving God's good purpose.

Servants together,
Pastor Bob

Worship With Us



- In-person worship at St. Mark's at 10:00 am on Sundays
- Online Worship: 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.



MOSES MESSAGE

A Sunday School Update



Hi everyone!! Summer is coming to an end really fast. School will be starting soon and everyone will be busy with school. We have been doing a lot of thinking about Sunday School starting and have decided NOT TO START until October 3rd. Also, we have changed the starting time for Sunday School to 9:00 am until 9:45 am. We have decided that with a shorter time for Sunday School, it will be easier for kids to get there. Also, a lot easier to plan lessons. Maybe more kids and parents will stay for church. But, please remember that since Covid-19 is increasing, things can change. We might not be starting in October, so please watch for any information about Sunday School starting. We are being very careful with Covid-19 spreading so fast. We want everyone to stay safe and healthy.

BIRTHDAYS

9/1 Leland Tharp

Happy Birthday, Leland!!

With God's Blessings,

Gwen Hoehne, Sunday School Superintendent



ST. MARK'S CHURCH COUNCIL MINUTES

July 15, 2021

The meeting was called to order at 6:35 pm by President Laurie Olson.

Roll Call:

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

Members Excused: Sherri Denney, Mykayla Tharp, and Jeff Tharp.

Members Unexcused: None

Guest: None

In keeping with the COVID 19 guidelines everyone met in person at St. Mark's. Wearing our face masks is now optional, but we are still practicing social distancing six feet apart.

Devotions: **Phyllis led us in devotions with a reading "What is the Church."**

Judy Hellman volunteered for devotions next month.

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

Approval of Minutes for the June 17th, 2021 meeting. MSC by Bruce Grundman/Phyllis Ziemke

Thank You Cards - **Mykayla Tharp for all her hard work on the St. Mark's summer splash event/church picnic.**

Financial Report:

1. Current Budget balance is \$81,015.41
2. Building Improvement is \$10,307.14
3. **June's giving was \$13,141.33**- Spending was \$13,502.42
4. Giving needs to be around \$3,500.00 to \$4,000.00 per Sunday to meet spending.

MSC by Judy Hellman/Pennie Linna.

Pastor's Report:

1. I made several home visits and hospital/nursing care visits.
2. I attended St. Marks church committee meetings as needed.
3. I met with St. Marks Mission and Action committee.
4. I Recorded and posted Sunday morning children's messages to our St. Marks Facebook Page.
5. I took a week of vacation 6/21 to 6/27.
6. I attended a VBS planning meeting at Gloria Dei Lutheran Church.
7. I meet with the ELCA churches of Neenah to discuss up-coming youth events.
8. I attended a couple of meetings to help plan St. Marks summer splash event/church picnic.
9. I attended the Appleton conference monthly zoom meeting.

MSC by Phyllis Ziemke/ Mary Jane Hartley

Committee Reports:

Christian Education: No Meeting.



Connections:

1. Things we talked about: Picnic on July 11th 2021 Discussed serving. Chose the menu: Brats, Buns, two salads, baked beans, chips, lemonade, and ice cream cup. Will have food served. Clean up. We will set up on Saturday.
2. Fellowship when no one signs up. Have two people do the Sundays that are open as a team: will have a list of teams. Suggested we serve, mini doughnuts, doughnut holes, Danish, Rice Crispi's bars, fruit cups, mini muffins, cupcakes, or homemade treats, and serve them on plates or napkins. Wear gloves and pour coffee, juice, and water. Plate what you are serving on table before church is over.
3. We have a sheet by the coffee pots and have instructions on how to serve during the covid-19 pandemic.
4. Table cloths: Amazon has 60-inch round tablecloths made of vinyl (all colors) that are nice and cost about \$11. We decided to wait and see. We could also use placemats.
5. The Craft Fair: October 23, 2021, 9am to 2pm. Setup times: Friday 7 pm to 9 pm and Saturday 6 am to 9 am. How many: 25 or 30 tables. The space for each table is 8 to 10 feet. Have asked Joe Deckers to help us do the taping off for tables. Entry fee is \$25 per table. Food will be simple: A bag with cheese, crackers, chips, and a bottle of water for \$3.
6. Things to do over summer: Bingo, Visit somewhere like nature center, new zoo, FVLH concerts, other area sites, movie. Plan a get together maybe in September with another church in the park.
7. Call some friends from church that we have not seen and invite them to church or the picnic. Maybe call some that have children or grandkids or invite a friend who does.
8. Card for Gwen was signed by all attending and sent.
9. Any issues or thoughts: Thinking about Gods Work Our Hands, Church in the park, Timber Rattlers game. Will discuss at our next meeting.



- Doris & Victor Gilbert
 - Pat Wenzel
 - Judy Koerner
 - Tracy Feldman
 - Brett Gawlick
 - Ron Forrest
 - Judy Fowler
 - Tom Hoehne
 - Lori Brehm
 - Todd Hellman
- Chuck Baumgartner
- Kevin and Megan
 - Pearl

Endowment:

The endowment committee is responsible for managing Endowment Funds and granting requests. The fund was established in 1985 with a gift from Louis Baer. The fund has grown with other contributions since then. The Endowment Fund grants request based on the money earned while preserving the principal of the account. The Principal is now \$162,939.00. Grants must be used to better the Christian church as a whole. Some examples include the following: Special music, Bible camp, Lay school, youth groups, Bible study materials, missionaries, and mission churches.

The committee meets as needed to review request and monitor our investments.

Endowment Principal January 2021: \$162,939.00

Grant money still available: \$23,574.00

2021 Grants to date:

Synod Mission and Mission program	\$1,800
Confirmation Camp with Neenah ELCA	915
Fox Valley Lutheran Homes Music series	<u>1,000</u>
<u>Total Grants 2021 January-July:</u>	<u>\$3,715</u>

Grant money still available in 2021: \$19,859

Please consider writing a grant request for camp, lay school, Christian speaker, bible study materials for a new group, or a new idea. Request forms are available in the church office.

Finance/Stewardship:

Mary Jane reviewed current giving for June which was \$13,141.33 and Expenditures were \$13,502.42. Our spending was over our giving by \$306.91.

The committee has started to explore whether the checking account could be an interest checking account and which financial institution has the best options.

Received a wonderful donation from Shirley Schloemer for \$1,500. This will go into the general fund.

Memorial: No Meeting.

Partnership: No Meeting.

Property:

1. Inmans will be here to paint court yard windows.
2. Joe called Cintas-Paper towel orders will be on hold until September.
3. Chair guides need to be replaced. Joe Deckers is calling around to locate what we need.
4. Tables in Mary Room will be getting new leg glides.
5. Dumpster will be put back in the coral.
6. New light switch for hall way has been installed.
7. Looking for one or two people to take over cutting the grass

Social Ministry: No Meeting.

Worship and Music:

1. June services were discussed. Candy bars, which were purchased from the bible campers, were given **to all the men at church on Father's Day.**
2. **Videos on Mother's Day and Father's Day were well received as was the NICODEMUS video. We felt** the videos added variety to the Sunday sermon.
3. Our church picnic will be on July 11.
4. We plan to have a hymn sing on July 25th.

Youth: No Meeting

Committee Reports: MSC by Judy Hellman/Phyllis Ziemke

Unfinished Business:

Life Line Screening needed an answer before the executive committee was able to meet.

New Business:

1. Mission and Vision update: Recent Survey on Mission Statement Choices need to be filled in and returned to the office.
2. In-person Task Force: They will be meeting in 2-3 weeks.

3. Appleton conference and Wisconsin Council of Church have approached different area churches to host a pop-up clinic in their parking lots to help get more Covid vaccines out to the people. MSC by Bruce Grundman/Phyllis Ziemke Pastor to follow up to see if there is still a need.
4. **A couple from out of the area has asked to use St. Mark's for their Wedding Ceremony with their own ELCA Pastor officiating.** After discussion, MSC by Phyllis Ziemke/Pennie Linna. They would need to **follow our wedding guidelines.** Would possibly need someone from St. Mark's present there that day to serve as host. Pastor will reach out to them.
5. Community Table served 79 people.

MSC by Judy Hellman/Pastor Bob to adjourn at 7:30 pm.

We closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Next meeting is August 19th, 2021 at 6:30 pm.

Submitted by Recording Secretary,
Donna Joachim



Lay School of Ministry: Synod Offers Classes to Equip Lay Ministers

Lay School. It's a funny name. But the term "lay" stands for Laity from the Greek word for "people." Not everyone is called to pastoral leadership. But pastoral leadership is not the only kind of leadership that exists in the church. Through the baptized, the Holy Spirit is at work feeding, healing, teaching, **restoring, and loving. That's what Christ's mission is all about.**

The Holy Spirit equips and calls people to lead church councils, bible studies, Sunday School, and youth meetings. Some are called to serve on teams that plan for new pastors, engaging people in worship, sharing the mission of Jesus in community. Maybe God is calling you to deepen your sense of what faith **is all about. If that's the case, lay school is for you.**

Lay School is either a two-year program with **"Core Classes" that take you through the basics.** OR, you can just learn one class at a time.

Fantastic classes are available to you and there is scholarship assistance ready if you are in need. Topics include: recent Christian history, deep dives in Old Testament texts, how we engage the Bible, putting words to our faith through the practice of theology, and taking time to consider what on earth is happening to and through the church these days. No matter your interest, lay school has got you covered. Instructors include faculty from our seminaries, church leaders like our Bishop, Rev. Anne Edison Albright, and ELCA pastors.

The first classes are September 17th and 18th, so if you are interested, you need to register soon. Classes are Friday evenings and Saturday mornings (with meals included) at the Synod office in Appleton. You can also meet virtually through Google Meet. If you are interested, but have questions, talk to Pastor Bob or email ecswlayschool@gmail.com if you would like to have a conversation with someone about the lay school.

Registration forms can be found online at www.ecswlayschool.org, or ask Jean in the church office to print the forms for you.





The Mission of the Month for September is the Pine Ridge Reconciliation Center which is part of the Lutheran Lakota Shared Ministries. They focus on four different ministry outreach areas.

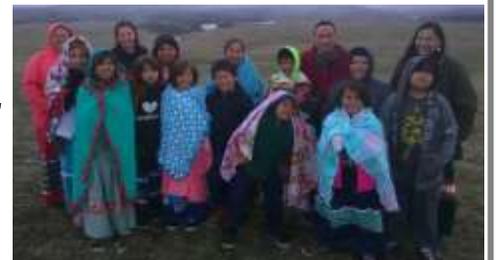
The Threshold/Common Basket ministries includes everything that is distributed out their door including new quilts and blankets, diapers and wipes, morning coffee, mid-day sandwiches, hot meals, and hygiene kits. In the winter months, it also includes our energy assistance matching program.



Cultural immersions are visiting groups who come to learn about Lakota history and culture from the Lakota people. We strive to provide programming and presentations that foster mutual conversations and greater understanding of each other. While Immersions are on hold because of COVID, they are updating the center to be ready for guests to return.

The Lutheran/Lakota Job Corp employs local people from the community of Pine Ridge to run and assist the ministries of the Reconciliation Center. This ministry provides people with a way to earn a living and support their families. They have added a mentoring element to the program for young adults.

Children and Youth— Currently, the Pine Ridge Reconciliation Center hosts Kids Time on weekdays after school offering a safe place to come and play and build relationships with the Kids Time staff. Early in 2019, Pre-Teen Time was also added for 9-12 year olds to come, share a meal, and participate in age appropriate activities, field trips, and cultural learning. We recently added a Teen Time to continue to walk with the youth into adulthood.



Please consider support this worthwhile agency this month. Include your donation in your offering envelope and mark **“Mission of the Month”** on the front of your envelope.

Labor Day brings to mind picnics, cookouts and family gatherings. Falling on the first Monday in September, it marks the unofficial end of summer and the beginning of a new school year. But the holiday was created in 1882 to honor the social and economic contributions of American workers. In a strong economy, it's easy to take for granted the ability to work and be paid well. But times have changed during the past few years, with many people still struggling with unemployment. During our holiday celebrations this year, let's give thanks for the jobs we have, pray for those who aren't as fortunate, and offer words of encouragement or help to someone who needs it.



Thanks to everyone who donates so faithfully to the Food Pantry. We have done a steady business all summer. In July, we had 43 families getting food to feed 159 people. We try to help them provide for their families and as we get information about services that may help them, we try to inform them. We are always in need of paper products, laundry and dish soap, sugar, and peanut butter and jam. We also can use many often used pantry items that we use in our kitchens every day. We do thank you for your help.

The Social Ministry Committee will meet on Monday, September 13, in the library.

— Karen Jordan



The Linwood Place Summer Concert Series has just one more concert this summer. On September 19th, a bluegrass band called Prince of Peace Spirit will be on stage. The concert is at 2:00 pm on the Linwood Place lawn. Bring a lawn chair. There will be a free-will donation and 50/50 drawing. **St. Mark's is a co-sponsor of this concert.**

UPCOMING OPPORTUNITIES

ESTHER 2021 Annual Banquet - **"Bridging Our Differences"**

Date: Sunday, November 7, 2021 5:00 pm Location: Liberty Hall, 800 Eisenhower Dr, Kimberly
 Keynote Speaker: Pardeep Kaleka, Executive Director, Interfaith Conference of Greater Milwaukee and the Zeidler Group. Founder of Serve 2 Unite. Co-author (with Arno Michaelis) of *The Gift of Our Wounds*.

Winnebago County Health Department is sponsoring a "Step Up" program that will improve balance and prevent serious falls. The class meets Thursdays from 1-3:00 pm at the Oshkosh Senior Center. Classes start September 9 and the cost is \$15. To register or for more information, contact the Health Department at 920-232-3000.

Powerful Tools for Caregivers— Taking care of yourself while caring for others is a 6-week to equip caregivers with the tools they need to take care of themselves while caring for a loved one. It will be held on Wednesdays, starting October 6 at the Outagamie County ADRC, 320 S. Walnut Street, in Appleton. Registration is required by September 20th at 920-832-5778.

Our Sunday Servants

Date	Assisting Minister	Reader	Greeters	Ushers	Counters	Altar Guild
September 5	Tom Wenzel	Gwen Hoehne	The Blank Family	Team 9	Jeff Tharp Susan Antonneau Kim Wallmuller	Gwen Hoehne
September 12	Jean Memken	Pennie Linna	Emil Leppiaho Jean Memken	Team 1	Jane Arps Ellen LaMarche Emil Leppiaho	Gwen Hoehne
September 19	Bruce Grundman	LaVerne Arndt	Laurie & John Olson	Team 2	Gwen Hoehne Doug Sebstead Renie Sebstead	Gwen Hoehne
September 26	Sherri Denney	Jenny Case	Pennie Linna Betty Linna	Team 3	Bruce Grundman Lois Kemp Judy Olson	Gwen Hoehne

Sponsored by the St. Mark's Lutheran Church, Neenah

Funding Provided by the St. Mark's Endowment



SUNDAY, OCTOBER 17 @ 7:00 pm

Menominee Nation Arena, Oshkosh

Meet at St. Mark's Church by 4:30 PM for Pizza/Drinks/Fellowship

(Please be prompt)

Return to St. Mark's around 9:30/10:00 PM

PLEASE NOTE: ALL ATTENDING MUST RIDE THE BUS

WE WILL NOT MEET UP WITH ANYONE AT THE CONCERT VENUE

Cost Includes: Pizza/drink @ St. Mark's, Bus ride to and from the arena, and concert ticket.

COST: \$5.00

Youth 6th grade and under must be accompanied by a parent/guardian. {Adult chaperones will be sitting with the unattended youth-those 7th grade+.}

LIMITED TICKETS AVAILABLE

Get a registration form outside the church office.

Turn your completed form into St. Mark's Church Office.

Payment required at time of sign up.





The team met twice in August (another meeting is scheduled for August 31) and will be taking the mission statement and core values (See below) to the September Church Council meeting for approval. The team is working on establishing four goals, to be implemented within the next 12-36 months. The goals will be presented to council, as well.

Mission Statement

Celebrating the joy of faith through love and service

Core Values

Community: Service through sharing, supporting and providing to our church, area and world.

Worship: Celebrating God's Love.

Fellowship: Coming together to celebrate life's joys and helping to carry life's challenges.

Serving With Gladness

On Sunday, September 12, we all have a chance to serve God and our **neighbor during the annual "God's work. Our hands." Sunday.**

There are four different ways to participate this year. Two are actual servant events and two are contributions of items. Check out the opportunities below. Then, please consider how you want to help out this year and make plans to participate.



Donation Servant Events:

- ◇ **Donate items to our St. Mark's Food Pantry.** This year, our food pantry is requesting donations of peanut butter, jam (prefer NO grape), canned fruit, and dish soap. You can bring items to **the church narthex and put them in the yellow bin labeled "FOOD PANTRY."**
- ◇ Donate items for residents of Linwood Place. We are collecting items to put in gift bags for the residents of Linwood Place/Fox Valley Lutheran Homes. Items to donate include: Cough drops, individually wrapped hard candy, tissue packs, disposable masks, and word search and crossword puzzle books.

Activity Servant Events:

- ◇ Key Chain and Thank You Card Making (SIGN UP REQUIRED). Stay after church on the 12th and create some nice mementos for our local community service providers. A bag lunch will be provided, and there will be someone to instruct you on making these gifts.
- ◇ Yardwork at Linwood Place/Fox Valley Lutheran Homes (SIGN UP REQUIRED) Meet at the church or at Linwood Place (425 N. Linwood in Appleton) after church to help spread mulch, trim shrubs, and sweep the parking area, etc. Bring work gloves and wear sturdy shoes. A bag lunch will be provided.



Whether you choose to donate or participate in an activity, we hope everyone will take part in this year's "God's work. Our hands." Sunday. Let's all "Serve the Lord with Gladness" on September 12.

VBS — A Rocky Railway that was Fun for All

By Jenny Case

Gloria Dei, St. Mark's, St. Paul and Our Savior's Lutheran Churches in Neenah combined to hold Vacation Bible School on August 1-5, 2021. Gloria Dei was the host church.



Jenny and Mykayla



Jenny and Mary Jane

The Theme was “Rocky Railway, Jesus’ Power Pulls Us Through.”

Due to Covid, masks were worn by the children and adults.

The kids received a ticket on the first night, which they wrote their name on. They had to pick up their ticket when they checked in every night.

Around 38 kids attended and there were around 25 teenage and adult helpers. Pastor Bob, Jenny Case, Mary Jane Hartley, and Mykayla Tharp **were the helpers from St. Mark's.**

The kids learned that Jesus’ Power Pulls You Through Life. They had fun singing songs with actions, learning about trusting in Jesus, and laughing.



The kids “high-5” one of the leaders.

I assisted with games outdoors and it was great to see the kids and their crew leaders having so much fun playing the games together.

A big thank you goes out to all the churches who participated in **this summer’s VBS! Thank you to all who helped out! And thank you to Gloria Dei for being the host church!**



Mykayla leads one of the outdoor activities.

A Volunteer's Story

By Mykayla Tharp

I was given the amazing opportunity to volunteer as a youth leader at Gloria Dei's “Rocky Railroad” Vacation Bible School. We started every evening as one big group, singing joyful praises to the Lord, and finding out the message we would be focusing on that day. Carrying that message around, the kids watched real-life stories from kids around the world, enjoyed a snack, recreated a story from the Bible, created a craft to remind us of God's message, and enjoyed some outdoor games. All children then came back together, danced, and sang songs such as “This Train is Bound for Glory.” By the excitement in the kid's eyes, you could see their love for Jesus and all the people that were teaching them about him. I was very happy I could be a part of this experience, not only to watch kids learn about Jesus but also be reminded of Jesus's love for me as well. And just as all the kids would chant... “Trust Jesus!”





Visit St. Mark's Website

www.stmarksneenah.org



Do we have your email address?

Please send an e-mail to office@stmarksneenah.org so we can update our church records.



Answers

Answers to prayers come in various ways, sometimes in minutes, sometimes in days. And some take years to fully unfold the harvest of love and blessings they hold.



Answers to prayers come in various forms, sometimes in sunlight, sometimes through storms. Some blossom early, and some blossom late, but each one will flower — have faith and wait!

— Helen Inwood, *His Mysterious Ways*

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

