



The Messenger

November 2021

St. Mark's Lutheran Church

A member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



"A psalm of thanksgiving. Shout with joy to the LORD, all the earth! Worship the LORD with gladness. Come before him, singing with joy. Acknowledge that the LORD is God! He made us, and we are his. We are his people, the sheep of his pasture. Enter his gates with thanksgiving; go into his courts with praise. Give thanks to him and praise his name. For the LORD is good. His unfailing love continues forever, and his faithfulness continues to each generation." (Psalm 100: New Living Translation)

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I read recently that Psalm 100 is second only to the 23rd Psalm, as the most popular and beloved Psalm in the Bible. Although the Psalm is only 5 verses long, it is a beautiful invitation to all the earth to praise and worship God who both creates us and sustains us.

This Psalm came to mind for me as we turn our calendars to November and look forward to our national holiday of Thanksgiving. Each of us have so much to be thankful for and sometimes it takes a holiday like Thanksgiving to remind us. That is not to say that we don't have individual fears or concerns, but when our troubles are kept in perspective, and set alongside of God's grace and mercy, they do seem more manageable.

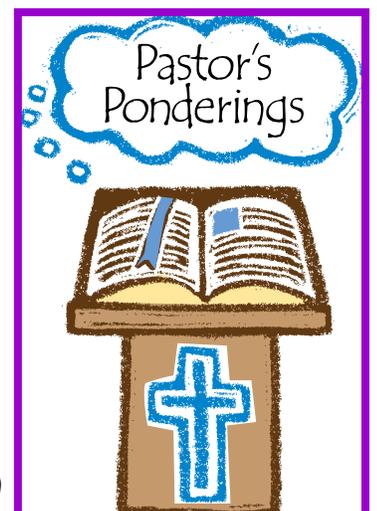
The reasons to be thankful will vary from person to person. Some are thankful for life changing events, such as getting a driver's license, graduating from high school or college, the birth of a child, a new relationship, or maybe a promotion at work. Still others are thankful for the on-going love and support of family and friends, the ability to hear beautiful music or a child's laughter, the ability to see wonderful works of art or the vibrant colors of a sunset. When we truly set our minds to a spirit of thankfulness, we can't help but acknowledge God's many blessings.

The psalmist invites us to show our appreciation for God's love and faithfulness in our act of worship. In Psalm 100, we are encouraged to enter God's gates with thanksgiving and go into God's courts with praise as we give thanks and praise God's holy name.

This past couple of years, Covid-19 has made it difficult to fully celebrate and worship as we would like, and yet, I give thanks for all of you and your patience as we have gone through this difficult time together as a community of faith.

I am thankful for those who attended parking lot worship in the bitter cold. I am thankful for those who mask even though they may not be comfortable. I am thankful for those who are willing to accept an elbow bump rather than a handshake or hug. I am thankful for those who feel safer to worship from home and tune into our on Facebook worship each week.

(Continued on Page 2)



Pastor's Ponderings

(Continued from Page 1)

I am thankful for our church council and our In-person Task Force for doing the difficult job of balancing safety with the desire for normalcy. I am thankful for all of you who continue to place the safety of others as your priority.

Called into a community where our main concern is loving God with all our heart, soul, and strength, and our neighbors as ourselves, maintaining an attitude of thankfulness is important, especially during difficult times. As we join together to help one another through these trying times, let us continue to give **thanks to God and praise God's name.** *For the LORD is good. His unfailing love continues forever, and his faithfulness continues to each generation."*

Thanking God for each of you,

Pastor Bob



Thanksgiving Eve Service Planned

This year, members of St. Mark's will gather with friends from Gloria Dei Lutheran Church and Our Savior Lutheran Church for a Thanksgiving Eve Service to remember and give thanks for the blessings that God has given us. The service will be held at 6:30 pm at Our Savior Lutheran Church, 809 S. Commercial Street, in Neenah. Come and join your St. Mark's family to worship and thank our gracious God for all His blessings!



MOSES MESSAGE

A Sunday School Update



Well, October is over and we are moving on to November and the holidays. Time is sure going fast this year. I hope you all have a chance to watch the Sunday Morning Sunday School at 9:00 am on St. Mark's Facebook page. This month is Thanksgiving and a time to think what you are thankful for. Be sure to thank God for all he has given us. We should be thankful for food, clothing, homes, family and friends, and nature. So, everyone have a good Thanksgiving and enjoy your family and friends, and be thankful for all you have.

BIRTHDAYS

Sophia Kersten – 11/16

Dylan Steeber – 11/22

Happy Birthday To All!!!

With God's Blessings,

Gwen Hoehne, Sunday School Superintendent



Voices of Peace Gospel Group Re-Scheduled

We were all disappointed when the Voices of Peace gospel group could not participate in our worship service on October 10th. But thankfully, they have re-scheduled and will be with us on November 14th during our regular worship service at 10:00 am.

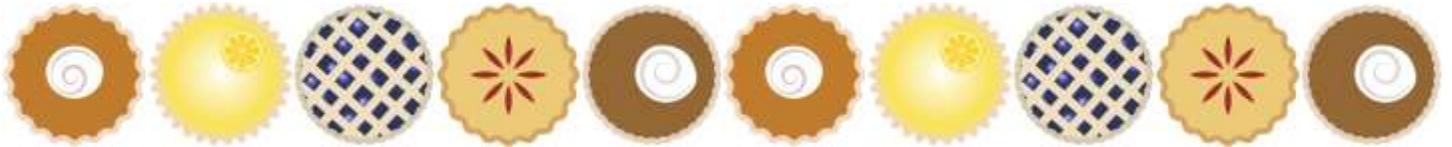
The mission of the Voices of Peace is to share their faith in music, song, and testimony, so it will inform and encourage people to experience a personal relationship with a loving God through His Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ. They began in 1997 when they launched the 1st outdoor Voices of Peace Gospel Fest in the Hilbert Civic Park, Hilbert, Wisconsin, which continues to be held 2 days annually, on the third Friday and Saturday in August. This 2-day celebration of song and music has expanded through the years and has inspired thousands for the past decade. The group has written 15 original songs and recorded nine CDs. Their music can be heard on numerous radio stations throughout the Midwest, Alaska, Canada and literally, around the world. They have also appeared on several TV stations throughout Wisconsin. Their music is soothing, comforting, and easy listening, and their goal is to not only provide Christian entertainment, but to minister to those who are searching for a closer walk with God.

We have a joy-filled service of worship and praise planned for **the 14th, and you won't want to miss it. We will sing quite a few favorite gospel tunes, and the Voices of Peace group will perform several gospel song selections before our service begins, so you will want to get to church early on that day.**

Don't miss the opportunity to praise God with the sounds of joyful Gospel music.



Voices of Peace Gospel Group



Our Sunday Servants

Date	Assisting Minister	Reader	Greeters	Ushers	Counters	Altar Guild
November 7	Sherri Denney	Jenny Case	Betty Linna Pennie Linna	Team 1	Jeff Tharp Susan Antonneau Fern Fuhrmann	Ginny Schieck
November 14	Jeff Tharp	Jean Memken	Bruce Grundman Emil Leppiaho	Team 8	Jane Arps Ellen LaMarche Emil Leppiaho	Ginny Schieck
November 21	Judy Hellman	Jeff Tharp	Jean Memken Evie Peterson	Team 6	Gwen Hoehne Doug Sebstead Renie Sebstead	Ginny Schieck
November 28	Tom Wenzel	Judy Hellman	Joe and Nancy Rose	Team 3	Bruce Grundman Lois Kemp Judy Olson	Ginny Schieck

Living Into a Culture of Mission and Action

The Mission and Vision Team met on October 19th. Members attending were Dawn Jones, Nancy Maslow, Pennie Linna, Ellen LaMarche, Tara Dieck, Mary Jane Hartley, Pastor Bob and Laurie Olson. Also attending was Fern Fuhrmann representing the Financial and Stewardship Committee.

Pastor Bob opened the meeting with a prayer.

The Mission and Vision Team wanted to meet with the Stewardship and Finance Committee to begin working on the first Ministry Result Area, *Connecting Passions to Ministry*.

Three objectives were discussed and established, which will assist in identifying individuals' passions, volunteer opportunities and processes of informing members of ways to connect at St. Mark's and/or the community. Outcomes, how to achieve the objectives, who will be the champions of each of the objectives, potential costs, funding sources for the costs, and timelines were developed. The three objectives include:

Annual Meeting Volunteer Opportunities

Calendar of Volunteer Opportunities

Table Talks (committee and missions of the month and exercises on identifying passions are possible topic areas).

It was also noted that an event be set to announce the new mission statement and core values. The development of a strategic plan brochure will be designed and made available, similar to the piece presented during our GSB cohort meeting.

The meeting closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Updates from the Returning to In-Person Worship Task Force

At the last meeting of the Returning to In-Person Worship Task Force, they reviewed and discussed the current Winnebago County COVID-19 case numbers. Laurie Olson informed the task force that each **weeks' report show an increase in the percentage of Winnebago County residents who have received the vaccination.** As of October 14, 56% have been vaccinated. It was noted that COVID-19 case numbers are consistently trending down. It was decided to resume Fellowship Hour beginning October 24. It was also decided to continue with masks and social distancing as safety precautions.

The Task Force agreed to meet soon to review COVID-19 status/data statistics and make further procedure changes, as needed.



Save the Date!

On December 26th, we will say farewell to Pastor Bob and Laurie at a special worship service and reception. You will soon be receiving a letter giving details about this special event, so watch your mail for a letter from St. Mark's in a couple of weeks.



ATTENTION ALL WOMEN OF THE ELCA

On November 13th, St. Mark's will host the Biennial Convention of the Women of the ELCA – East Central Synod Wisconsin. It should be a great day of speakers, worship, fellowship and decision-making. All women of the ECSW WELCA are invited to attend.

As the host church, we need to provide lunch and a welcoming atmosphere. The theme of the convention is "Generations of Sisters in Christ." The local arrangements committee (Laurie Olson, Dawn Jones and Jean Memken) thought it might be fun to share old pictures, recipes and cookbooks (especially church cookbooks) that show the dedication and faith of Lutheran women throughout the generations. We are planning a soup and salad luncheon featuring classic Lutheran potluck salads from throughout the years.

So if you have old pictures, recipe cards, and/or cookbooks you would like to add to our display and table decorations, we would love to have them. The pictures can be of any woman or women participating in some aspect of church life—baptism, confirmation, youth groups, WELCA, Altar Guild, Sunday School, potlucks and fellowship, etc. The recipe could be a family favorite or something you remember was always prepared for the Lutheran potlucks you have attended. Please bring your pictures, cards or cookbooks to the church office by November 11. We promise to take good care of them and will return them to you after the 13th.

If you are interested in attending the WELCA Convention, please pick up a registration form and turn it into the church office by November 5. The Endowment Fund has money available to pay for your registration, so you can go at no cost to you! What a deal!

We will need help with setting up, cleaning up, greeting, ushering during the worship service, and serving the luncheon. If you can help out, please let one of the committee members know or call or e-mail the church office. We hope to have a great delegation from St. Mark's at this event!



- Doris & Victor Gilbert
 - Pat Wenzel
 - Judy Koerner
 - Tracy Feldman
- Brett Gawlick
 - Ron Forrest
 - Judy Fowler
 - Tom Hoehne
- Donna Joachim
 - Otto Arndt



**For the month of
September 2021**

**Given: \$14,684.91
Spent: \$11,520.47**

Youth Gathering This Summer!

It is not too early to start thinking about attending the National Youth Gathering this summer (July 24-28) in Minneapolis, Minnesota! Every three years, thousands of high school youth and their adult leaders from across the ELCA gather for a week of faith formation known as the ELCA Youth Gathering. Through days spent in interactive learning, worship, Bible study, service and fellowship, young people grow in faith and are challenged and inspired to live their faith in their daily lives.



The Endowment Committee has scholarship money available to help cover the cost of attending this event. All youth in grades 8th-12th grade at the time of registration (2021-2022 school year) are eligible to attend. For more information, check out the Youth Gathering website at: <https://elca.org/YouthGathering/>

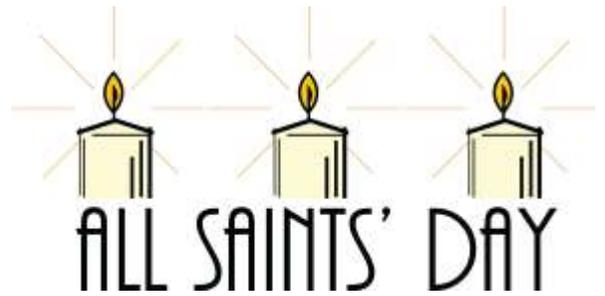
Remembering the Saints

When Paul wrote to the church in Rome, he addressed his letter “To all God’s beloved ... who are called to be saints” (Romans 1:7, NRSV). Paul regarded his fellow believers as people who have responded to the good news of Christ by choosing to follow and serve God.

The New Testament emphasizes that Christians are God’s beloved — special people set apart to receive his grace and to be his witnesses. All people whose minds and hearts are devoted to God are “called to be saints.”

About 700 years after the church began, leaders designated November 1 as All Saints’ Day to honor people whose lives reflect Christ dwelling within them. Because of what God has done for us, all Christians can wear the label of saint.

On the first Sunday in November, November 7th, we will celebrate All Saints’ Sunday here at St. Mark’s. There will be a special time of remembrance during the service where all those who have gone to their heavenly home will be remembered. Friends and family members of those being remembered will be invited to come forward and light a candle in their honor. We will include all St. Mark’s members who passed away in the past year, but if you have a friend or family member who passed away that you would like to include in our remembrance this year, please call or e-mail the church office and let us know.



Lay School Continuing Education Classes Overview — Part 1

By Jenny Case

Lutheranism 101 — We are focusing on the parts of Luther’s Small Catechism, including the Ten Commandments, The Apostles’ Creed, The Lord’s Prayer, The Sacrament of Holy Baptism and Confession, The Sacrament of the Altar, and Daily Prayer and the Household Chart.

Our class time is spent discussing what we read out of our textbook for that month. The book is entitled, “By Heart: Conversations with Martin Luther’s Small Catechism.” We also answer questions the instructor has included on our syllabus. At the end of class, as a group, we recite together the next month’s topic that we will be focusing on in the *Small Catechism*.

Experiencing God. How and Where God Meets Us — This is another class I am taking. Our topics for this class include: The Problem of Connectivity (the difficulty we have connecting with God), God’s Presence is Always on God’s Terms, God’s Presence in Suffering, Faith as the Experience of God, God’s Presence in Word and Sacrament, God Visible in this World and the World to Come, God in the Community of the Faithful, and Spiritual Practices — Lutheran Style.

Our preparation for class is reading a chapter of our text (*Where God Meets Man* by Gerhard D. Forde). We also read a certain passage/scripture from the Bible, as well as an online article. Our instructor also asks us to come up with examples in relation to the topic for that month.

Next Month: An overview of more classes offered at the Lay School of Ministry.





The Mission of the Month for November is the ELCA Good Gifts. This ELCA program allows donors to purchase much needed resources for people all over the world. You can purchase livestock – a cow, a pig or a flock of chickens for people living in poverty so they have not only a source of food, but also revenue from raising farm animals. You can purchase equipment for those needing transportation or implements to support themselves. At the community level, you can buy a well for fresh water or a latrine for basic sanitation. You can purchase education for seminary students and school supplies for children. you can even buy vaccinations to protect people around the world from deadly diseases. **If you are interested in supporting this very worthwhile organization, please mark “Mission of the Month”** on your giving envelope to denote the portion of your offering you would like to contribute to ELCA Good Gifts. We will determine the gifts we put your donations towards once we get a final total of the money we collect this month, and report it in a subsequent newsletter.

Children and Youth
Currently, the Pine Ridge Reconciliation Center hosts Kids Time



on weekday after school offering a safe place to come and play and build

Thankful for Our Volunteers!

We recently got the following note from Feeding America. What a nice way to remember our Food Pantry volunteers!



St. Mark's Lutheran Church,

Happy Anniversary! For 18 years your organization has been working with Feed American Eastern Wisconsin to make sure your neighbors in need have enough. Our network of hunger-relief partners is stronger with as part of it.

Together we can solve hunger!
Thank you for your partnership!

Patti Habeck, CEO



St. Mark's Food Pantry

St. Mark's Food Pantry is still doing well, especially with all your help. We all appreciate it and thank you. Our numbers seem to fluctuate but we have quite a few regular customers---

some weekly and some just monthly, but all are grateful for the help we give. In September, we helped 45 families to feed 163 people. We are always in need of dish and laundry soap and juice. Otherwise we are good for this month. Thanks. — *by Karen Jordan*



Fall Fun in Navarino

By Jenny Case

On October 6th, eleven ladies enjoyed a beautiful, warm fall afternoon riding on a trolley through the Navarino Nature Center. Our tour guide was very informative and answered all of our questions. We were able to see flocks of sandhill cranes overhead. We also saw trumpeter swans and egrets in the wetland region of the Nature Center. The beauty and the smells of this beautiful fall day were very relaxing!



On the way back, we stopped at Wagner's Farmer's Market and picked up some fresh produce. Then we pulled into the ice cream shop in Black Creek for an afternoon treat. A favorite of most of our group was the caramel apple sundae!

We thank God for this beautiful fall afternoon, enjoying creation and having fun together! We would also like to thank Judy Hellman for arranging this outing!



Our intrepid group (from left): Jean Memken, Sharyn Gawlick, Emma Anderson, Jenny Case, Joy Case, Delores Jacobsen, Ginny Schieck, Judy Hellman, Mary Jane Hartley and friend, and Lois Hill.



Left: Our transport for the afternoon. We covered five miles, so we were happy we didn't have to walk.

Below: Our excellent tour guide and driver!



ESTHER Dedicates Peace Tree to Remember Victims of Violence

On October 11th, a white pine was dedicated in a beautiful ceremony in a grove of trees near the Paper Discovery Center in Appleton. This tree was donated by Menominee Tribal Member Adrian Miller. There was a short program which included a variety of speakers and performances. Appleton Mayor Jake Woodford read the proclamation recognizing October 11 as Indigenous Peoples' Day. There was music by the Wolf River Singers, a tribal drum team. Several members of the Menominee tribe spoke, as did Robert Brown of the Oneida Nation. Both Wisconsin Governor Tony Evers and Lt. Governor Mandela Barnes made remarks and shared their commitment to support the effort to combat violence against Indigenous women and girls.



The tree was then dedicated in honor of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and Two Spirits by Kristin Welch of the Waking Women Healing Institute. Following the dedication was the Blessing of the tree by a Menominee tribal member, and then came a Native American prayer, and songs by the Wolf River Singers. The pictures to the left and right show the backdrop of the ceremony and the Wolf River Singers' performance.





- 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.

Congratulations to our Confirmands!

On Sunday, October 31st, four young people from our congregation were able to reaffirm their baptisms, and were confirmed in the faith. They completed confirmation classes (through a pandemic, no less), wrote an essay about their faith, and made a public pledge to remain faithful during their confirmation ceremony. We welcome these newest **confirmed members to St. Mark's!**



*Our confirmands (along with friends Martin and Katie):
From left: Ryan Blank, Braeden Ross, Janae Rodriguez,
and Jensen Rodriguez.*

Casting Crowns Concert – An Event to Remember!

On October 17th, after an 18-month wait, a group of St. Mark's members and friends enjoyed a terrific evening of fellowship, food and music as they made their way to the Casting Crowns concert at the **Menominee Nation Center in Oshkosh.** The evening started with a pizza party in St. Mark's Fellowship Hall at 4:30 pm. We then boarded a large school bus for a pleasant (okay, it was a little bumpy) ride down to Oshkosh. We disembarked right by the main door of the arena. The lines leading into the arena were long, but we found the shortest one and after going through security, we found our seats. They were towards the top of the arena, so we had a good view of everything going on below. The concert began with a performance by warm-up act Matthew West, who sang some inspiring (and a few silly) songs.

Then Casting Crowns took the stage and entertained us with many new songs as well as a few oldies. Casting Crowns is a contemporary Christian band that employs a soft rock music style. The band was created in 1999 by youth pastor Mark Hall, who also serves as lead vocalist. Casting Crowns originally served and performed as part of a youth group in Atlanta, Georgia. After Christian music star Stephen Curtis Chapman heard them, they got a recording contract and vaulted to popularity in 2003 with songs **such as "If We Are The Body" and "Who Am I."** Some members of the band currently work as ministers for Eagle's Landing First Baptist Church in McDonough, Georgia. The band has won a Grammy and a Dove Award. They put on a great performance.

The bus was waiting for us right by the door when the concert was over and we made our way back to Neenah. It was a long evening, but a great time was had by all and it was so wonderful to actually be out and attending a concert after a very long time.

A BIG THANK YOU to St. Mark's Endowment Committee for organizing this event and supplementing the cost of the evening.





Visit St. Mark's Website

www.stmarksneenah.org



Let gratitude be the pillow upon which you kneel to say your nightly prayer. And let faith be the bridge you build to overcome evil and welcome good.—Maya Angelou



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

