



The Messenger

January 2022

St. Mark's Lutheran Church

A member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



"Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now. I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ." (Philippians 1:2-6 NRS)

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The salutation above is from Apostle Paul's letter to the church in Philippi. Paul's letter to the Philippians is his most joyful letter. In it, he and his fellow evangelist, Timothy, thank the Philippian Church for their support of his ministry.

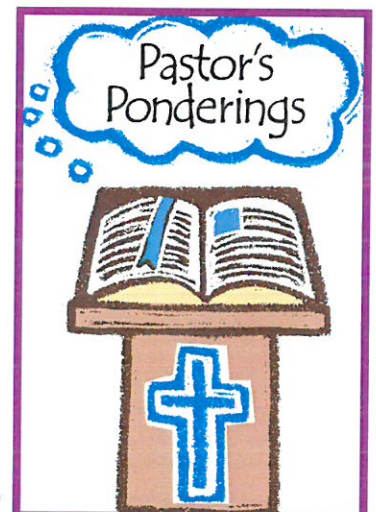
In this, my final newsletter message to all of you, my top priority is to thank you for your support of both Laurie and me, and our ministry with and among all of you. From the very first day until the very last day, we have felt your love and support. St. Mark's was my first call after graduating from seminary, and I appreciated your patience as I dived into the rhythms of ministry in this place. You were always affirming of my efforts, and gracious in not calling out my missteps. My prayer is that you will continue to be as gracious in your support of your interim pastor and the pastor which you will eventually call to join you in your ministry.

St. Mark's went through many changes during my time here, including many upgrades in the building. Together we learned new hymns and communion settings, and we discovered we can not only worship in the park, but also the parking lot. We also embraced new technology, such as the projector in our sanctuary and the camera that allows us to livestream our worship services to St. Mark's Facebook page. Some of my favorite worship services were our Lenten services in which members participated in dramatic dialogues. Hopefully, you will continue to utilize the dramatic talents of your members.

One of the great pleasures of mine during my time here was becoming involved with the ELCA's Companionship Synod program and accompanying several members of St. Mark's on a visit to Rustenburg, South Africa, where we visited St. Mark's sister congregation, Bethlehem Lutheran. Unfortunately, Covid shut down our plans to host visitors from South Africa in 2020. My hope and prayer is that you will soon be making plans to host visitors in the summer of 2023, and that you will extend the same kindness and generosity to your guests as we were shown in South Africa.

St. Mark's greatest strength is their genuine concern for each other and the people of the surrounding community. And, it has been my greatest privilege to represent the people of St. Mark's in bringing the mercies of Christ to individuals and families in their time of loss and grief.

Continued on page 2



Pastor's Ponderings
Continued from Page 1

As Paul says near the conclusion of his letter to the Philippian Church, "Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you" (Phil. 4:9). As I told St. Mark's Church council on my last evening with them, "I hope in some small way, I have brought you closer to Christ and to each other." God bless and keep you in all your ways throughout all your days.

Servants together,

Pastor Bob

To Our Dear Friends at St. Mark's Church,

Saying "thank you" seems so insufficient for all the love and kindnesses that you have shown to Laurie and me during our time with you. The celebration of our time together on December 26th, along with your kind words, and your generous gifts, have left us humbled and so very grateful for all of you.

God bless you all,

Pastor Bob and Laurie

- In-Person Sunday School and Bible Class at 9:00 am on Sundays
- In-person worship at St. Mark's at 10:00 am on Sundays
- Online Worship: www.facebook.com/stmarksneenah at 10:00 am
- Please call the church office at 920-725-2828 if you would like a DVD of any worship service.



It is great to be back in Sunday School with everyone again, You did an excellent job on the Christmas Program. I hope everyone enjoyed it! I know I did. I hope everyone had a great Christmas and a Happy New Year!!! Sunday School will start again on January 9th at 9:00 am. Can't wait to see everyone and hear about your holidays. Our January meeting was cancelled, but if anyone is interested in helping with Christian Education, please join us in February. We meet in the Library.

HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL!!!!

With God's Blessings,
Gwen Hoehne, Sunday School Superintendent



ST. MARK'S CHURCH COUNCIL MINUTES December 16, 2021



The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm by President Laurie Olson.

Roll Call:

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

Members Excused: Jeff Tharp, Mykayla Tharp, and Donna Joachim

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

Devotions: Phyllis Ziemke led us in devotions. Mary Jane Hartley volunteered for devotions next month.

Approval of Minutes for the November 18th meeting.

MSC by Phyllis Ziemke/Bruce Grundman.

Thank You Cards – Pastor Bob and Laurie for all they have done for our congregation. Ginny Schieck for her outstanding job as custodian.

Financial Report:

1. Current Budget balance is \$85,360.99.
2. Building Improvement is \$18,494.57.
3. September giving was \$13,032.13. Spending was 15,011.61.
4. Giving needs to be around \$3,500.00 to \$4,000.00 per Sunday to meet spending.

MSC by Pennie Linna/Phyllis Ziemke.

Pastor's Report ~ Pastor Bob Wilkinson

1. I had a week of vacation November 15 – November 21.
2. I made several home Communion visits, and nursing care visits.
3. I attended committee meetings at St. Mark's Church, as needed.
4. I participated in a community Thanksgiving Eve worship service at Our Savior's Lutheran Church in Neenah.
5. I recorded both Gwen Hoehne and Judy Hellman so that I might assemble and post Sunday school lessons to our St. Mark's Facebook page through the season of Advent.
6. I recorded children's messages that were posted to St. Mark's Facebook page.
7. I met with and/or had discussions with new members who joined St. Mark's Church on Sunday, December 12, 2021.
8. I have worked with and plan to meet again with Jenny Case and Sherri Denney to lay out a plan for continuing the education of our confirmation age youth.
9. I have worked with Gwen Hoehne and others to record the Sunday School Children's Christmas program.
10. I have been working to provide the necessary documents for Portico Insurance and the East-Central Synod of Wisconsin regarding my up-coming retirement.
11. My last Sunday will be Sunday, December 26th.

MSC by Pennie Linna/Bruce Grundman



**For the month of
November 2021**

Given: \$13,032.13

Spent: \$15,011.61

Worship & Music Committee – November 30, 2021 ~ *Submitted by Judy Hellman*

Our Worship & Music Committee met on Tuesday, November 30th. Members present were Betty Linna, Ardys Seelow, Mary Ellen Tracey, Pastor Bob, and Judy Hellman. Pastor Bob led us in devotions.

November worship services were discussed. The Gospel group, "Voices of Peace" was well received by the congregation. All Saints' Sunday and Christ the King Sunday were also celebrated this month. Several members of our congregation attended the combined Thanksgiving Eve service at Our Savior's Lutheran Church. On November 28th, we started the Advent series, "Wait Upon the Lord."

Pastor Bob discussed the section of our hymnal that is useful in planning the service each Sunday. This will be helpful in planning our services until we get an interim pastor. We also have a list of supply pastors and lay people to contact.

Pastor Chuck is planning to do one service a month until an interim pastor is obtained. Pastor Jon or Pastor Tabitha will serve on January 16, February 6 and February 20.

Our Christmas Eve service will be at 5:00 pm. The children's program will be a part of this service. There will be Communion at this service as well as on Christmas Day. The Christmas Day service will be at 10:00 am.

We closed our meeting with the Lord's Prayer. Our next meeting will be Tuesday, December 28th at 10:30 am.

Property Committee – December 6, 2021 ~ *Submitted by Bruce Grundman*

In attendance: Bruce Grundman, John Olson, Ginny Schieck, Phyllis Ziemke, and Jason Blank

1. John Olson visited us.
2. We took the lawnmower for annual maintenance.
3. We worked on the 2022 budget.
4. We discussed broken thermostats around church.

Finance/Stewardship Committee – December 14, 2021 ~ *Submitted by Pennie Linna*

Attendance: Laurie Olson, Mary Jane Hartley, Evie Peterson and Pennie Linna

Mary Jane reviewed the current giving for November which was 13,032.13 and expenditures were 15,011.61. Our spending was over our giving by 1,979.48.

We reviewed recommendations for the 2022 budget. The committee will be recommending pay increases for Office Administrator, Custodian and organists. The pastoral salary will remain the same as 2021 budget.

We discussed that 50 envelopes were not ordered with original order so some members will not be getting their envelopes at this time. In the event that the envelopes don't arrive before the first of the year members will be asked to utilize the yellow envelopes. The committee will review the envelopes not picked up and reach out to those members.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:00 pm.

MSC by Phyllis Ziemke/Pennie Linna



Pat Wenzel
Judy Koerner
Tracy Feldman
Brett Gawlick
Ron Forrest
Judy Fowler
Tom Hoehne
Donna Joachim
Otto Arndt
Ellen LaMarche
Bob Hellman

Unfinished Business:

1. Pastor's Farewell

- Pastor Bob and Laurie will be presented with several gifts, a scrapbook, and a cash gift.
- Van Abel's of Hollandtown will cater the meal.

New Business:

1. Mission Investment Fund

- Interest for this fund is .65% for 1 year.
- We are looking for Thrivent to better this.

MSC by Phyllis Ziemke/Sherri Denney

2. Staff wages and Organists

- Proposed increase in salary for 2022 was voted on and accepted.

MSC by Bruce Grundman/Phyllis Ziemke

3. Missions

- Congregation members are to contact Jean Memken if they want to submit a mission of the month to be put on the ballot.

4. Supply Pastors

- Agencies have been contacted to do temple talks.
- Lay people can also be used.
- Several pastors from the list have agreed to preach.

5. Contracted services from Gloria Dei Church

- Currently Pastor Jon or Pastor Tabitha will preach one or two Sundays a month in January and February
- They will also do funerals, weddings, committee meetings, hospital calls, etc.

MSC by Sherri Denney/Bruce Grundman to adjourn at 6:30 pm.

We closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Next meeting is January 20, 2022 at 6:30 pm.

Submitted by Judy Hellman, Secretary

Post Council Meeting:

- Council shared affirmations and encouragements with Pastor Bob.
- Litany of Thanksgiving giving thanks for our ministry together.
- Litany was followed with a meeting with a rep from the Bishop's Office staff to discuss the transition.

We Get Mail . . .

Here's an excerpt from a letter we received from Mary Parsons, Executive Director of LEAVEN, our Mission of the Month for November.



"Thank you for your \$582.00 contribution that was received on 12/7/2021. I hope you take great pride in knowing you have touched the lives of individuals and families struggling to meet their basic needs. Despite the challenges of worldwide pandemic, LEAVEN has continued to execute on its mission to stabilize and empower people in crisis by providing financial assistance, resource coordination, and case management. In 2020, we responded to 5,149 requests for assistance, distributing nearly \$800,000 in direct client assistance. Our entire community benefits by your support of our neighbors in need."



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

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



The Food Pantry has been very active lately. With all this cold weather, we have had the help of two ladies braving the cold to take the food orders. It has worked out quite well when our helpers alternate being out in the cold. In November, we had 14 families shopping to feed 159 people. We seem to always be in need of Spam, paper products and bar, dish and laundry soap. Thanks to all of you for your support in 2021. — *by Karen Jordan*

Christmas at St. Mark's

Wasn't it nice to actually celebrate Christmas at St. Mark's this year? If you recall last year, we had to watch St. Mark's Christmas Eve worship on our computers and we took communion from our cars. But this year, the church was open and many members and their families and friends enjoyed our joyous holiday worship services. The Christmas Eve Service featured a video of our Sunday School children telling the Christmas story through drama and song. We also had the traditional lighting of the candles while singing "Silent Night." Christmas Day worship was also a beautiful celebration of Christ's birth. Pastor Bob preached two wonderful sermons of hope and favored the Christmas Day attendees with a song entitled "Mary's Boy Child." Many thanks to all who played a part in these lovely services and thanks to all who donated poinsettias to decorate our church throughout Advent and the Christmas Season!



Pastor Bob delivers a Christmas morning sermon!

We Bid Farewell to Pastor Bob and Laurie

On Sunday, December 26th, we said good-bye to Pastor Bob and Laurie Wilkinson after 5-1/2 years of ministry here at St. Mark's with a special worship service and dinner. The service included some special music by St. Mark's choir, under the direction of Judy Hellman. They sang "Bless This House" and "You'll Never Walk Alone." Pastor Bob also sang "God Be With You Till We Meet Again," accompanying himself on his guitar. The service included a special "Thanksgiving at the Conclusion of a Call" section where we thanked God for Pastor Bob and released him from his call to St. Mark's, and we prayed for God's guidance for our future as we go our separate ways. After the worship service, we gathered in the Fellowship Hall for a delicious meal catered by Van Abels of Hollandtown, featuring fried chicken, dressing, mashed potatoes, cole slaw, rolls and beverages. Of course, there was cake for dessert. Following the meal, there were presentations of gifts to Pastor Bob and Laurie and several members added special anecdotes and remembrances about Pastor Bob's and Laurie's ministry here.

I think everyone would agree we were happy and sad all at the same time at this celebration. We will all miss Pastor Bob and Laurie, but we rejoice in the ministry we had with them, and we look forward to the plans God has for each of us as we strive to do His will.

Check out the pictures of the celebration below.

Pastor Bob singing during the Farewell Service.



Laurie and Pastor Bob listen as members and friends share stories and accolades.

The Fellowship Hall was gorgeous, thanks to John and Laurie Olson who hung many strands of Christmas lights and some special decorations that were actually made by Laurie Wilkinson!



Here is the beautiful cake for dessert!



Pastor Bob admiring a wooden cross that was one of his going away gifts from the congregation.



Pastor Bob and Laurie next to a special bulletin board designed by Joy and Jenny Case, chronicling their ministry here at St. Mark's.

Our Sunday Servants

Date	Assisting Minister	Reader	Greeters	Ushers	Counters	Altar Guild
January 2	Bruce Grundman	Pennie Linna	Nancy Bricco Karen Jordan	Joy Case Jenny Case	Jeff Tharp Kim Wallmuller	Mary Jane & Jane Hartley
January 9	Sherri Denney	Jenny Case	Judy Fowler Ginny Schieck	Emil Leppiaho Phyllis Ziemke	Jane Arps Ellen LaMarche Emil Leppiaho	Mary Jane & Jane Hartley
January 16	Jeff Tharp	Jean Memken	John & Laurie Olson	Linda Anderson Betty Linna	Gwen Hoehne Doug Sebstead Renie Sebstead	Mary Jane & Jane Hartley
January 23	Judy Hellman	Gwen Hoehne	Betty Linna Pennie Linna	Tom Wenzel Jeff Tharp Dawn Jones	Bruce Grundman Lois Kemp Judy Olson	Mary Jane & Jane Hartley
January 30	Tom Wenzel	Bruce Grundman	Nancy Maslow Linda Anderson	The Blank Family	Dawn Jones Laurie Olson Judie Hilliker	Mary Jane & Jane Hartley



ANNUAL MEETING

**Get These Important
Dates on Your Calendar!**

Budget Review – February 6, 2022

Annual Meeting – February 13, 2022

Welcome New Members!

On Sunday, December 19th, our St. Mark's family grew by three as Lois Hill, Jean Memken, and Joe Rehorst became members. They were officially installed as members during the Sunday morning worship service, and then everyone gathered in the Fellowship Hall for a reception to welcome them to the St. Mark's family.

Welcome, Lois, Jean, and Joe!



*Jean Memken, Joe Rehorst and
Lois Hill pose with their
celebratory cake!*

Lay School Continuing Education Update

By Jenny Case

Classes are still meeting once a month virtually. I meet up with Linda Tipler from St. Paul's Lutheran in Neenah on Lay School weekends. I am enjoying learning in the four classes and class discussion is really good every month. You sure can learn a lot from others that will give you a new perspective on their experiences in church or pertaining to what we are reading or when the instructor asks questions and wants our feedback. I am challenging myself every month to read the assignments and I have been pretty successful so far. Through the reading I have learned a lot that I didn't know before but some reading is harder to comprehend. Sometimes things like the Apostles' Creed might be mentioned in more than one class.

Look for an article on the Lord's Prayer in February's Messenger.

You are always welcome to ask me questions about what I am learning, because I am happy to share!



When a Pastor Leaves...

We said goodbye to Pastor Bob and Laurie and gave thanks for their time at St. Mark's! We were blessed to have them with us for the past 5 ½ years!

Many of you are asking "What's Next?"

- ♦ The church council will keep you informed, as we move through this process. A representative from the synod attended the December council meeting and reviewed the steps of the transition. We were informed that there is an extreme shortage of interim pastors. It may take several months, if at all, before we receive an interim pastor.
- ♦ We have entered into an agreement/covenant with Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, Neenah. Pastors Jon and Tabitha from Gloria Dei will be on call for emergency pastoral situations. They will also be in contact with key areas of the church, such as the worship and music committee, Christian Education and Confirmation and preach one to two Sundays per month. They will not have any office hours. St. Mark's will be paying Gloria Dei on a monthly basis for their Pastors' services. The remaining Sundays will be covered by supply pastors and lay ministers. The Sundays in January and February are covered and we are working on coverage for the outlying months.
- ♦ The transition period is a time for the congregation to evaluate its ministries, staffing, purpose and vision asking questions, "Where is God leading us?" and "Who is God calling us to be?" The good news is that we went through a recent mission and visioning process, which began answering these questions.
- ♦ We will be developing a profile, by creating a **Ministry Site Profile (MSP)** committee. This is a document that describes the ministry of our congregation. The MSP is presented to potential candidates as they discern God's calling for our next chapter of ministry. 6-9 persons are needed to assist with this process. Please contact Laurie Olson, if you are willing to serve on this committee.
- ♦ A **Call Committee** will eventually be formed. The Call Committee will receive and review candidates' profiles provided by the synod office, interview candidates and listen to candidates' sermons. They will recommend a final candidate to the council and congregation. Please contact Laurie Olson, if you are willing to serve on this committee.
- ♦ After a candidate is recommended to the council, the council then calls an officially held meeting of the congregation. The congregation votes to call the new pastor.

Please pray for this process and those willing to serve on the Ministry Site Profile Committee and Call Committee. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact one of your St. Mark's Church Council members. Updates will be announced during worship, in future newsletters, emails, and direct mailings.

PEACE

Laurie Olson
Church Council President





JANUARY 2022

Mission of the Month:
Christine Ann Shelter

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1 NEW YEAR'S DAY
2 8:30 Confirmation 9:00 Bible Class 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Worship w/ Comm 10:00 Online Worship	3 6:00 Esther Prison Reform 6:30 Property Meeting	4 6:15 Book Study 7:00 AA 7:00 SAA	5 9:00 Food Pantry 6:30 Education Comm.	6	7 7:00 AA	8
9 8:30 Confirmation 9:00 Bible Class 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Worship 10:00 Online Worship	10	11 11:30 Comm. Table 6:15 Book Study 7:00 AA 7:00 SAA	12 9:00 Food Pantry 9:30 HS Pyramid Leader Meeting	13	14 7:00 AA	15
16 8:30 Confirmation 9:00 Bible Class 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Worship w/ Comm. 10:00 Online Worship Scrip Orders Delivered 6:30 Neenah Baseball	17 MISSION OF THE MONTH DEADLINE	18 1:00 HS Prg. Ldr. Mtg. 6:15 Book Study 6:30 Finance & Stewardship 7:00 AA 7:00 SAA	19 9:00 Food Pantry 11:00 HS Pyramid Model Training 11:30 HS Ongoing Ed.	20 11:30 HS Policy Council 11:30 HS Brd of Adv. 1:30 Lydia Circle 6:30 Church Council	21 7:00 AA	22
23 8:30 Confirmation 9:00 Bible Class 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Worship 10:00 Online Worship	24 1:00 pm Connections	25 11:00 Worship/Music 6:15 Book Study 7:00 AA 7:00 SAA	26 9:00 Food Pantry	27	28 7:00 AA	29
30 8:30 Confirmation 9:00 Bible Class 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Worship 10:00 Online Worship	31					

KEY

Red—Fellowship

Orange—Online

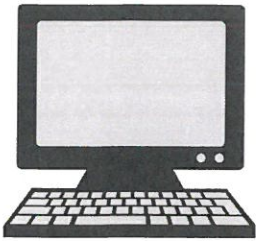
Green—Library

Blue—Mary Room

Purple—Sanctuary

Pink—Lounge

Black—Other



Visit St. Mark's Website

www.



*Do we have your
email address?*

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



Biblical resolutions

Hold firmly to your faith (Hebrews 4:14)
Assemble with the saints (Hebrews 10:25)
Pray and thank God earnestly (1 Thessalonians 5:17-18)
Petition God for great blessings (Malachi 3:10)
Yield not to temptation (1 Thessalonians 5:22)

Notice opportunities to serve others (Galatians 6:10)
Examine yourself daily (2 Corinthians 13:5)
Work diligently for the Lord (1 Corinthians 15:58)

Yearn for righteousness (Matthew 5:6)
Exercise godliness (1 Timothy 4:7)
Aim for sinless perfection (Hebrews 6:1)
Redeem the time, living wisely (Ephesians 5:15-16)
—Gus Nichols (adapted)

St. Mark's Office & Leadership Email Addresses

St. Mark's office (Jean): office@stmarksneenah.org

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

St. Mark's Lutheran Church

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JANUARY

