

The Messenger

July 2022

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



Christ Be My Leader

In case you hadn't noticed, our government has been in the news quite a bit lately. It seems all three branches of the U.S. Government have been competing to get the headlines in the national newspapers and the most attention on other forms of media. If you turn on the television or radio, or even check your Facebook or Twitter feed, you will probably read or see something about the President, Congress, or the Supreme Court. It is somewhat difficult to keep track of all that they are doing these days, both the good and the bad.

As I have read through the Scriptures, I have discovered that God has quite a bit to say about government, in both the Old and New Testament. Probably the most famous Bible verse related to government was Jesus' brilliant answer to the Jewish leaders who asked him whether it was right to pay the government taxes. Jesus replied, "Give back to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's." (Mark 12:17). But what else does God have to say about the Government?

Actually, there are three different forms of government that are introduced in the Bible, particularly in the Old Testament. First, there is God as King. This is the situation God wanted. But the people rejected God's rule. So, the second form of government came into being and that was really no ruler at all. This is what we see in the book of Judges where the people "did evil in the sight of the Lord" and chaos reigned. It is where the people forgot that God was their leader and didn't follow His commandments. We see inklings of this today as it seems so many people, including some of our leaders, disregard God's rule. The children of Israel could see the folly in not having any leader, but they still didn't want God as their leader. They wanted a king like everyone else on earth had at the time. The prophet Samuel tried to warn the people that an earthly king would not be good. Humans are fallible and power often corrupts them as we have seen so often in these modern times. They still wanted a king. So God allowed the third form of government – a human king.

In God's ideal situation, we consider God our leader and we follow him in what might be called the "Government of God." If you read Psalm 65, you can see that is truly a wonderful type of government. The Psalmist reminds us: "When we were overwhelmed by sins, you forgave our transgressions . . . We are filled with the good things of your house, . . . You answer us with awesome and righteous deeds, God our Savior . . . You care for the land and water it; you enrich it abundantly." (Psalm 65).

These are words from scripture that make it quite clear how very good God is to us. What a wonderful and compassionate leader God is. He takes care of our every need. He loves us with an everlasting love. His focus is on us and our well-being. Wouldn't it be great if our leaders today followed that example? Just imagine how different society would be if our government cared for us as God does. But even when it seems that all we experience is partisan politics from our leaders these days, we can still have that kind of relationship with God through Jesus, His Son. We can allow the Holy Spirit to work in our lives which helps us know God as a loving father. We can allow the Government of God to rule our lives no matter what form of government we live under here on earth.

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Christ Be My Leader

(continued from page 1)

When God first allowed the children to Israel to have a king, he called Saul to be their leader. Now we remember Saul as being a very bad leader. But when he was first called, the "Spirit of the Lord" came upon him and he was transformed. He became a new person. Samuel told him, "Whatever job you are given to do, do it. God is with you!" (1 Samuel 9:6-7). Had Saul taken these words to heart, he would have been a great king. But Saul wanted to lead on his own terms, and all of the blessings God gave him were taken away. What first happened to Saul when he became king can happen to any leader, actually to any person when they accept Jesus as their Savior. As long as we keep Christ in our hearts, we will know the assurance of God's love in our lives.

When Jesus came to earth, there were some who thought he would bring about a new government. They were hoping for a Messiah that would overthrow the Romans and rule Israel like King David did. But Jesus had a much different path to take, and his life of love and service gives us an example of what we should do in times like these when the world seems to provide nothing but trials and tribulations. Jesus' final days before His crucifixion were filled with turmoil as well. He told His disciples that His soul was "troubled and distressed . . ." (John 12:27a). But He didn't look to solve these problems by overthrowing the Roman government. He knew what He had to do. His death brought a "not guilty" verdict for the rest of the world, the overthrow of the evil that governs so many lives, and the glorification of Jesus as Lord and Savior. He challenges us to "become children of light" in the midst of darkness. He wants us to be the light of the world by proclaiming His saving love to those who do not know Him.

Jesus leads us not like an earthly king, but rather a gentle shepherd. But following His example of serving rather than being served, we can all experience God's presence in our lives. Because of Jesus, the "kingdom of God" is truly ours and will be for eternity. As we celebrate the birthday of our country and its government this week, let us give thanks that we are governed not only by a man-made democracy, but more importantly, by God himself, and that government of God will be ours for eternity. God bless you and God bless America! Happy 4th! – jm



MOSES MESSAGE

Hi everyone. Hope you are enjoying your summer so far. It is going fast and before you know it, it will be time for Vacation Bible School. Vacation Bible School will be on August 1-4 from, 9:00 A.M. to noon each day. It will be at Our Savior's Lutheran



Church on Commercial Street in Neenah, along with other ELCA churches. You should have received a letter in regards to this VBS and you can register online or drop by the church to get a registration. Call the church if you need help registering. Hope you can go and have some fun!!! Enjoy the rest of your summer!!

BIRTHDAYS

Braydin Messing – July 2 Mason Biese – July 4

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!!!

Have a safe and fun Fourth of July!!!

With God's Blessings,

Gwen Hoehne, Sunday School Superintendent





ST. MARK'S CHURCH COUNCIL MINUTES

June 16, 2022



The meeting was called order by our President Laurie Olson at 6:36 pm.

Roll Call:

Members Present: Pennie Linna, Kim Wallmuller, Mary Jane Hartley, Sherri Denney, Laurie Olson, and

Judy Hellman. Also present was Pastor Mike Dismer. Excused: Jenny Case, Jeff Tharp, and Mykayla Tharp

Devotions: Judy Hellman gave devotions taken from the book, "A Song in My Heart." Mary Jane Hartley will give devotions in July.

Approval of Minutes for the May 19th meeting.

MSC by Sherri Denney/Pennie Linna.

Thank You Cards: Pastor Jake for doing several of our Sunday services.

Financial Report:

- 1. Current Budget Balance is \$89,099.41.
- 2. Building Improvements is 13,550.14.
- 3. May giving was \$13,409.70; Spending was \$13,042.68.
- 4. Giving needs to be around \$3,5000 to \$4,000 per Sunday to meet spending.

MSC by Pennie Linna/Sherri Denney to accept the report.

Pastor's Report: None

Committee Reports

Property Committee - May 2, 2022 ~ Submitted by Bruce Grundman

Members Present: Terry Stillman, Jason Blank, Joe Deckers, Sandy Deckers, Phyllis Ziemke, Bruce Grundman, and Ginny Schieck

- 1. Discussed dehumidifiers in boiler room.
- 2. Ginny painted the door at the end of the hallway and painted the front entrance lights.
- 3. We will be changing the furnace filters
- 4. We got a new supply of cleaning supplies
- 5. We will be flipping the front sign.

Worship and Music Committee - May 16, 2022 ~ Submitted by Judy Hellman

The Worship and Music Committee met on Monday, May 16th at 10:30 am. In attendance were Mary Ellen Tracey, Lois Hill, Betty Linna, Joy Case, Jenny Case, Jean Memken, and Judy Hellman.

Judy Hellman gave devotions based on the hymn, "Wonderful Words Of Life." Lois Hill volunteered for devotions in June.

We discussed the upcoming June worship services. June 5th is Pentecost Sunday. Everyone is reminded to wear red that day. The red geraniums have already been planted. Donations for the geraniums are still being accepted.

On June 19th, Father's Day, each adult man will be given a candy bar. Betty Linna and Mary Ellen Tracey will hand them out.



On June 26th, we will have a hymn sing. LuAnn Stensberg is the organist that day.

The choir will continue to sing once a month. New choir members would be greatly appreciated. We still have openings in June and July for supply pastors.

Our next meeting will be June 20th at 10:30 am.

We closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Connections Committee - May 23, 2022 ~ Submitted by Mary Jane Hartley

Attended: Sharyn Gallick, Betty Linna, Sandy Mathenia, Mary Jane Hartley, Joy Case, Jenny Case, Jane Arps, Judy Hellman, and Ellen LaMarche

We opened with a prayer that Sharyn read.

Laurie Olson joined our meeting and gave us an update on the Call Process which has started and told us that there are not many candidates, but we are hopeful that one will be available.

We went over the greeter program that we are to oversee and will contact Jean to see if there are some guidelines that we can follow and help update the greeter program. When this is done and someone new comes to church, we have small gift bags with our magnet and info about our services and a small gift to welcome them for coming and we will work with the greeters to do this.

Sharyn shared that we purchased a fish dinner for Doug Bedor and she had lunch with him. She will be reimbursed for the cost of \$15 in cash as she brought the receipt. Thank you, Sharyn.

Prayer

Pat Wenzel
Tracy Feldman
Brett Gawlick
Otto Arndt
Ellen LaMarche
Delores Cherdon
Richie Sczerzen
Donna Joachim
Ron Forrest

We talked about having a "bring a friend to church" in June, but we put that aside until later in the year as the summer months are starting and many will be vacationing.

The Fellowship list is good for June, and we will assist anyone if needed. We will be asking church members personally if they can help with fellowship, as it is for everyone and not just the Connections committee's job to always be the servers. Thank you to everyone who has helped.

We talked about a day trip in June to Doty Cabin and Octagon House around June 22nd, 2002, and visit and go have ice cream after. We will get a sign-up sheet out soon.

Timber Rattlers gave was brought up and we will be contacting them in August to see if we can have a game night in September.

We closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Finance and Stewardship Committee – June 15, 2022 ~ Submitted by Jean Memken

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm. Members present were Laurie Olson, Pennie Linna, Evie Peterson, Mary Jane Hartley and Jean Memken.

Mary Jane gave the Treasurer's report. The checking account balance is currently \$98,099.41. Giving in May totaled \$13,409.70, while expenditures were 13,042.68, giving a positive—spending difference of \$367.02. Mary Jane noted changes in our investment accounts, and our endowment fund. She also pointed out that our building fund stands at \$18,592.57. In all, we have \$18,46.03 more total giving than

spending for the current year. Although this seems like a positive sign, Laurie noted if we had a pastor, we would not have a positive balance.

The Scrip account has over \$7,000 in it, and Laurie approached Tammie Kersten to see if we could use it to purchase the new sound equipment. Tammie agreed, but the funding for the new microphones will be coming from the Karen Thompson memorials.

We received \$553.67 from outside groups using our building for meetings and events.

Jean reported that the cost of paper has gone up significantly in just the last few weeks. We discussed ways we might cut down on paper use including encouraging people to take advantage of the electronic version of the newsletter, and using both sides of the paper for reports.

Laurie and Mary Jane reported the increased cost of our financial software, Quick Books. We have upgraded the software and we now have access to tech support whenever we need it for a monthly (rather than yearly) fee.

Laurie mentioned there was interest in having pew Bibles. She thought we could use endowment money to pay for these. Jean will take this idea to the Worship and Music Committee for discussion. We thought perhaps waiting to see if our new pastor will be encouraging the use of pew Bibles might need to be considered as well.

We discussed the use of the fishbowl for offerings. Currently, it seems to be working well. Continued use of the fishbowl would mean we could continue using usher teams of 2 or 3, rather than 4 people.

Laurie presented a proposal to address assessing the costs of funerals at St. Mark's and charging the family appropriately. St. Mark's has a funeral guideline booklet, but it has not been updated for several years. After discussing this with Pastor Tabitha Gallatin after a funeral of a non-member here at St. Marks, and considering what other churches charge, Laurie came up with the guidelines that the committee approved. Members would still just be required to provide an honorarium for the pastor and \$139 for the organist which is the current pay for organists at St. Mark's. Non-members will be charged for the organist, \$175 for the pastor, \$150 for use of the church, \$50 for use of the Fellowship Hall, and \$25 for the office staff, and \$25 for the Custodial staff. The pastor and organist would be paid directly and the rest of the money would go into the funeral fund. The committee approved these recommendations.

The committee discussed the use of Portico, which is the benefit management company used by ELCA church workers. It is expensive and there are other options that might be less expensive. It was noted they coverage from Portico is very good, and they manage all retirement benefits for our former pastors, so that is an advantage of staying with the company. No action was taken on this at this time.

Laurie reported the Council will be discussing a church picnic/potluck to be held on July 17. If they approve, the committee agreed the funds for the main course condiments and drinks could come from the Hospitality account.

Laurie reported on the effort to contact non-active members. Only two returned the post card we sent them, and three packets came back undeliverable. We will proceed in sending those not responding a letter informing them their membership at St. Mark's is discontinued, but if they want to return and be an active participant in the church, we will reinstate them.

Laurie also reported the Council will be discussing having a Rummage Sale to try and get rid of many of the things in our church basement that we no longer need or use. Members would be invited to give items to the sale that they no longer want. Proceeds could go to the "Spruce Up" fund used for church maintenance projects.

The meeting closed with the Lord's Prayer and adjourned at 7:32 pm. MSC by Mary Jane Hartley/Kim Wallmuller to accept the committee reports.

Unfinished Business:

- 1. Pastoral Transition Waiting for candidates to interview
- 2. Many churches (24 in the Synod) are awaiting pastors.

New Business:

- 1. Pastor Mike Dismer Visit:
 - Pastor Mike did an exercise with us which dealt with what a church should be. The church should be "living the life of Jesus Christ" and "Be The Church
- 2. Proposed Funeral Fees:
 - Members need only pat the pastor and organist.
 - NON-MEMBERS will pay \$150 for use of the church, \$175 for the Pastor, \$139 for the organist, \$50 for use of the Fellowship Hall, \$25 for office staff time and \$25 for custodial staff time.

MSC by Sherri Denney/Kim Wallmuller to accept the new fee schedule for funerals.

- 3. July 17th COOKOUT/POTLUCK:
 - Hospitality Fund to be used for meat, buns, condiments, and drinks.
 - Members will be asked to bring salads and desserts.

MSC by Pennie Linna/Sherri Denney to approve the above plan.

- 4. CHURCH RUMMAGE SALE:
 - Sometime in August
 - Items from the church basement and other rooms can be sold.
 - Church members may bring items from their homes.
- Proceeds from the sale will go to the "Spruce Up Fund." MSC by Sherri Denney/Pennie Linna to approve the Rummage Sale.

MSC by Sherri Denney/Pennie Linna to adjourn the meeting at 7:44 pm.

We closed with the Lord's Prayer.

The next meeting is July 21st, 2022, at 6:30 pm.

Submitted by Judy Hellman, Secretary





The interviewing of Pastoral candidates is a slow process. The Call Committee had an initial virtual interview with a candidate in May. The committee felt the candidate was not a fit for St. Mark's and released the individual (no longer considering). They continue to wait for additional candidates to interview. Please continue to include the Call Committee and this process in your prayers!

Please feel free to contact one of your St. Mark's Church Council Members, if you have any questions. Updates will continue to be announced during worship, in future newsletters, emails, and/or direct mailings.

PEACE Laurie Olson



Brats, hotdogs, buns, condiments, & drinks provided.



Small Miracles

I'm not sure whose idea it was to plant a lily right below the mailbox in front of the church, but I am so glad they did. I'm not all that familiar with how lilies grow, but this one was amazing to watch and I saw it every day when I went to get the mail. I wish I had more pictures to show its appearance, but once the initial plant turned green, it changed every day, growing at an amazing pace, sometimes, I would estimate, 1-2 inches overnight. About halfway through its growth cycle, the buds started to appear and enlarged every day until they finally started to pop open. What a lovely reminder of our God's beautiful creation! It's in full bloom today as of July 1, so check it out the next time you come to church! — jm









The Food Pantry has been very busy. The Food Pantry has been very busy. We've been getting new patrons most Wednesdays, but we never know just how busy we'll be, Sometimes the cars are lined up out to the street and then we'll have a very slow day. We try to be prepared. In May, we had 70 families shopping for food to feed 146 family members. In June, we served 53 families. We try to fill their needs, but if they come early they have a better selection of groceries. We are in need of paper products, dish and laundry soap,

sugar, cake mixes, brown or white rice, tomato soup, and canned pasta meals. Thanks for all your generous donations. We all appreciate your help. — Karen Jordan

We Get Mail!

Here's a note from Lynn Ann Clausing Rusch, Executive Director at Linwood Place.

Thanks to all of our supporters for making our Pie & Ice Cream Social a great success! We received over 50 pies, served 100 people, raffled off two beautiful quilts and had a wonderful time with both old and new friends. Special thanks to the pie bakers, quilt makers, volunteer helpers, Old Glory Café for the ice cream, sponsor Matt Prickett of R&R Insurance and Deb Linsmeier for supporting the event with a Thrivent Action Team grant. Your contributions allowed us to exceed our goal of \$1,500.



Some St. Mark's members enjoying ice cream at the Pie & Ice Cream Social at Linwood Place. Front row: Fern Fuhrmann, Mary Jane Hartley, and Lois Hill. Back row: Down Jones, Jenny Case, and Joy Case. YUM!!!





Quitting Group

The Mission of the Month for July is our own Wednesday morning Quilting Group. These faithful servants gather each week to make quilts that are given to Lutheran World Relief and then sent all over the world to people in need. The money you donate will be used to purchase thread, batting, and other quilting supplies to produce these quilts. If you would like to donate to support this very worthwhile mission, 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 June. You can also contribute electronically through VANCO.

Currently, the Pine Ridge Reconciliation Center hosts Kids Time on weekday after school offering a safe place

WELCA Appleton Conference Spring Meeting Was Inspiring

On Saturday, June 11, nine women from St. Mark's traveled to Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in Appleton for the WELCA Appleton Conference Spring Gathering. The Conference had not had the opportunity to meet for a couple of years because of the Covid-19 pandemic, so it was great to get together again for a morning of fellowship, worship, and inspiring speakers.





Conference President Wanda Fischer

The morning began with a welcome from our Conference President, Wanda Fischer, and East Central Wiscon Synod President Deb Martin. Deb acknowledged our efforts to host the Fall Convention in November. She also talked about the upcoming Fall Retreat in September which will be held at the Imago Dei Camp near Clintonville.



East Central Synod President
Deb Martin.



Cindy Czarnik-Neimeyer

Our first speaker was Cindy Czarnik-Neimeyer, a Catalpa Health Therapist and member of Prince of Peace. She gave a wonderful presentation on finding strength in times of trouble that included a number of physical and mental exercises one can do to be more mindful of God's presence and less stressed when facing the challenges of life. She shared many personal experiences of growing up in a family with many siblings and an alcoholic parent. She also talked about her experiences as a counselor and working with young people who have had to face many serious challenges in their lives. She was really inspiring. The one quote that stood out for me in her presentation was: "Our capacity for resilience is hard-wired in the brain – one of our greatest gifts. Resilience, buttressed by faith and by hope, is indomitable." – Rita Shiano

After a short break, we got to hear a from Franki Moscato – a 21 year-old singer/songwriter who lives in the Fox Valley. She is only 21 years old, but she has accomplished a great deal in her short life including the start of her own Foundation which raises funds to combat teen suicide and promote kindness. She told us her life story and she sang several inspirational songs, including some of her own compositions.

We finished the gathering with a very nice salad luncheon prepared by one of the members of Prince of Peace who is a professional caterer. In all, it was a great event and I think everyone from St. Mark's enjoyed it. The next time you enter our church through the front doors, check out the "Be Kind" poster that we brought back from this meeting. Be Kind is the motto of the Franki Moscato Foundation.

Attending from St. Mark's were: Laurie Olson, Mary Jane Hartley, Lois Hill, Sharyn Gawlick, Joy Case, Jenny Case, Emma Anderson, Ginny Schieck and Jean Memken. — jm



Franki Moscato



"Life is like a ten-speed bicycle. Most of us have gears we never use."

—Charles M. Schulz

Oh, Sing to the Lord!

The Choir has been meeting once a week, either on Saturday morning or Wednesday evening since Lent began. And it has been great having them be a part of our worship services. At their final rehearsal for the season, Sherri Denney snapped a few pictures of this dedicated group. Thank you, Sherri!



Here's a couple of sopranos, Mary Ellen Tracey and Mary Jane Hartley, making music!



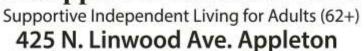
Altos Emma Anderson and Lois Hill take a breather.

Director Judy Hellman helps tenors Chuck Baumgartner and Sharyn





In Support of Linwood Place



July 10th 2:00pm

Talk of the Town, New Orleans Jazz

Aug. 14th 2:00pm

The Happy Wanderer's German Band

Sept. 25th 2:00pm

Voices of Peace, Gospel 50/50 Raffle

Bring Your Lawn Chair...Get Ready For Great Music And Fellowship

Sponsored By:



Free-Will Donation

A Ministry of Fox Valley Lutheran Homes.

In case of rain, concerts will be moved to Grace Lutheran Church, 900 N Mason St, Appleton.

Updated Funeral Fees

During this time of transition, it is suggested that we review policies and update where necessary. The St. Mark's Church Council approved the following funeral fees, at their June 16, 2022 meeting.

	Member No	Non-Member		
Use of Church	No fee	\$150		
Pastor	Honorarium	\$175		
Organist	\$139	\$139		
Use of Fellowsh Hall	ip No fee	\$ 50		
Office Sta	aff No fee	\$ 25		
Custodia Staff Tim		\$ 25		



Our Sunday Servants — July

Date	Assisting Minister	Reader	Greeters	Ushers	Counters	Acolyte
July 3	Jeff Tharp	Gwen Hoehne	Joy Case Jenny Case	Sherri Denney Mary Jane Harley	Jeff Tharp Kim Wallmuller Pat Westphal	Volunteer
July 10	Sherri Denney	Pennie Linna	Linda Anderson Nancy Maslow	Emil Leppiaho Phyllis Ziemke	Jane Arps Ellen LaMarche Emil Leppiaho	Volunteer
July 17 Church Picnic	Judy Hellman	Jeri Travis	Emil Leppiaho Karen Jordan	Evie Peterson Lois Kemp	Gwen Hoehne Kim Wallmuller	Volunteer
July 24 Hymn Sing	Tom Wenzel	Jenny Case	Ginny Schieck Judy Fowler	John and Laurie Olson	Bruce Grundman Lois Kemp Judy Olson	Volunteer
July 31	Jean Memken	Tara Dieck	The Blank Family	Pennie Linna Betty Linna	Laurie Olson Dawn Jones Judie Hilliker	Volunteer

Altar Guild: Ginny Schieck



Sleep in Heavenly Peace Contributions

As you may recall, our Lenten outreach this year was "Sleep in Heavenly Peace," a local organization whose motto is, "No kid sleeps on the floor in our town!" Volunteer help build bunk beds and they are given to any family who has a need for children's bedding in the Fox Valley area.

All the offerings collected during our midweek Lenten services and midweek Holy Week Services were given to this organization. In addition, we asked members to donate twin sheet sets, blankets, pillows, and bedspreads to go along with the money that would finance the building of the beds. Finally, several of our members participated in a "Bed-a-Thon" bed building day that coincided with this year's Synod Assembly in Oshkosh.

Each bed costs about \$250 to build which includes the cost of lumber, hardware, finishing stain, and equipment needed in the building process. We pledged \$500 to sponsor two beds and sent that in as a donation from St. Mark's. However, we actually collected an additional \$1,545 that we were able to donate to Sleep in Heavenly Peace to build more beds!

As far as bedding donations, members of St. Mark's contributed 23 sheet sets, 3 comforters, 10 blankets and 8 bedding sets (sheets and comforter).

On top of that, we recently received a thank you from Sleep in Heavenly Peace addressed to our Quilting Group, thanking them for the "wonderfully crafted" quilts they recently received.

Thank you all for your generous donations to this organization. Thanks to you, there are many children in this community that will now be able to get a good night's sleep in a bed of their own.





Visit St. Mark's Website

www.stmarksneenah.org



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.



Do we have your email address?

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



-Max Lucado, God Came Near

St. Mark's Office & Leadership Email Addresses

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

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

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