

July 2025



# The Messenger



**Rev. Niveen Sarra,**  
**Pastor**  
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**Administrator**  
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**Ginny Schieck,**  
**Custodian**

**Laurie Olson,**  
**Treasurer**

**Pat Westphal,**  
**Financial Secretary**



**Sunday School 9:00 am**  
**(September-May, every**  
**other Sunday)**

**Adult Forum**  
**Sundays 9:00 am**

**Worship**  
**Sundays 10:00 am**  
**(Holy Communion on**  
**1st and 3rd Sundays)**

**Bible Study**  
**Thursdays 1:30 pm**

**St. Mark's Lutheran Church, 140 S. Green Bay Rd, Neenah, WI 54956**  
**Phone: 920-725-2828**  
**Website: [stmarksneenah.org](http://stmarksneenah.org) E-mail: [office@stmarksneenah.org](mailto:office@stmarksneenah.org)**

Dear Children of God gathered  
as St. Mark's Lutheran Church,  
*Grace and peace to you in the name of  
our Lord Jesus Christ.*



I lift my heart in thanksgiving to God for the outpouring of love and generosity you have shown during this difficult season for my family and me. Your compassion—whether expressed through the support of the food pantry, your thoughtful gifts, or the power of your prayers—has been a wellspring of strength and consolation. Words cannot fully convey how deeply your kindness has touched me.

I also give thanks to the Lord that my brother Odeh, his wife Marina, and my mother Sylvia-Catrin have arrived safely in the United States, away from the suffering and uncertainty brought on by the war in Palestine. Odeh is now receiving hospice care, and though our hearts are heavy, your prayers and care continue to remind us that we are not walking this road alone. Even as my youngest sister Abeer and her family in Bethlehem remain in the midst of hardship and conflict, we have experienced the faithfulness of God through your presence and support.

We continue to seek the Lord's guidance as we make difficult decisions about Odeh's care and work through the complexities of immigration. It is a true blessing that my sister Nisreen, a nurse and Belgian citizen, is with us—offering her strength, wisdom, and loving presence at a time when it is needed most.

Amid all of this, I have been reflecting deeply on what it means to live faithfully in times of change. I find comfort and purpose in continuing the ministry entrusted to me. Being with you in worship and service nurtures my spirit and renews my faith. Your love is a reflection of Christ's own care for the weary and the burdened.

I believe it is important to receive the changes the Lord has allowed in my life with faith and openness. Though it would have been easy to give in to frustration or despair, I have chosen instead to adapt—to walk this path with trust in God's presence. This is the path my family and I have embraced: adjusting to our present circumstances while trusting that the Lord, in His mercy.

*(Continued on page 2)*

## Pastor's Post

*Continued from page 1*

I believe, as the apostle Paul teaches, *"No testing has overtaken you that is not common to everyone. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tested beyond your strength, but with the testing he will also provide the way out so that you may be able to endure it"* (1 Corinthians 10:13).

I ask that you continue to hold my family in prayer. From the depths of my heart, thank you for your steadfast support, your generosity, and your compassion. As we walk forward together, may we be upheld by the promise of Isaiah 41:10:

*"Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be afraid, for I am your God. I will strengthen you; I will help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."*

With gratitude and in the love of Christ,

**Rev. Dr. Niveen Ibrahim Sarras**



## Midweek Worship Services – Don't Miss Out!

If you happen to miss our Sunday worship service, you now can attend on Wednesday evenings! Join us for midweek worship services on the following dates:

- **July 9th and 23rd**
- **August 13th and 20th**

The service will begin at **6:30 pm** and will follow the same liturgy as the previous Sunday. We will gather in the **Fellowship Hall**, and to make the evening even sweeter, **ice cream will be provided** afterwards!

We look forward to seeing you there!

Of course, we have our regular Sunday morning worship at the same time and place, 10:00 am in the sanctuary. Holy Communion on the first and third Sundays of the month. Adult forum meets at 9:00 am.

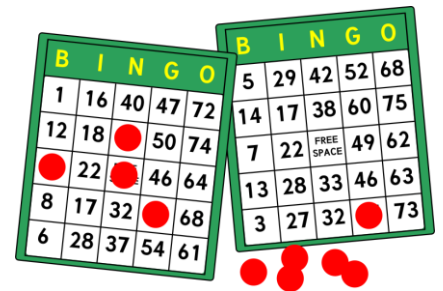


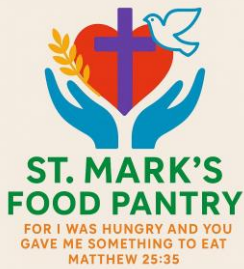
## BINGO NEWS!!!!

This summer our Connections Ministry team will sponsor BINGO afternoons on the third Monday of every month, beginning at 1:00 pm. So the next BINGO session will be Monday, July 21<sup>st</sup>.

Come on over to church on July 21<sup>st</sup> and enjoy a rousing afternoon of Bingo, refreshments, and fellowship. And there will be prizes for the winners!

**Speaking of prizes**, the Connections Ministry Team is looking for prizes for the Bingo winners! Bingo Prize items should be small and not expensive. It is important that any food items or personal care items be unused and sealed by the manufacturer. Thank you!



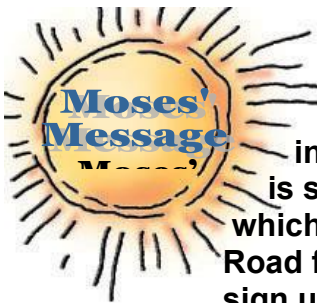


The Food Pantry is always busy, but very unpredictable---one week we have 27 people looking for food and then another week we only get 12 patrons. We try to have the most desired items, but perishables are tricky. We do the best we can. In May, we had 83 families shopping to feed 226 people. We have some come every week and their need is great. We appreciate all your help. Right now, we need canned pasta meals and paper towels. Thank you. – *Karen Jordan*

Don't forget! Food Pantry Sunday is always the first Sunday of every month! Please give what you can to support this ministry of our church.

## Toppling Hunger Benefits Our Food Pantry!

During the last two weeks of June, the Fox Communities Credit Union conducted a cereal drive to benefit local food pantries, and our pantry was chosen to be one of the beneficiaries! Before the cereal is distributed, during the week of July 7<sup>th</sup>, they plan to post a video showing the donations at all of their 22 Fox locations, plus a video from WBAY-TV of their cereal boxes lined up and toppled down like dominos! Then we will be able to pick up our donation from the Neenah branch. We are so blessed to be chosen for this food drive by the Fox Community Credit Union in Neenah!



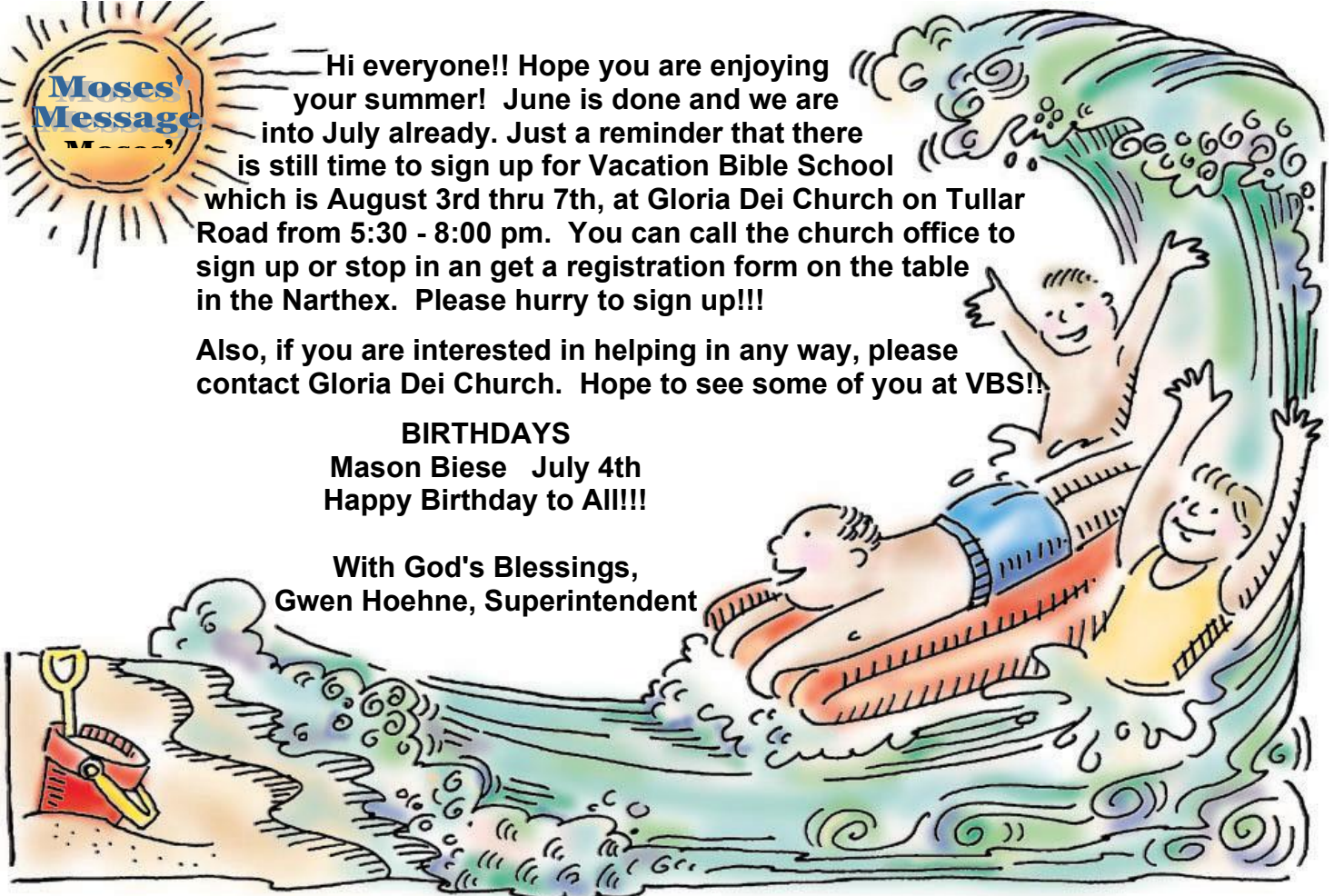
Hi everyone!! Hope you are enjoying your summer! June is done and we are into July already. Just a reminder that there is still time to sign up for Vacation Bible School which is August 3rd thru 7th, at Gloria Dei Church on Tullar Road from 5:30 - 8:00 pm. You can call the church office to sign up or stop in and get a registration form on the table in the Narthex. Please hurry to sign up!!!

Also, if you are interested in helping in any way, please contact Gloria Dei Church. Hope to see some of you at VBS!!

### BIRTHDAYS

Mason Biese July 4th  
Happy Birthday to All!!!

With God's Blessings,  
Gwen Hoehne, Superintendent







**Called to order:** President Dawn Jones called the meeting to order at 6:31pm.

**Members absent:** JT Rose

**Devotions:** Pastor Niveen, Devotions for July: Laurie Olson

**MSC to approve minutes from the last meeting of 04/24/25 by Tom Frantz/Joe Rehorst.** We did not meet in May 2025.

**Thank You's:** Pennie for the confirmation slideshow in the narthex- Laurie will write her one.

**Did you know?** Pastor would like to know more about previous pastors of the church. Highlight previous pastor, history of church. Dawn will reach out to Joy Case.

**Financial Reports:** Total in checking account \$227,168.48. Building Fund: Investments and Designated \$33,916.10. Total difference for (giving less spending for year-to-date) (\$4,668.09). Giving versus spending difference for month of May (\$7,935.51). Average per month is \$13,840.16. Double utility bills paid in May. Synod paid for the benevolence. We had software subscription expenses the previous month as well. We also had double office equipment lease/fees and City of Neenah quarterly fees were taken out this month as well. Philosophy of what bring in is what we should spend.

**MSC to approve financial report from Jason Blank/Tammie Kersten.**

**Pastor's Report:** Affirmation and two Baptisms. Pastor is also doing a coaching session; she will be certified.

**MSC to approve pastor's report Tom Frantz/Emily Christofilis.**

### Ministry Team Reports:

**Christian Education Ministry Team—May 27, 2025 ~ Submitted by Gwen Hoehne**

PRESENT: Jenny Case, Joy Case, Dawn Jones, Pastor Niveen, Gwen Hoehne

Pastor Niveen opened with prayer.

- 1) End of Year – Started the year with 14 students and ended with 11 students. Last day, they did a Mother's Day Gift. Each student was given a certificate and a gift card for Dairy Queen. They sang in church and did a good job.



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- 2) Change start time for classes – Jenny and I discussed the possibility of changing the time to start Sunday School from 9:00 am to 8:45 am. We don't seem to have enough time to do a lesson plus a craft or project. Also, this would give us time to watch a movie one week and then the next week talk about the lesson. Everyone seemed to be fine with that so starting in September Sunday School will be from 8:45 -to 9:45 am.
- 3) Moses Messages – Will be a trial to put Moses Messages in the Sunday church bulletin each week. In other words, if something I would put in Moses Messages monthly, I can put in the church Sunday bulletin.
- 4) VBS Update – Vacation Bible School will be August 3<sup>rd</sup> thru August 7<sup>th</sup> from 5:30 - 8:00 pm at Gloria Dei Lutheran Church on Tullar Road in Neenah. You can still register through the church office or get a registration form from the table in the Narthex.
- 5) Acolytes for next Fall – Will talk more about in the fall as we get closer to the start of Sunday School. We do not have anyone in Confirmation this fall.
- 6) Other Business – Will look at Cluster Event for first day of Sunday School which is “God’s Work, Our Hands” Sunday.

Next meeting will be in August after VBS. Date to be determined.

Closed with Lord’s Prayer.

**Property Ministry Team—June 2, 2025 ~ Submitted by Jason Blank**

Present: Bruce Grundman, Joe Rehorst, John Olson, Laurie Olson, Phyllis Ziemke, Ginny Schieck, and Jason Blank

- Laurie Olson attended the meeting to talk to us about the possibility of replacing all the lights in the church. We have gotten some quotes for different levels of replacement.
- We approved the addition of a small bike rack on the north side of the building.
- We received a kit from our property insurance company to monitor water leaks in the basement.
- We purchased and received rain barrels for collecting water that can be used to water the flowers.
- We are getting a new tree planted in the center of the north lawn.
- We will be getting our lawn sprayed for weeds.

**Social Ministry Team—Social Ministry Team is not meeting over the summer. ~ Submitted by Karen Jordan**

**Worship and Music Ministry Team—May 19<sup>th</sup>, 2025 ~ Submitted by Judy Hellman**

The Worship and Music Ministry Team met on Monday, May 19<sup>th</sup>. Members attending were Joy and Jenny Case, Pat Westphal, Mary Jane Hartley, Ardys Seelow, Mary Ellen Tracey, and Judy Hellman

Devotions were given by Pat Westphal. Jenny Case will give devotions in June. During her devotions, Pat expressed her concern about some policies that are being passed by our government. For people who are concerned about certain government policies, google ELCA Advocacy and contact your representatives for any issues you may question.

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Pastor Niveen was not present but gave us a list of upcoming services. On Sunday, May 25<sup>th</sup>, we will celebrate the graduates during the worship service. Thursday, May 29<sup>th</sup>, is the Feast of the Ascension of the Lord. We will celebrate on June 1<sup>st</sup>, since we do not have a Thursday worship service. Sunday, June 8<sup>th</sup> is the Feast of Pentecost and the baptism of Lorrie Wood's Granddaughter. Sunday, June 22<sup>nd</sup> is a healing service and Holy Communion.

Summer vesper services are tentatively set for July 9<sup>th</sup> and July 23<sup>rd</sup>. and August 6<sup>th</sup> and August 20<sup>th</sup>. St. Paul's Lutheran church will be invited.

On Father's Day, Mary Ellen Tracey and Joy and Jenny Case will hand out candy bars, wooden crosses and cards to all adult men. Mary Jane Hartley will purchase the candy bars from VandeWalle's.

Our peppy songbook is being compiled. Judy Hellman is in charge of the final production.

Our July 27<sup>th</sup> fellowship was discussed. Our sundaes will consist of vanilla ice cream with the following toppings: caramel, chocolate, strawberries, chopped pecans, sprinkles, cherries and whipped cream.

Our next meeting will be June 23<sup>rd</sup> at 10:30 am instead of June 16<sup>th</sup>.

We closed with the Lord's Prayer.

#### **Youth Ministry Team—No Meeting Scheduled ~ *Submitted by Laurie Olson***

The Youth Ministry team did not meet this month.

#### **Connections Ministry Team—Connections did not meet in May. ~ *Submitted by Mary Jane Hartley***

#### **Finance and Stewardship Ministry Team—June 17, 2025 ~ *Submitted by Laurie Olson***

**Members Present:** Treasurer Laurie Olson, Mary Jane Hartley, Pennie Linna, and Fern Furhmann.

**Members Absent:** Pastor Niveen, Financial Secretary Pat Westphal, and Jason Blank

Opened with a Prayer.

Reviewed current account balances through end of May 2025. May's giving to current monthly expenses was \$12,072.03 and expenses of \$20,007.54. The difference was (\$7,935.51). Laurie noted that synod benevolences were paid in May, an annual QuickBooks subscription (financial computer software), quarterly City of Neenah utilities (sewer/water/fire), and two months of utilities and machine contracts hit the books, which contributed to the higher-than-average monthly expenses.

Year-to-date: Spending=\$75,291.67 and Giving=\$70,623.58 with a net of (\$4,668.09).

Total Associated Bank checking has a balance of \$227,165.48 which includes \$122,665.23 allocated to designated accounts and \$104,500.25 for current operating. Additionally, \$170,189.34 in the Thrivent money market and \$1,035.54 in Thrivent TIPS account and \$57,298.52 in the ELCA Mission Investment Fund.

Laurie informed the team that employee payroll will be direct deposit, starting with the next payroll. She noted this is long overdue. She also is looking at getting the organists set up with direct deposit. Laurie said that direct deposit for employees is free with Quickbooks, but there is a \$1.75 per/deposit for vendors (organists).

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She said the cost of a paper check is approximately \$1.00 and the overall cost to do direct deposit for the organists will net out at approximately \$40 per/year. She thinks this is worth it, since there have been occurrences of lost checks, organists not cashing their checks in a timely manner and manually needing to hand out a check each Sunday. (Mailing the checks would add \$.73 per check which would make switching to direct deposit process a wash). The Finance & Stewardship team agreed it is worth the expense to put organists on direct deposit.

Temporary credit cards have been set up for two of the individuals going on the Pine Ridge Trip- both are drivers, and this will assist with streamlining gas purchases/reimbursements.

Closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Next regular meeting is July 15, 2025, at 6:30 pm.

### **Endowment Ministry Team—May 18, 2025 ~ Submitted by Jean Memken**

The Endowment Ministry Team met on May 18, 2025 in the church office. All members were present. The team members are Jean Memken, chair, Nancy Maslow, and Tammie Kersten.

The team considered a request for \$1,000 for the Bible Campers. After some discussion, we approved the request, but we asked that in the future, requests for camping funds include what, if any, fund-raising activities did the child and their family engage in to raise funds for camp, how much, if any, of the camping fee will the family be responsible for, and what might be the circumstances that would preclude the child and his/her family from fund-raising activities or paying for part of the camping fee. We are glad to support the camping activities of our members, but felt if the family and especially the camper, committed time (as part of a fund-raiser) or personal funds to pay the camp fee, it might be a more worthwhile experience for the camper and his/her family.

The current balance of the Endowment Fund is \$197,652.22, an increase of about \$3,024.63 from the previous month. In spite of the significant fluctuations in the stock market, our Endowment Fund continues to grow. God is good!

*Please be  
Praying for...*

**Ministry Team Report Summary:** Ice Cream Social coming up in July from the worship and music ministry team. Christian Education, Gwen wants to go back to 8:45 am start time in the fall. 8:45 am-9:45 am. Peppy Songbook, Pastor said to collect all the songs/hymns you are familiar with that have high beats and are upbeat. They will be used for summer mid-week service that will start in July. This will be starting July 9th, July 23rd, August 6th, August 20th, St. Paul's is also invited. We will meet in the Courtyard. Would fellowship be included? Vesper- worship for the evening.

Ellen LaMarche  
Sarah L.  
Richie Sczerzen  
Doug Bedor  
Odeh Sarras  
Mary & Ron Zielewski  
Serenity and Leighton  
Chuck Baumgartner  
Janet Travis

### **MSC to approve ministry team report Jason Blank/Joe Rehorst.**

**Unfinished business:** Safety guide in each room and incident report is in the back. Maybe coordinate a time for Pastor to mention them before each service? Alert verbally? Training for BLS on 06/23/25 at 6:00pm. SCRIP will pay for participants.

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Waiting for MCC to call us to set up dates for Parking lot to finish. They will give us a 7-day notice before we do anything with the parking lot.

### Goals and objectives:

**GOAL #1:** Reviewed for the council. Pastor would like the goal of the book study for church council, “Autopsy of a Deceased Church: 12 Ways to Keep Your Alive” by Dr. Thom Rainer. We have some money, and we can order the books. The book study will be 10/8/2025 from 5:30pm-8:30pm. Pastor would like one session and fellowship. This will just be a council exercise, not filter into the ministry teams.

**GOAL #2:** Dawn talked about the need to connect passions to ministry. Not sure how to do more of that digging to find your passion, stewardship will work on this but culture needs to be reviewed. How do we change the climate of our church and bring others in? Maybe the church council will make a statement about this. **Goal:** Revise the **Ministry Team Covenant** to include a statement that those who show interest in a team or program are welcomed and included – should not be turning away individuals who show a passion/interest in getting involved. Tammie suggested we tie this into a “Did You Know?” How we as a congregation want people to be involved, make it clear that ministry teams should be welcome to have others to join. Bylaws in our church council, to support the work in our ministries. Pastor will write something for the covenant, and we will talk about it during the next council meeting.

**MSC to approve unfinished and new business Tammie Kersten/Emily Christofilis.**

**Our next meeting will be 07/17/25 at 6:30pm**

**We closed with the Lord’s Prayer.**

## Art Appreciation

*Josie, Vayda, and their grandma Ginny Schieck helped decorate our sidewalks with inspiring messages on June 25 (and then they had pizza!). Thank you for sharing your talents, and thanks to our Youth Ministry Team for sponsoring this event.*







## Fox Valley Community Table



The Mission of the Month for July is the Fox Valley Community Table. Fox Valley Community Table (FVCT) is a free meal site located in the lower level of St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Neenah. They serve lunch every Tuesday and Saturday from 11:30 am-12:30 pm. There are no income or residency requirements. Once a month, members of St. Mark's provide a meal for those at the Fox Valley Community Table. If you would like to donate to buy food for these meals, please check the "Mission" column on your giving envelopes and put them in the offering when you attend worship anytime in July. Or designate Mission of the Month on your electronic giving account. Let's support our volunteers at the Community Table!

## St. Mark's Members Train for Emergencies

We had a great educational session (thanks to Laurie Olson) on Basic Life Saving Skills this past week here at St. Mark's. All nine of the St. Mark's members who took the course passed and are now considered certified in Basic Life Saving skills, which include CPR, Ventilations, use of an AED (defibrillator), and relief of foreign-body airway obstruction (choking). Here are a few pics of our newly certified life savers.



### ***Our new Basic Life Skill Certified Members:***

*Far left: Rosemary Cermak, Pat Westphal and Pastor Niveen*

*Upper Left: Ginny Schieck and Bruce Grundman*

*Upper Right: Jason and Jenny Blank*

*Lower Right: John Olson and Jean Memken*





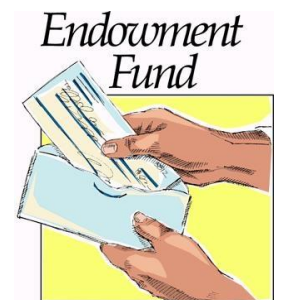
**Did you know** that St. Mark's has an Endowment Fund that supports a variety of activities in our church as well as throughout the ELCA? The fund originated in 1985 when the six ELCA congregations in Neenah and Menasha each received a substantial monetary gift of \$80,000 from Neenah citizen, Louis Baer.

I found what I believe was the first Council Report from the manager of the Endowment fund dated March 20, 1986. In this short report, it was noted that anyone may give money to the Endowment Fund at any time and that the "intention of this fund is to be self-perpetuating, principled dollars invested and reserved, with income monies being returned to St. Mark's Lutheran Church on a yearly basis." Expenditures from this fund were to be used to fund "special and benevolent needs beyond the budgeted items of St. Mark's Lutheran Church." The current principal balance of the fund today is \$163,939, over double of the original balance, thanks to many generous contributions to this fund over the years.

Originally the management of this fund was overseen by the "Management Committee." In a document laying out the responsibilities of this group, it was written that they were "to give the earning of this fund to the betterment of the Christian Church." It was noted that only the interest from the fund would be used to fulfill requests for funding. Examples of what the money could be used for included "betterment and enrichment of our Lutheran people in areas of education, music, camp, youth groups, etc.; the Lutheran Church Ministry which would include missionaries and mission churches."

The current Endowment Fund is invested in a Thrivent Investment Portfolio that earns interest based partially on the stock market. Our investment portfolio for this fund is considered "a moderately Conservative Target Risk" that includes various fixed income bonds, some international investments, and other equity funds. This combination of investments has served us very well and has yielded enough funds to support a variety of different programs and activities. In recent years, the Endowment fund has supported students attending Lay School (of which I am one – THANK YOU!), the Linwood House Summer Concert Series (we provide funds for the "Voices of Peace" concert each year), Bible Campers, the Community Christmas Dinner, and the ESTHER Banquet. We have also supported programs and ministries at other ELCA churches in the area. The current balance of the Endowment Fund is almost \$200,000, so we have around \$6,000 we can use to support ministries of our church and the ELCA.

The Endowment Fund is always glad to accept contributions to increase the value of its principal. This tax-deductible gift is one that truly keeps on giving as it is not spent, but rather used to generate more interest revenue to fund projects and programs. The bigger the principal, the more money the fund generates, so your contribution to the Endowment Fund is one that will benefit St. Mark's and the ELCA community partners for as long as we are a church body. – *Jean Memken, Chair of the Endowment Ministry Team*



## A Creed for July 4th

I believe in America because in it we are free - free to choose our government, to speak our minds, to choose our different religions.

Because we are generous with our freedom, we share our rights with those who disagree with us.

Because we hate no people and covet no people's lands.

Because we are blessed with a natural and varied abundance.

Because we have great dreams and because we have the opportunity to make those dreams come true.

– *Wendell L. Willkie, Candidate for president in 1940*





**GIVE NOW**

Scan the code and give to support the ministry of St. Mark's Lutheran Church.  
Thank you.

## VBS NEWS!

**Vacation Bible School will be held August 3-7 from 5:30-8:00 pm at Gloria Dei Lutheran Church in Neenah.** There is still plenty of time to register your child/grandchild for VBS. Pick up a form on the table in the church narthex or register online at:

<https://forms.gle/eQ7iCB4yvPjxx53v6>



**VBS needs Volunteers!** They need a timer and several group leaders, so if you can help, tell Jean in the church office.

**Current VBS Volunteers:** There will not be any volunteer meeting in July, but Jill Kruger, who is the main organizer of VBS, will be at Gloria Dei on Monday, June 30 from 5:30-7:30 pm if you have any questions or need help (or if you want to help her decorate the church for VBS). Anyone who has questions or just wants to check out their area again, you may stop in during this time. There will be a couple of decorating days to be scheduled probably around the week after the 4<sup>th</sup> of July.

There will be a big meeting for all **VBS staff on Monday, July 21 at 6:00 pm.** You will get your t-shirt and find out a rough idea of how many kids we have signed up. You can also start bringing in and gathering the supplies you need.

## Our Sunday Servants

Date	Assisting Minister	Reader	Greeters	Ushers	Counters
July 6	Emily Christofilis	Tom Frantz	Linda Anderson LaVerne Arndt	Mary Jane Hartley Pennie Linna	Jeff Tharp Kim Wallmuller Fern Fuhrmann Lorrie Wood
July 13	Sherri Denney	Bruce Grundman	Chuck Baumgartner Sherri Denney	Judie Hilliker Pat Westphal	Jason Blank Jenny Blank Pat Westphal
July 20	Jean Memken	Gwen Hoehne	Nancy Bricco Judie Hilliker	John & Laurie Olson Shaun Johnson	Gwen Hoehne Doug Sebestead Renie Sebestead
July 27	Judy Hellman	Pennie Linna	Joy Case Jenny Case	Joe & Linda Rehorst	Bruce Grundman Lois Kemp Linda Anderson

### Communion Assistants:

July 6 – (Intinction) – Linda Anderson, Adam Clifford, and Sherri Denney

July 20 – (Intinction) – Dom and Emily Christofilis, and Bruce Grundman

**Altar Guild:** Ginny Schieck



## FILTHY FUN KIDS RUN



{Kids Mud Run}

St. Mark's is the *volunteer sponsor* of this event!  
Held on Saturday, July 12 at  
O'Hauser Park, Neenah  
7:00 am - Noon



## 14 Volunteers Needed

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

**Sign Up Sheet is on the table  
in church narthex or use this QR code.**



## Get it on Your Calendar! Linwood House 2025 Summer Concert Series and More!

We have been invited our friends at Linwood House for fellowship and great music at their summer concert series and a special concert.

**Sunday, July 13 "Talk of the Town", New Orleans Jazz 2:00 pm**

**Sunday, August 17 "Elvis John" 2:00 pm**

**Sunday, September 21 "Voices of Peace", Gospel 2:00 pm (St. Mark's is a sponsor of this concert!)**

Linwood Community is a faith based independent living community for persons 62 and over.

We serve persons wishing to partake in community living and maintain independence without the work of home maintenance.



AND

**New Horizons Musical Ensemble**

**Monday, July 21 at 6:30 PM**

Join us for a fun filled evening of fellowship and music as the members of New Horizon's Ensemble entertains us in Linwood Commons. Bring a friend and join the fun.

*Linwood Community is a faith based independent living community for persons 62 and over. We serve persons wishing to partake in community living and maintain independence without the work of home maintenance.*



## So What Happened at Synod Assembly?

*The Synod Assembly was held June 7<sup>th</sup> in Green Bay, and the entire day was captured by an artist who continually drew this mural as the meeting was held. Our St. Mark's delegates, Adam Clifford and Jean Memken, will submit a complete report of what took place at the Assembly for the Annual Meeting booklet early next year, but here's a little preview of what went on during the Assembly.*



# Myths and Facts About Congregational Governance

The ELCA Office of the Secretary has issued a clarification in response to false rumors suggesting that the 2025 Churchwide Assembly will eliminate congregational autonomy or authorize synods or the churchwide organization to seize congregational property. These claims are untrue. The Churchwide Assembly, the ELCA's highest legislative body, will meet in Phoenix from July 28 to August 2, 2025, and as is customary, it will consider constitutional amendments. However, none of the proposed changes diminish congregational self-governance, affect property ownership, or alter the disaffiliation process. The Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church (CRLC), created to review the church's organizational principles with attention to anti-racism, serves in an advisory capacity only and does not have authority to make changes. Its current recommendations do not threaten congregational autonomy or property. Further information, including the proposed changes and their rationales, is available through the provided link:



<https://www.ecsw.org/news/2025-governance>

## New Memorial Tree at St. Mark's

Phyllis Ziemke and her family spent a warm afternoon planting a lovely Autumn Blaze Pear tree on St. Mark's property in the grounds north of our parking lot. The tree is donated in memory of her husband, Walt. The tree will produce lovely white flowers in the spring and will turn brilliant red in the fall. What a beautiful tribute to Walt and a wonderful gift to our church. Thank you, Phyllis and family!

*Pictured:  
Phyllis (on the right)  
and her daughter,  
Deb Martola (left),  
standing by the  
tree planted in  
memory of their  
husband and father,  
Walt Ziemke.*



*Sharon Gawlick shared this picture of Doug Bedor who recently moved a little closer to us and now lives in Appleton. He celebrated his birthday a few months ago, and he is pictured here with his birthday cake! Thank you, Sharyn, for your visitation ministry!*



**St. Mark's Lutheran Church**  
**140 S. Green Bay Road**  
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