

March 2026



The Messenger



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Laurie Olson,
Treasurer

Pat Westphal,
Financial Secretary



Sunday School 8:45 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
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The Forty Days: A Poem for Lent

The desert opens its mouth,
and we step inside—not to escape the world,
but to see it truthfully.

Dust remembers our name.
Silence becomes a teacher.
The body relearns what the soul forgot.

“This life has been given to you for repentance,”
says John Chrysostom,

reminding us that time itself is mercy.
Fasting, then, is not hunger alone,
but the schooling of the heart.

Bread waits.
Power waits.
Glory waits.

Yet the Word answers hunger with Scripture,
and the stones remain stones.

O Lent—
not a season of despair,
but quiet rejoicing:
a joy born not of fullness,
but of truth.

For to fast is to grow mature in faith,
to confess without shame:
in our weakness, we need the Lord.

Here desire is disciplined,
thoughts are gathered,
and the soul learns again
to seek the Lord alone.

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The harp of Ephrem the Syrian sounds softly:

“Fasting is the weapon; prayer is the shield.”

**Not because God must be persuaded,
but because the heart must be trained—
freed from false kings
and divided allegiance.**

**Fasting clears the mind
and opens space within,
where the Spirit speaks
without competition.
Thus the devil is resisted—
not by strength of will,
but by attention fixed on God.**

**Do not boast of empty stomachs
while feeding the pride.
The desert mothers warn us still:
fast from cruelty,
abstain from contempt,
and let fasting open the heart.**

Then Augustine of Hippo names our longing:

*“Our heart is restless
until it rests in You.”*

**So Lent becomes confession and trust—
not punishment, but a path.**

**And when the fast loosens its grip,
we rise not lighter, but truer,
remembering at last
that we do not live by bread alone,
but by every word
spoken by God.**

Rev. Sarras





The Food Pantry had another busy month. We had 63 shoppers getting food to feed 178 family members. We keep getting new people signing up and I think those numbers will continue to increase since everything costs more all the time. At this time, we need **Hamburger Helper**, **paper towels** and **paper grocery bags**. **Cash donations** are always welcome to help us purchase meat, dairy and produce. Thanks for all your help.—*Karen Jordan*



GIVE NOW

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



Time is sure flying by! February is gone and we are into March. On February 18, we had Ash Wednesday which is the start of Lent. What is Lent? Lent means Spring! Yes, it is the time we think of renewal and rebirth of the flowers and animals and warmer days. During Lent we prepare our hearts and minds in as we get ready to gather and remember Jesus' death on the cross and celebrate his resurrection on Easter.

So during Lent think of all that Jesus gave up for us.

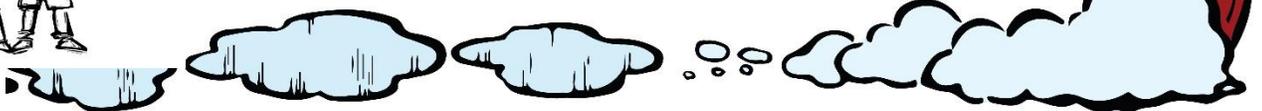
The children will be having Sunday School on March 22nd as normal, and also on Palm Sunday, March 29th. On the 29th, we will have a cluster event during Sunday School and the children will march into church carrying the palms at the beginning of church. So I hope of lot of you can make it. Parents, you are welcomed to walk into church that Sunday with your child/children also carrying palms.

There is NO SUNDAY SCHOOL ON APRIL 5th. THAT IS EASTER.

BIRTHDAYS

Zayden Mueller 3-5 Layla Parker
HAPPY BIRTHDAY!!

With God's Blessings,
Gwen Hoehne, Superintendent





Members Present: Jason Blank, Dawn Jones, Tara Dieck, Joe Rehorst, Tom Frantz, Tammie Kersten, Pastor Niveen, and Laurie Olson

Members Absent: JT Rose

Call to Order: President, Dawn Jones, called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

Devotions: By Pastor Niveen. Devotions for March: Tom Frantz

Election of Officers: MSC by Tom Frantz/Jason Blank to approve Dawn Jones as Council President, Jason Blank as Vice President and Tara Dieck as Secretary.

Dawn read the *Covenant for Ministry Teams and the Council*. She further reminded council representatives to read the covenant at their next ministry team meetings.

Members shared their highs and lows for the week.

Welcome New Member: Asked that the Office Administrator put together a council binder for new member, Tara Dieck. Include contact information, meeting dates, Missions of the Month, the Covenant for Ministry Teams and the Council, and the constitution.

Approval of January 15, 2026, Council Minutes. MSC by Tammie Kersten/Pastor Niveen to approve the minutes.

Thank You: Pat Westphal for sponsoring the first mid-week Lenten meal-Tom will do the thank you. Also, thank the Youth Ministry Team for the Valentine's Day Dinner-Laurie will pass on the thank you at the next Youth Ministry Team meeting.

Did You Know?: Dawn will do an article on the Theatre/Movie Room for the March newsletter. It was suggested to ask Pat Thompson and Phyllis Zeimke to give the history of the planting of the Geraniums.

Financial Reports: Laurie reviewed current account balances through end of January 2026. January's giving to current monthly expenses was \$10,971.20 and expenses of \$7,432.73. The difference was \$3,538.47. It was noted that we had not received the synod invoice for January's Pastoral salary/benefits. If we had, we would have been in the red. Year-to-date: Same as end of January.

Total Associated Bank checking has a balance of \$244,189.30 which includes \$147,847.90 allocated to designated accounts and \$96,341.40 for current operating.

Additionally, \$175,308.72 in the Thrivent money market and \$1,063.19 in Thrivent TIPS account and \$58,647.98 in the ELCA Mission Investment. Stewardship 8 Finance Team noted discussed moving \$75,000 of the Thrivent Mutual Funds dollars into short-term bonds. This move was suggested by our Thrivent Representative. It is still



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conservative yet will probably result in better returns. **MSC by Tammie Kerston/Pastor Niveen to approve Financial Report.**

Pastor’s Report ~ Pastor Niveen Sarras

Dear Members of the Church Council,

Grace and peace to you. I give thanks to God for the joy and privilege of serving alongside you and our congregation, and I am grateful for the many signs of life, faith, and shared ministry that continue to unfold among us.

I continue to teach Adult Sunday School for both children and adults, and I met with the Christian Education Ministry Team to discuss First Communion education, which will take place during Sunday School weeks. We also planned for Palm Sunday and Easter, with a strong emphasis on meaningful participation by our children in these important celebrations of our faith. In addition, I participated in the Thursday Bible Study led by Jean Memken, and I am grateful for the opportunity to engage in rich theological conversation and shared learning.

I attended a virtual Synod event with updates on the bishop’s trip to South Africa and participated in both the monthly and annual Appleton Conference meetings. The conference awarded our congregation a \$500 grant for the food pantry, and the annual meeting included discussions on collaboration and the election of a new financial president and dean.

I participated in the Social Ministry Team meeting, where we addressed both blessings and challenges. One important transition is that Jane Frantz has stepped down from her role of shopping for the food pantry due to increased demands at her workplace. I am deeply grateful for her passion, faithfulness, and dedicated service to this ministry. Moving forward, a group of volunteers will now share the responsibility of shopping, allowing more people to be involved while easing the burden on any one individual.

I also participated in the Community Table, where we served 110 meals. I was deeply impressed by the volunteers who worked with care, generosity, and respect. The meal was abundant, guests were able to take food home, and many expressed heartfelt gratitude for both the food and the hospitality they received.

The Valentine’s Party was exceptional, and I extend sincere thanks to the Youth Ministry Team for their creativity and leadership. I attended part of the event, provided bread, and shared a prayer with participants before the meal, then excused myself to teach my online Old Testament class.

On February 14, I attended the installation service of Pastor Asher O’Callaghan at All Saints Lutheran Church in Oshkosh. About fourteen

clergy and deacons were present. This service deeply encouraged me and renewed my hope, reminding me that the Lord continues to raise leaders and will not give up on the Church.



- Ellen LaMarche
- Sarah Lamb
- Richie Sczerzen
- Traci
- Linda Rehorst
- Mary Ellen Tracey
- Chris
- Alex F.

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I continue to alternate with Dawn Jones in teaching Sunday Bible Study and had the privilege of teaching from the books of Genesis and Exodus. I also attended the Worship and Music Ministry Team meeting, where we planned for Ash Wednesday and the midweek Lenten services.

For Ash Wednesday, I participated in an ecumenical service with churches in Neenah and also led a separate worship service at our congregation. This year, St. Paul and St. Mark will worship together at our church during Lent. Four leaders will participate in preaching: Dr. Jean Memken, Rev. Amy Engebose, Rev. Dara Clifford, and myself.

During the first week of Lent, I visited several members to offer Holy Communion and ashes. I am especially excited about this Lenten season, as our midweek worship will focus on our baptismal promises and what it means to live them out in daily life.

I remain deeply thankful for the opportunity to serve this congregation. It is truly a joy to witness the Spirit at work among us, and I look forward with hope and gratitude to what God will continue to do in and through our shared ministry.

In Christ's service,
Rev. Dr. Niveen Ibrahim Sarras

MSC by Jason Blank/Joe Rehorst to approve Pastor's Report.

Ministry Team Reports:

Christian Education Ministry Team – Monday, February 9, 2026 ~ Submitted by Jean Memken

Present: Gwen Hoehne, Chairperson, Dawn Jones, Joy Case, Jean Memken and Pastor Niveen

Absent: Jenny Case

Guest: Pennie Linna

Gwen called the meeting to order at 6:27 pm.

Pastor opened the meeting with prayer.

Topics Discussed:

Lessons – Gwen reported that Pastor was teaching the lessons and the children were doing well. Pastor plans to teach until the end of the Sunday School year (May 17).

Gwen reported that Nancy Rose has been very helpful in teaching the younger children. It was noted that Jenny was not able to help with the classes this month due to play practice.

Gwen reported there will be four children going into confirmation next year: Vayda, Hunter, Tyler, and Avery.

Children still in Sunday School - Dylan, Mason, Zayden, Josie, Layla, Lyla, Miriam, and Keegan. Gwen reported the 2nd grade students would remain with the younger children for one more year.

There is a great need for teachers in the Sunday school.

Lent/Palm Sunday – Normally Sunday School does not meet on Palm Sunday. Lent starts on the February 18th. This year the children are scheduled to meet on Palm Sunday which is March 29. Gwen is planning a cluster event for the children on that day.

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Pastor questioned if the children would be singing on Palm Sunday. Gwen talked to Judy Hellman about getting back to having music at 9:30 am on Sundays now she is back. Gwen had just planned to have them process with palms, but not sing. Pastor wondered if they could sing “This is the Day.” Pastor will talk with Judy Hellman to see if that could be arranged.

Pastor questioned if only 45 minutes was enough time to teach a Sunday School lesson. The team discussed starting at 8:30 am instead of 8:45 to accommodate the lesson and music. Gwen didn’t think the families would mind coming that early. She said she would ask the parents. She thought there might be a problem with Keegan as he comes from De Pere, but she would check with his parents.

There will be bags for Easter Sunday for the children. They are not going to be big—some candies and a little toy and donkey will be included.

First Communion – Pennie Linna will lead the students through first communion instruction. There will be four students in this class: Avery, Vayda, Hunter, and Tyler

After some discussion, it was the consensus of the team and Pennie that First Communion would take place on May 3. That is the same day one of the students, Vayda, will be baptized. Pennie requires four classes to instruct the students on First Communion and then the students also must come in the Saturday before their First Communion ceremony to make the Communion bread and rehearse. After checking calendars and worship schedules, it was determined the students could meet on February 22, March 8, March 22, and April 19. They would make the bread and rehearse the ceremony on May 2. The First Communion students will also decorate banners for a required project of the class.

Mason, Dylan, and Zayden and will still be in Upper Grade Sunday school on those dates.

Hunter Brill – Gwen reported that Hunter is technically in 8th grade now. At school, he is actually in the 8th grade and is able to learn by having an aide with him at all times. He does like to color and when he isn’t coloring, he listens, so Gwen felt he could be successful in the first communion and confirmation classes. Nancy has been instrumental in helping him in Sunday School and his brother Tyler has also helped him.

Last day of Sunday School is May 17th – It was decided that there would be a cluster event, games, and snacks on this date and all students will receive a certificate.

Pennie mentioned an online source for Children’s sermons called Sermon Suite that had children’s sermons and lessons related to the readings each week. Gwen and Pastor thought that might be a good resource for Sunday School lessons as well as Children’s sermons. They will investigate to see if the content that is available with a paid subscription might be valuable for teaching Sunday School.

We closed with the Lord’s Prayer.

The meeting adjourned at 7:20 pm.

Property Ministry Team—Monday, February 2, 2025 ~ Submitted by Jason Blank

Members Present: Bruce Grundman, Phyllis Ziemke, Ginny Schieck, Joe Rehorst, and Jason Blank

- The cabinets in the sacristy have been repaired so they close properly.
- The new snowblower has been purchased and is in the garage ready to go.

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- We will be looking into replacing the large light that shines onto the parking lot to something brighter
- There was some discussion the getting cameras mounted outside for the parking lot.

Social Ministry Team—Monday, February 9, 2026 ~ Submitted by Gwen Hoehne

Chairperson: Karen Jordan

Present: Phyllis Ziemke, Gwen Hoehne, Jane Arps, Pastor Niveen

Discussion and Action Items

The meeting was opened with a prayer led by Pastor Niveen.

Graduation Recognition (May 24, 2026)

The committee discussed plans to recognize graduating students during worship and fellowship on May 24.

The following graduates will be acknowledged:

- Eric Blank (College)
- Krista Nelson (High School)
- Dakota Lemmers (High School)

Shopping Assistance

The committee noted that Jane Frantz is no longer able to assist with shopping needs. Ginny Schieck has expressed possible willingness to assume this responsibility. Karen will follow up to confirm her availability.

Pastoral Care

The committee discussed several members who are experiencing health challenges and explored ways to provide appropriate pastoral and congregational care.

Valentine Outreach

Karen mailed Valentine's cards to college students and to shut-in members as part of the committee's outreach efforts.

Food Pantry Grant

The committee received and celebrated the news that the Appleton Conference awarded a \$500 grant to support the congregation's food pantry ministry.

Next Meeting

Monday, March 9, 2026

Time: 1:00 PM

Location: St. Mark's Apartments

Worship and Music Ministry Team (2 REPORTS)—Monday, January 19, 2026 ~ Submitted by Pat Westphal

Those attending: Pastor Niveen, Mary Jane Hartley, Joy Case, Jenny Case, Pat Westphal

Those absent: Judy Hellman, Ardys Seelow, Betty Linna, (Mary Ellen Tracey)

Next meeting: Monday, Feb. 16th at 10:30 in the Fellowship Hall

Jenny Case will provide devotions.

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Lent: After opening devotions from Pat Westphal, Pastor went over the plans for the start of the Lenten season services. Ash Wednesday will include an ecumenical service at Our Savior's Lutheran Church (Neenah) at Noon. Participating churches will include Our Savior's, St. Paul, the United Church of Christ, and St. Mark's. St. Mark's will again offer an evening service at 6:00 p.m. with a light supper preceding the service at 5:00 p.m. (likely soup, bread, bars) on Ash Wednesday

For the remaining Lenten season, the pastors will present a round-robin worship experience moving from church-to-church for a 6:00 p.m. service. *(An option to have the pastors remain in the home church and have the congregations move from site to site was discussed and rejected as a less desirable choice. Many of the church members do not care about travelling during the nighttime and feel more comfortable at their home church. Members do like to experience the messages from other pastors, however.)* It was decided to continue our past practice of a light supper preceding the worship services. St. Paul has offered to host two suppers at St. Mark's. We will set up a schedule at our next Team meeting. In the interim, Pat Westphal will provide the soup and bread for the Feb. 18th Ash Wednesday service. The pastors have not selected a specific liturgy for Lent at this point, and we will be notified when things have been finalized. (Judy indicated she will consider playing (or recording) songs if the services are during the day. Since they are in the evening, additional decision-making is required here.)

Thank you to Pastor Niveen for keeping us informed.

Bibles for the pews: We again visited the topic of providing Bibles for the pews. It was decided to place 20 Bibles (from Immanuel Church, Wausau) in the pews to receive feedback from the congregation regarding their usage before we invest in a full-scale purchase.

Music group(s) rehearsal and performance schedule: Judy provided the following information on rehearsal times and planned performances:

Wed., Jan. 28th at 1:30 p.m. Rehearsal Ladies Quartet Performance: Feb. 8th

Wed., Feb. 4th at 3:30-4:30 Full Choir Rehearsal Performance: TBD

Sun., Feb. 8th at 11:15-12:00 Bell Choir Rehearsal Performance: Feb. 22nd

Music for Jan. 25th is still undetermined. LuAnn has not contacted anyone to let us know if she is returning. Pastor will check with Nancy to see if she is available.

Additional Team Members: We discussed the fact that we need some additional help with our team because several of our members find it difficult to assist due to frailty or inability to attend meetings. We are looking for St. Mark's members with a passion for our worship services to join us.

Ad Hoc Committee for Special Music: The Ad Hoc committee established by the Council to investigate ways to refresh and re-invigorate our worship services met on Feb. 18th at 11:15. Members Dawn Jones, Lois Hill, Tara Dieck, Pastor Niveen, Pat Westphal, and musician Delores Jacobson discussed ideas to enrich our services (not replace what we have). As a long-term goal, it was considered that we have something special on a larger scale about once a month and something smaller once a month. This is too much to accomplish in the short term. We would like suggestions from the congregation regarding things they may have seen when worshipping in other venues. Delores has offered to sing and to play organ-piano (Clavinova®) duets with Judy, Jean, or other keyboardists. We would like to see the Clavinova used to its fuller range of capabilities including using its brass and string options. We will visit Lawrence University's music website to find out more about using Lawrence students to provide special music. It is suggested that Endowment Funds

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can be used to pay for this supplemental music. The ad hoc committee will meet again at 11:15 a.m. on February 15th in the meeting (Mary) room to discuss things we have learned and to move forward. For those to whom an “ad hoc” committee is strange language, it is a short-term committee formed to address a narrowly focused topic (and then it disbands). Anyone with ideas or suggestions to share is encouraged to contact a committee member.

Worship and Music Ministry Team—Monday, February 16, 2026 ~ Submitted by Judy Hellman

The worship & music ministry team met on Monday, February 16th. Members present were Jenny Case, Joy Case, Mary Jane Hartley, Judy Hellman, Pat Westphal, and Pastor Niveen.

Jenny Case gave devotions with a reading from Ephesians. Pat Westphal will do devotions in March.

Ash Wednesday services will be based on Psalm 51. Congregation members will wash their hands with hyssop and receive ashes.

Midweek services during Lent will be with St. Paul’s. The services will be held at St. Mark’s with rotating speakers.

Jean Memken will order the palms for Palm Sunday. We will discuss the purchase of Easter flowers in the March meeting.

Lenten meals were discussed. Pat Westphal is doing the meal on February 18th. Gwen Hoehne, Mary Jane Hartley, and Judy Hellman will provide the meal on February 25th. St. Paul’s will do at least two of the meals.

Pat Westphal gave a report from the ad hoc music committee. The committee plans to contact the high school and middle school, and the Lawrence Music Studio, for possible solo/ensemble performances. Our team agreed to endorse a \$50.00 payment to any school.

Other ideas presented were having the congregation sing a song in round form, an instrumental group of congregation members, and whistling a verse of a hymn.

Our next meeting will be March 16th at 10:30 A.M.

We closed with the Lord’s Prayer.

Youth Ministry Team—Sunday, February 8, 2026 ~ Submitted by Laurie Olson

Members Present: Laurie Olson, Nancy Rose, Sherri Denney, Ginny Schieck, JT Rose, Joe Rose, Jeff Tharp, and Pastor Niveen.

Members Absent: Jenny Case

Prayer: Opened with a prayer

Business for Consideration

Valentine’s Day Dinner:

- The team went through all the details for the event and assigned Youth and Adult to positions: Want this event to be an experience!
- Ginny and Laurie said they would work on most of the set up during the week, but assistance will still be needed that day. Look at the hanging lights in the basement.
- All helpers should arrive by 4:45 pm, so to review final responsibilities.
- Everyone should wear red or black or Valentine themed attire.

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- Pastor Niveen will do a dinner prayer.
- Nancy Kraus and her husband will provide our musical entertainment. Set up risers to get them up higher for all to see.
- Check-in: JT and Nancy will work at that station. Sell on-site tickets, have everyone provide their name for door prizes, and handout magnets.
- Food: Sherri & Ginny have a plan and server positions will be assigned on Friday, once we know where & what we'll need for helpers. It will be cafeteria style. Bread will be on the table.
- Photo Booth: will need a few to work here – older youth and an adult.
- Door Prizes: reviewed our prizes and drawing will be done during dinner. We will purchase small gifts for all the littles attending.
- Clean-up: all hands-on deck

Upcoming Events:

- **Synod Bowling** – April 5. We'll get information out in early February.
- **St. Mark's Bowling Event:** look at something in May, since our January date was not available.
- Laurie will check with **Linwood Place** on some of our youth/adults going to their facility for a BINGO afternoon in March (avoid March 1, if possible).
- March 15 we will be hosting fellowship with the St. Patrick's Day theme. Ginny will do her potato soup again and ask her son about again doing the corned beef on crackers.
- May will be a carwash.

Closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Next meeting: Sunday, March 8 at 11:15 AM.

Connections Ministry Team – Monday, January 26, 2026 ~ Submitted by Tom Frantz

No meeting in December 2025.

Craft Sale Donations: After discussion the Connections Ministry Team decided to award the following amounts to these charitable organizations:

- Good Gifts \$500
- Animal Shelter: \$250
- Bible Campers \$50
- Neenah Light House \$500
- Multi Cultural Coalition, Inc. \$250

Newcomer Welcome Bags: The Ministry team assembled welcome gift bags to distribute to newcomers. These will be available in the narthex. Each bag contained:

- A church magnet
- A religious themed joke card/Scripture Survival Kit
- Windows of St. Mark's
- A description of the church's ministry teams

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Outreach to Homebound & Absent members: There was discussion about ways to reach out to the homebound and members we've not seen in a while to show them we've noticed their absence and that we care. Members are encouraged to identify those people; inform the ministry team or who they are; give them a call, send a card, or visit.

Reminder: Valentine's Day Dinner & fun on 2/13. Sponsored by the church youth to benefit congregational youth activities. Tickets are \$10. Please purchase in advance to help them plan for quantities. Should be a fun night.

Fellowship Hour: Some weeks do not have hosts for the Fellowship Hour. We need to recruit hosts.
February 8: Connections Team
March 1, 8, 22 & 29 all open

Discussion about honoring Ellen La Marche on 3/29 because 3/28 is her birthday.

Bingo: March 16. We will maintain the schedule of bingo being held the third Monday of the month beginning at 1:00 pm. Snack items either baked or bought are welcome.

Meeting adjourned with the Lord's Prayer.

Racial Equity Ministry Team—Tuesday, February 10, 2026 ~ No Report

Finance and Stewardship Ministry Team—Tuesday, February 17, 2026 ~ Submitted by Laurie Olson

Members Present: Treasurer Laurie Olson, Pennie Linna, Financial Secretary Pat Westphal, and Pastor Niveen

Member Absent: Fern Furhmann, Jason Blank, and Mary Jane Hartley

Opened with a Prayer by Pastor Niveen.

Laurie reviewed current account balances through end of January 2026. January's giving to current monthly expenses was \$10,971.20 and expenses of \$7,432.73. The difference was \$3,538.47. We have not received the synod invoice for Pastor's January salary and benefits. If we had, we would have been in the red.

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The team reviewed Thrivent Mutual Funds' investments. Laurie reminded everyone that our Thrivent representative recommended that we look at moving some of the mutual funds' investments into short-term bonds. Our rep informed us that our returns in 2025 for mutual funds were 3.5% (and remain at 3.5%) and does not flex. He said that the short-term bonds averaged out in 2025 at a 6% return. The short-term bonds are currently at a 4% return and will flex, based on interest rates. After a discussion, it was decided to move \$75,000 from the \$175,308.72 in mutual funds to short-term bonds. There are no service fees to move the money. Laurie will call Thrivent and have this done.

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Closed at 7:30 PM with the Lord's Prayer.

Next regular meeting is March 17, 2026, at 6:30 PM.

MSC by Tom/Jason to accept the Ministry Team Reports.

Unfinished Business:

Music Ad Hoc Update: Dawn reported that the team met twice and making contacts and moving forward.

Lighting Update: Joe hopes to finish within the next few weeks.

Computer upgrade update: Laurie noted that the hang-up continues to be the automatic/programmable back door system.

New Business

Approve (officially) Lenten Season Community Project-Hygiene for the Homeless. It was noted that due to time, this was agreed upon via email. **MSC** by Tammie/Tara to approve supporting this project.

Ministry Team- Council Representatives:

Christian Education- Dawn Jones

Connections Ministry- Tom Frantz

Endowment- Tammie Kersten

Stewardship/Finance- Jason Blank

Memorial- Tara Dieck

Partnership- Dawn Jones

Property- Joe Rehorst

Racial Equity- Dawn Jones

Social Ministry- Pastor Niveen

Worship and Music- Pastor Niveen

Youth- JT Rose and Laurie Olson

Installation of Council worship date: The installation of Council Members and Ministry Team Chairpersons will be Sunday, March 8.

Path to Palm Sunday – Tom Frantz: Tom gave a verbal report on the Palm Sunday afternoon event.

Council members gave their support for this event. Tom will prepare & present an announcement at the next worship service and information will be provided for the March newsletter and included in Sunday bulletins, for those that are interested in attending.

MSC by Tara Dieck/Tammie Kersten to adjourn at 8 PM.

Closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Next meeting Thursday, March 19th, 2026, at 6:30 PM.

BINGO is Coming!

BINGO at St. Mark's will return on March 16th from 1:00-3:00 pm. As always, there will be plenty of snacks and prizes along with your favorite game!

Come for an afternoon of fun and be sure to bring a friend!



Walking Wet: Living Our Baptismal Promises in Daily Life

This series gently invites us to slow down and remember who we are and whose we are.

Beginning on Ash Wednesday and continuing through the Wednesdays of Lent, we gather around God's Word, prayer, and proclamation to reflect on the promises spoken over us at baptism. Week by week, we are called to trust God's grace, to live with humility and compassion, and to walk faithfully with Christ as we seek to love our neighbors and bear hope in the world. See the schedule below.

Date	Theme	Preacher
March 4	Hear the Word of God and Share in the Lord's Supper	Rev. Amy Engebose
March 11	Proclaim the Good News of God in Christ Through Word and Deed	Rev. Dara Clifford
March 18	Serve All People, Following the Example of Jesus	Rev. Niveen Sarras
March 25	Strive for Justice and Peace in All the Earth	Rev. Amy Engebose

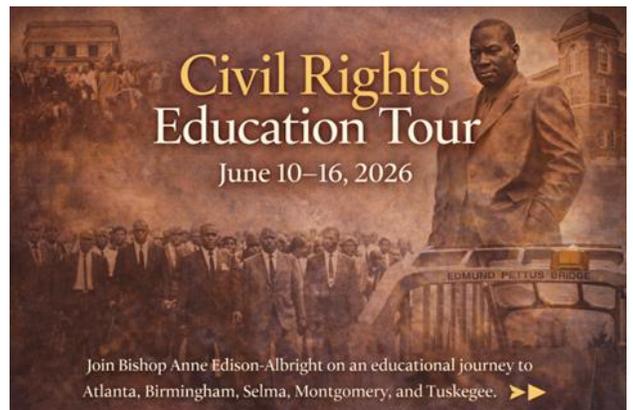
All services begin at 6:30 pm. There will be a light meal (soup, bread, salad, dessert) served before each service, starting at 5:00 pm. Once again, we are partnering with our friends at St. Paul Lutheran Church, and they will be preparing two of the Lenten meals this year. So come and spend some time with old and new friends alike as we ponder the wonder of God's love during this Lenten season.

Synod Sponsoring a Civil Rights Education Tour

June 10–16, 2026

Join **Bishop Anne Edison-Albright** on an educational tour exploring key sites of the Civil Rights Movement, including Atlanta, Birmingham, Selma, Montgomery, and Tuskegee. The journey will focus on learning, reflection, and shared witness. For details and registration, click the link below.

<https://tinyurl.com/hky2denh>



Important Upcoming Dates



Sunday, March 8, at 10:00 a.m. — The congregation is invited to witness the installation of the Ministry Team Chairs and the Church Council, which will take place during the service.

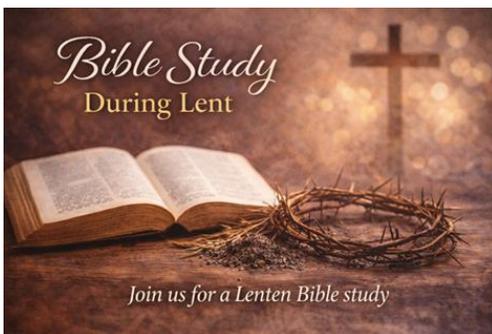
Sunday, March 29, at 10:00 a.m. — We will celebrate Palm Sunday, commemorating our Lord's triumphal entry into Jerusalem.

Thursday, April 2, at 6:30 pm — Maundy Thursday—An Agape Meal Service will be held, including a simple supper, the celebration of Holy Communion, and the customary ritual of the

washing of feet or hands during the service. The service will start at 6:30 pm and will be in the Fellowship Hall.

Friday, April 3 — An Ecumenical Good Friday observance will take place at **St. Paul Lutheran Church at noon** and we will also hold our own worship service at **St. Mark's at 6:30 p.m.**

Sunday, February 5, at 10:00 a.m. — The congregation will gather for the celebration of Easter, with Fellowship following the service.



Bible Study During Lent

A Lenten Bible study on the **Book of Ruth** will be held on **March 1, 15, and 29**, led by **Rev. Sarras**. On **March 8 and 22**, **Dawn Jones** will lead a Lenten Bible study using the Bible study featured in *Gather* magazine.

New Bible Study on the Book of Acts

Join us each Thursday afternoon at 1:30 pm for a time of prayer, reflection, and some serious (often seriously fun!) Bible Study. **We are just beginning a study on the Book of Acts.** If you like adventure, mystery, love stories, and intrigue, Acts is the book for you! And here's always coffee and little something sweet to eat. What's not to like? We will be in the library and we look forward to seeing you!



Our Sunday Servants

Date	Assisting Minister	Reader	Greeters	Ushers	Counters	Acolyte
March 1	Dom Christofilis	Pennie Linna	Karen Jordan Pennie Linna	Linda Anderson Nancy Maslow	Jeff Tharp Fern Fuhrmann Lorrie Wood	
March 4 Midweek Lenten				Linda Anderson		
March 8 Officer Installation	Bruce Grundman	Bruce Grundman	Joe & Linda Rehorst	Phyllis Ziemke Pennie Linna	Pat Westphal Jason Blank Jenny Blank	Tyler Joachim
March 11 Midweek Lenten				Pat Westphal		
March 15	Jeff Tharp	Jeff Tharp	Jeff Tharp Wanda Webster	Judy Fowler Ginny Schieck	Gwen Hoehne Doug Sebstead Renie Sebstead	
March 18 Midweek Lenten				Mary Jane Hartley		
March 22	Judy Hellman	Dom Christofilis	Doug & Renie Sebstead	Linda Anderson Nancy Maslow	Bruce Grundman Lois Kemp Linda Anderson	Mason Biese
March 25 Lenten Service				Sherri Denney		
March 29 Palm Sunday	Pennie Linna	Sherry Denney	Pat Westphal Rhonda Smith	LaVerne Arndt Rosemary Cermak	Dom Christofilis Dawn Jones Laurie Olson	
April 2 Maundy Thursday				Joy Case		
April 3 Good Friday				Bruce Grundman		
April 5 Easter Sunday	Jean Memken	Pat Westphal	Pat Thompson Phyllis Ziemke	Doug Hesser Judie Hilliker	Jeff Tharp Fern Fuhrmann Lorrie Wood	Avery Hill

Communion Assistants:

March 1 – (At the rail) – Adam, Clifford, Mary Jane Hartley, and Judy Hellman

March 15 – (Intinction) – Gwen Hoehne, Pennie Linna, and Jean Memken

April 1 – (Easter Sunday) – Chuck Baumgartner, Jean Memken, Joe Rehorst, J.T. Rose, and Avery Hill

Altar Guild: March/April: Ginny Schieck and Jean Memken



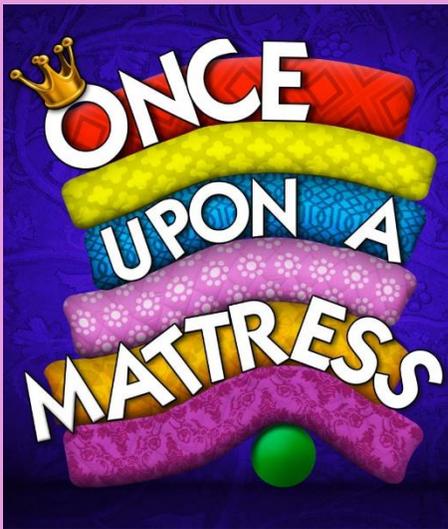


St. Mark's Helping Hands

Our Mission of the month for March is our own Helping Hands Fund. The purpose of the Helping Hands Fund is to provide financial aid to an individual/family who is in need on an urgent basis. The Helping Hands Fund is available to all and is not limited to those attending St. Mark's. The Social Ministry Team, under the oversight of the Pastor, has responsibility for overseeing the fund. In the past, we have funded a rent payment for an individual who had just started a new job, but had not received their first paycheck, a partial mortgage payment for an individual who was at risk of losing their home, and a payment to a mechanic for a family who needed a car, but could not afford to get it repaired. The Helping Hands fund has also been used to help pay utility and medical bills for families in need.

Individuals or families seeking assistance from the Helping Hand Fund are asked to complete an application and submit supporting documentation, such as a utility or medical bill. Then the Social Ministry team meets to consider their application and if they approve the request, a check is sent to the utility company, medical complex, landlord, etc. to cover the money owed.

Currently, the Helping Hands fund is almost depleted, so it is perfect timing that it was on the Mission of the Month schedule for June. Please consider giving a donation to this much needed ministry of St. Mark's. Mark your giving envelope as a "Mission of the Month" donation or use your VANCO electronic giving to support our Helping Hands Ministry this month.



St. Timothy Lutheran Church Players Production of "Once Upon a Mattress"

Friday, March 13 at 7 p.m.

Saturday, March 14 at 7 p.m.

Sunday, March 15 at 2 p.m.

Friday, March 20 at 7 p.m.

Saturday, March 21 at 2 p.m. & 7 p.m.

Sunday, March 22 at 2 p.m.

Doors open one hour before show.

Admission is free will offering with profits going to charity.

St. Timothy Lutheran Church
473 7th St., Menasha, WI



Our Movie Room and a Piece of Neenah History

Did you know that our church movie room is connected to more than a century of local entertainment history?

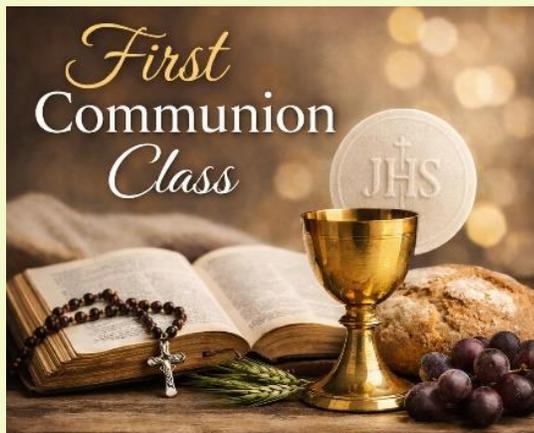
The original Neenah Theater, located at 114 East Wisconsin Avenue, officially opened on December 26, 1902. Before that time, people in Neenah had to travel to Appleton or Oshkosh to attend performances—no small trip in those days. Neenah’s citizens wanted a place close to home where they could gather and enjoy live entertainment.

For many years, the theater hosted live performances and community groups such as the Neenah Club and the Wisconsin Dramatic Society. In the 1920s, it began showing silent films, accompanied by a theater organ. In 1941, the building was purchased by Ben Marcus of the Marcus Corporation, and it continued as a movie theater for decades, showing popular films and serving as a beloved community gathering place.

Although the Neenah theater eventually closed and the building was torn down in 1998, its legacy of bringing people together lives on.

When the Marcus theater in Neenah closed, our church was able to purchase authentic movie theater seats, which are now part of our own movie room. Today, this special space is used for Sunday School movies, Vacation Bible School, and gatherings for a variety of church groups. We are also fortunate to have a movie-style popcorn machine, which adds to the fun and hospitality. Our movie room is more than just a place to watch films—it is a welcoming space where we enjoy hosting, sharing fellowship, and continuing a long Neenah tradition of community and connection.

—Dawn Jones



Instruction for First Communion
Hunter Brill • Avery Hill • Tyler Joachim • Vayda Zielinski
Pennie Linna, Instructor

First Communion Instruction

Pennie Linna will lead First Communion instruction on March 9, March 22, and April 22. Their first class was February 22. The students participating in this class are:

- Hunter Brill
- Avery Hill
- Tyler Joachim
- Vayda Zielinski

The First Communion ceremony will be on May 3 during the regular worship service.



Details Here



ESTHER-FOXVALLEY.ORG/PALMSUNDAY

Palm Sunday Path

Sunday, March 29th | 1PM-3PM | Houdini Plaza, Appleton

A movement of faith communities across the country
 We will gather at the peaceful, nonviolent Palm Sunday
 Public Witness to show our shared belief that all
 deserve compassion, justice, and dignity.
 We don't have to agree on everything to stand together
 in support of our neighbors.

JOIN US

Synod Youth Bowling Event

LET'S BOWL TOGETHER!

SAT
APRIL
25
NOON-2 PM

It's all about community in Christ and sharing in a time of connection & fun!

SAVE THE DATE - WATCH FOR DETAILS.

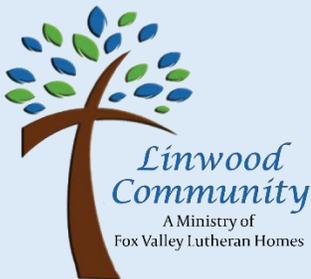
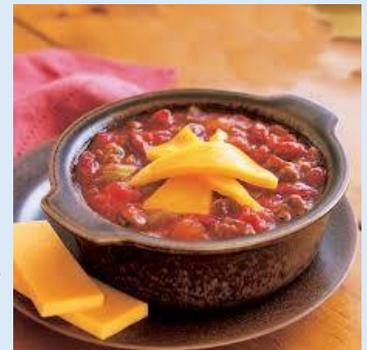
St. Mark's Youth Ministry Team

Calling All Chili, Soup, Dessert Makers & Eaters!

Wednesday, March 11, 2026, 11am-1 pm

Support Linwood Community and make your favorite pot of soup and/or a tasty dessert to support our 1st Annual Chili and Soup Cookoff.

If you identify as a soup eater, but not a cooker/baker, join us for a fun lunch, which includes samples for taste testing, a bowl of soup of your choice, tasty dessert and famous Linwood fellowship. Your \$8 donation will support our elevator reconstruction project.



If you have a tasty soup or dessert to share, please call Jean George at (920) 734-7225 Ext. 7 or email: resource.fvlhomes@gmail.com by Monday, March 2. Prizes will be awarded for best soups in several categories.

Valentine Dinner a Huge Success

Thank you to all who assisted with the *Valentine's Day Dinner*, sponsored by the Youth Ministry Team. Fifty-nine tickets were sold (+additional donations were given) and twenty, ten adults & ten youth, volunteered at the event. We had great food and fellowship with live entertainment provided by Nancy and Don Krause. \$669 was raised for the Bible Camper Fund. – *Youth Ministry Team*



Lenten Season Community Project



Help for the Homeless HYGIENE DRIVE™

We are a
collection site!

Bring items to church anytime
during these dates:

Feb. 22 - Mar. 15



Donations of hygiene and cleaning supplies make it possible for local crisis agencies to concentrate their limited financial resources on providing qualified staff, safe housing, nutritious food, education, and counseling to those they serve.

DON'T FORGET TO ALSO SUPPORT OUR
ST. MARK'S FOOD PANTRY.



St. Mark's Lutheran Church
140 S. Green Bay Road
Neenah, WI 54956

