

August 2026



The Messenger



Rev. Niveen Sarra,
Pastor

Email:
pastorniveen@stmarksneenah.org
Phone: 510-355-4352

Jean Memken,
Administrator

Email:
office@stmarksneenah.org
Phone: 309-825-5326

Ginny Schieck,
Custodian

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

Phone: 920-725-2828

Website: stmarksneenah.org E-mail: office@stmarksneenah.org

Dear Children of God gathered as
Saint Mark's Lutheran Church,

Grace and peace to you.



Did you know? Have you ever wondered why the church uses different colors throughout the church year?

The colors we see on the altar, pulpit, and clergy's vestments are more than decoration. They reflect the meaning of each season and festival, helping us enter more deeply into the story of God's saving work through visual symbols. This tradition developed gradually over the centuries and continues to be practiced in different ways across Christian traditions and cultures.

A Brief History of Liturgical Colors

- **Early Church (1st–4th centuries):** Early Christians worshiped primarily in homes and did not use special vestments or liturgical colors. After Christianity was legalized in **A.D. 313**, worship became more public, churches became more formal, and sacred spaces were adorned with beautiful fabrics.
- **Development of Vestments and Paraments (4th–9th centuries):** Clergy continued wearing the common Roman garments of their day, which gradually evolved into distinctive liturgical vestments. Linen altar cloths also developed into decorative paraments used on altars, pulpits, and lecterns.
- **The Emergence of Liturgical Colors (9th–13th centuries):** At first, there was no universal system of liturgical colors. Around **A.D. 1200**, Pope Innocent III described one of the earliest organized color patterns, laying the foundation for the color traditions many churches follow today:
 - **White:** Christ, Easter, Christmas, and non-martyr saints
 - **Red:** Pentecost, Holy Week, and martyrs
 - **Green:** Ordinary Time
 - **Purple:** Advent and Lent, seasons of preparation and repentance
 - **Black:** Funerals (used in some traditions)
- **Standardization (1570):** Following the Council of Trent, Pope Pius V officially standardized the Roman Catholic liturgical color system, making its use more consistent throughout the Western Church.

Continued on page 2

Continued from page 1

During the Reformation, **Martin Luther** retained vestments, paraments, and liturgical colors as *adiaphora*—practices neither commanded nor forbidden by Scripture—because they promote good order and help proclaim the gospel. Today, many churches, including the **Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)**, the Roman Catholic Church, and the Anglican Communion, continue to use paraments and liturgical colors to mark the seasons of the church year, teach the story of salvation, and enrich worship through visual symbolism.

Liturgical Colors Throughout the Church Year

Season/Festival	Color	Meaning
Advent	Blue (or Purple)	Hope; expectation of Christ the King
Christmas	White or Gold	Joy, light, purity of Christ
Epiphany & Baptism of Our Lord	White	Christ's glory and purity
Time after Epiphany	Green	Growth in faith
Transfiguration	White	Glory of Christ
Ash Wednesday	Purple (or Black)	Repentance and mortality
Lent	Purple	Repentance and preparation
Palm/Passion Sunday	Scarlet (or Purple)	Christ's suffering and sacrifice
Holy Week	Scarlet or Purple	Passion of Christ
Maundy Thursday	White or Scarlet	Holy Communion and Christ's love
Good Friday	No color	Altar is stripped in remembrance of Christ's death
Easter Vigil & Easter	White or Gold	Resurrection, victory, and joy
Easter Season	White	Resurrection joy
Pentecost	Bright Red	Holy Spirit and fire
Holy Trinity	White	Joy in the Triune God
Time after Pentecost	Green	Spiritual growth and discipleship
Christ the King	White	Christ's reign, light, and glory
Reformation	Red	Holy Spirit and tribute to martyrs for the faith
All Saints' Sunday	White	Celebrating the lives of our saints
Saints & Festivals	White; Red for martyrs	Celebration; witness through sacrifice

May these colors do more than beautify our worship space—they invite us to walk more deeply through the story of God's saving love in Jesus Christ. As the seasons of the church year unfold, may they remind us of God's presence, shape our faith, and draw us ever closer to Christ.

Yours in Christ,

Rev. Dr. Niveen Ibrahim Sarra, Ph.D

From Our Property Ministry Team

The updated Green Bay Road sign renovation is complete! Many heartfelt thanks go out to everyone involved... from the landscaping plan to the concrete curbing, pulling out old plants, removing mulch, widening the plot, tilling the soil, removing heavy Lannon stone bricks, putting in new mulch and finally purchasing and planting the new perennials! All of this was made possible by using some of the Jane Hartley memorial money. Her legacy will live on for all to enjoy! Thank you, Mary Jane and Karrington!"



Call to Order: 6:32pm

Attendance: Laurie Olson, J.T. Rose, Tom Frantz, Joe Rehorst, Tammie Kersten, Tara Dieck, Jason Blank, and Pastor Niveen

Absent: Dawn Jones

July Devotion: Tara Dieck

Devotions for August 20, 2026, Meeting: Tom Frantz

Thank You's: Leland, JT, Bruce, and Property committee (newsletter to committee, Jason card to Bruce), Joe Rose, Chris Rose, and Bruce for helping with the lighting project (Joe)

Did you Know: History of the Bell (JT to contact Donna to ask about the history of the bell) Phyllis Ziemke, Ellen Krempien, Joy Case, and Lois Kemp

Approval of Minutes from June 18, 2026, meeting:

MSC by Tammie Kersten/Tom Frantz to accept the minutes from the June meeting

Finance Report:

Laurie reviewed the current account balances through the end of June 2026. June giving toward current operating expenses totaled \$11,605.25, while expenses were \$16,031.61, resulting in a deficit of \$4,426.36 for the month.

Year-to-date, current operating expenses total \$89,545.97, while giving toward monthly expenses totals \$83,434.55, resulting in a year-to-date deficit of \$6,111.42.

Total funds in the Associated Bank checking account are \$108,197.33, which includes \$51,267.49 allocated to designated accounts and \$56,929.84 available for current operations. In addition, St. Mark's has \$177,628.47 in a Thrivent Money Market account, \$1,076.40 in a Thrivent TIPS account, and \$59,683.88 in the ELCA Mission Investment Fund. Laurie reported that all the parking lot invoices have been paid, which is reflected in both the current and designated checking account balances.

Laurie noted that our monthly expenses include nothing unusual. However, our recent monthly contributions have not been sufficient to cover our monthly expenses. She referred to the Stewardship & Finance Meeting minutes for further information.

Approval of Financial report:

MSC by Joe Rehorst/Jason Blank to approve the Financial Report



Continued on page 4

Continued from page 3

Pastor's Report ~ Pastor Niveen Sarras

Grace and peace to you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

As I reflect on this past month, I am filled with gratitude for the many ways God continues to lead our congregation into ministry, learning, and service. Although I experienced some health challenges for approximately two weeks, thanks be to God those concerns have now been resolved. I am grateful for your prayers and support, and I look forward with renewed energy to continuing our shared ministry together.

Pastoral care continues to be at the heart of my ministry. I have spent time visiting members in their homes and in the hospital, as well as offering care, encouragement, and prayer through phone conversations. These moments remind me that Christ is present with us in times of joy, illness, uncertainty, and hope, and it remains a privilege to walk alongside our members as their pastor.

One of the highlights of this season has been preparing for our joint **Vacation Bible School** with Neenah ELCA churches, which will take place **August 3–6**. I have been coordinating with Patty Koplitz, Director of Children, Youth, and Family Ministry at Our Savior's Lutheran Church, as we prepare for this exciting week of faith formation and ministry with our children. I have been asked to design and lead the curriculum for one of the days, focusing on Palestine. The overall theme, **"Who Is My Neighbor?"**, teaches that God's love embraces people from every nation, language, and culture. We are expanding the curriculum to include Palestine alongside other countries, helping children discover that Jesus calls us to love our neighbors across every border and to celebrate the diversity of God's family. I am excited for this opportunity to help our children grow in faith, compassion, and global awareness.

At the request of the synod, I have begun meeting with the vicar serving Christus Lutheran Church in Greenville to help deepen his understanding of Lutheran theology and identity. We have met once thus far, and I look forward to continuing these conversations in the months ahead. The materials and insights from these mentoring sessions will also enrich our Sunday morning Adult Forum at St. Mark's, where I will lead a series exploring Lutheran theology and the teachings of Martin Luther.

I am grateful to have been invited to design and teach an **Old Testament** course for the Southeastern Synod Leadership Academy. Teaching Scripture has always been one of my greatest passions, and I am excited to share God's Word with lay leaders across the synod. The course will consist of six sessions.

In addition, I will be preparing the syllabus for a **New Testament** course for the East Central Synod of Wisconsin Lay School. One exciting aspect of this work is that the materials I prepare for both Lay School courses will also enrich our own Sunday morning Bible Study at St. Mark's. Our congregation will benefit from the same biblical scholarship and educational resources that will be shared with students throughout the synod.

From **July 18–21**, I will attend the **virtual Annual Conference of the Catholic Biblical Association**. This gathering brings together biblical scholars from around the world to explore current biblical research, engage in theological dialogue, and deepen our understanding of Scripture. I am grateful for this opportunity for

Continued on page 5

*Please be
Praying for...*

Ellen LaMarche
Sarah Lamb
Richie Sczerzen
Mary Ellen Tracey
Chris
Christopher
Sharon
The Families of
Tracy Feldmann
and
Don Burghardt

Continued from page 4

continuing education, which strengthens my biblical scholarship and enriches my preaching, teaching, and ministry here at St. Mark's.

On **July 25**, I will lead a workshop in Madison entitled "**Love in Bloom: Ecology and Desire in the Song of Songs**," in partnership with **Holden Village**, an ELCA outdoor ministry based in Washington State. The workshop will explore how the Song of Songs invites us to see God's creation as a place of beauty, interconnectedness, and love, offering fresh insights into the relationship between Scripture, ecology, and human flourishing. If you are interested, I encourage you to register and participate in this meaningful event.

In addition to these ministries, I continue to participate in meetings, planning sessions, and the ongoing work of our congregation and synod. I remain deeply grateful for the privilege of serving alongside all of you as we seek to proclaim the Gospel, nurture disciples, and serve our neighbors with Christ's love.

Thank you for your continued prayers, encouragement, and partnership in ministry. Together, may we remain faithful to God's call, trusting that "the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ" (Philippians 1:6).

Yours in Christ,

Rev. Dr. Niveen Ibrahim Sarra

Approval of Pastor's report: MSC by Pastor Niveen/J.T.Rose to approve the report.

Ministry Team Reports:

Christian Education Ministry Team—No Meetings until August

Property Ministry Team—Monday, July 6, 2026 ~ *Submitted by Jason Blank*

Members Present: Bruce Grundman, Phyllis Ziemke, John Olson, Ginny Schieck, and Jason Blank

- We need to address moving the signs for the handicapped parking spaces. They are currently out of alignment with the new parking lot spaces.
- We are still working on getting the carport fixed.
- The lawn has been sprayed to eliminate the weeds.
- The Neenah Fire Department will be inspecting the range hoods in the kitchen. This is an annual inspection.
- The area where the roof meets the chimney has been resealed.

Social Ministry Team—No meetings until September

Worship and Music Ministry Team—The Worship and Music Ministry Team will meet July 20.

Youth Ministry Team—Sunday, July 12, 2026 ~ *Submitted by Laurie Olson*

Called to order

Members Present: JT Rose, Nancy Rose, Jeff Tharp, Pastor Niveen, Laurie Olson,

Members Absent: Ginny Schieck, Sherri Denney, Jenny Case, Joe Rose

Opened with Prayer: by Pastor Niveen

Continued on page 6

Continued from page 5

Business for Consideration:

- **Church Picnic Games:** The team decided not to proceed with games for the Worship & Music's sponsored picnic/potluck. The date of August 9 is not enough time to pull something together since many of the team members have other commitments coming up.
- **VBS-** Pastor will send an email out to eligible St. Mark's families, Laurie will post on Facebook again and others will encourage members and others to sign up.
- **National Youth Gathering:** Pastor Niveen will be hosting a presentation for interested youth/families on August 2, after worship.
- **Badger Sports Park.:** July 25 from 1-3 pm. Sign up is requested by July 20. A \$5 cost is requested for each attending. Total cost is \$27 and church youth activities fund will pick up the balance.
- **Craft Fair:** Connections Team is looking for youth/families to assist with set up and clean-up of craft fair. The team mentioned that additional information is needed, such as dates and times. This will be discussed further at upcoming Youth Team meetings.
- **Fellowship Mural design.** Pastor Niveen will set up a date after a worship service. Once date is established, we will get the word out to the families.

Closed with the Lord's Prayer

Next Meeting: August 9, 2026, at 11:15 AM.

Connections Ministry Team—June 23,2026 ~ *Submitted by Tom Frantz*

Mary Jane began the meeting with reading the Church Ministry Team and Church Council Values statement.

Devotional was "Familiar Kindness" led by Jenny Case.

Fellowship Hour hosting discussion: We have several dates in July that are open and in need of hosts. There was discussion about why we have open dates. One idea expressed was that it was summer and more people traveled and wouldn't be able to host. Another was that some of the food "spreads" had grown and that people weren't volunteering because it was too much work or cost-prohibitive for them. The consensus was to put a reminder in the bulletin and *Messenger* to encourage people to host and make the point that the gathering was to enjoy fellowship of one another and not about the extent of the food.

Bingo: Our bingo prizes need freshening up. The team decided to take \$50 from our craft sale proceeds and purchase some new prizes from Dollar Tree. Next bingo is 7/20 at 1 pm.

Fund Balances: There was a question about our balance in our annual budget and also the craft sale balance. Mary Jane reviewed allocations we made to non-profit community groups following last fall's craft sale but was unclear about the balance. Tom volunteered to consult Laurie Olson about current fund balances.

Treasures in the Trunk: Mary Jane presented a new fundraising idea called Treasures in the Trunk. This is like a yard sale of items that people don't want anymore, but the sale is held in the church parking lot with people car trunks being the display areas. Proceeds from the sales would benefit the church food pantry, which has seen a significant uptick in clients. We need to make it clear this is a benefit for the food panty to participants--both sellers and buyers.

Continued on page 7

Continued from page 6

Discussion about when: We quickly determined that it should not be held on a date close to the craft sale. Saturday, August 15 was selected as the preferred date with the timeslot tentatively set from 10 am - 3pm. (*Note: Date was subsequently changed to September 19*). The details will need to be worked out after we receive approval from the church council. Tom will follow up with approval. Key items that were identified to be addressed included but were not limited to:

- asking for volunteers from the church,
- presenting the concept to congregants who may wish to sell items,
- publicity and promotion,
- whether we have food and water available for purchase,
- how to handle money (single check out vs. each vendor handles their own and turns it in at the end).

Stay tuned for developments.

Craft Sale: Work continues. We will once again need assistance from the congregation for set-up, takedown, and cleanup. Timeline:

- Thursday 10/22 6:30 pm Take down tables and chair in Fellowship Hall. Seek help from Property committee. Mark off spaces for vendors.
- Friday 10/23 Vendors may set up 6 pm to 8 pm
- Saturday 10/24 vendors may set up before sale begins. Craft Sale 9 am until 2 pm.
- After 2 pm Vendors take down their displays. 3 pm clean up begins and tables and chairs set up.

Bake sale, food sale, and Youth group soup sales are expected to take place again this year.

Adjournment: Meeting adjourned after The Lord's Prayer.

Racial Equity Ministry Team—July 7, 2026 ~ Submitted by Pat Westphal

Members Present: Mary Jane Hartley, Dawn Jones, Pat Westphal

Members Absent: Pastor Barb Girod, Laurie Olson, Pastor Niveen Sarras

The meeting opened with a prayer by Pat Westphal.

Discussion on the details for the pictures from the Palestinian traveling exhibit was tabled until the August meeting because we did not have the necessary information to plan our steps forward. It seems this event was to occur in **October of 2026**.

It is time for a lunch or dinner outing again. We chose lunch at **Solea** (on Gillingham in Neenah) **on August 4th (Wednesday) at 11:30**. Let's confirm this with one another during fellowship time in the next two weeks so that we can make it happen.

The New Oneida Museum opened on June 20th. They are just getting things running but we think it would make a good trip. We enjoyed the old museum trip in 2024 with a stop for ice cream on the way home. The new Museum is located at 760 Airport Drive in Oneida. They operate T-F 8:30-4:00 and Sat 9:00-1:00. It was decided to plan a guided tour again. The new facility looks beautiful and interesting. **Cost is \$10/adult; \$5/senior (plus the fee for the guided tour)**. A sign-up sheet should be prepared to plan a tour for early August. **Tuesday, August 10th** is suggested. Discussions around fellowship tables during the next two weeks should give us an idea of interest.

A discussion centered on our next book study. If the Palestinian display is not happening, then an October book study would be good. Otherwise, February was suggested to occur after Thanksgiving, Christmas, and the annual meeting. We are still looking at book options. *The Sun is Also a Star* is for young adults and is available as an audio book from the library right now. It involves a Jamaican girl whose parents are to be deported soon and a Korean boy whose parents want him to attend Yale. Can we interest some youth in attending a book study?

Continued on page 8

Continued from page 7

Another option is a collection of short stories called *The Good Immigrant* with 20 stories of a variety of immigrant experiences. We thought we would like to read these books before selecting. If anyone has another good selection, please bring your information to the next meeting.

Next Meeting: 6:30 pm Tuesday, August 11th in the library

The meeting was closed at 7:30 pm with the Lord's Prayer.

Stewardship and Finance Ministry Team—Tuesday, July 14, 2026 – Submitted by Laurie Olson

Members Present: Treasurer Laurie Olson, Mary Jane Hartley, Financial Secretary Pat Westphal, Fern Furhmann, Pennie Linna, and Pastor Niveen

Member Absent: Jason Blank

Opened with a Prayer by Pastor Niveen.

Laurie reviewed the current account balances through the end of June 2026. June giving toward current operating expenses totaled \$11,605.25, while expenses were \$16,031.61, resulting in a deficit of \$4,426.36 for the month.

Year-to-date, current operating expenses total \$89,545.97, while giving toward monthly expenses totals \$83,434.55, resulting in a year-to-date deficit of \$6,111.42.

Total funds in the Associated Bank checking account are \$108,197.33, which includes \$51,267.49 allocated to designated accounts and \$56,929.84 available for current operations. In addition, St. Mark's has \$177,628.47 in a Thrivent Money Market account, \$1,076.40 in a Thrivent TIPS account, and \$59,683.88 in the ELCA Mission Investment Fund. Laurie reported that all the parking lot invoices have been paid, which is reflected in both the current and designated checking account balances.

Laurie noted that our monthly expenses include nothing unusual. However, our recent monthly contributions have not been sufficient to cover our monthly expenses.

It was noted that a stewardship message written by Pat for the July newsletter, titled *"Stewardship Is Alive and Well at St. Mark's,"* highlighted many examples of stewardship in action at St. Mark's that have been witnessed thus far in 2026. It was also noted that the expenses associated with these examples, when applicable, were paid from designated accounts or endowment funds and were not part of the monthly operating expense deficit.

The team discussed that it is not unusual to see a decline in giving during the summer months. However, they also agreed that this deficit should not be ignored and that the congregation needs to be made aware of the situation.

The team decided to implement a **"Catch-Up Sundays"** approach to address our widening deficit. Pastor Niveen will prepare a brief message for the bulletin, Pat will create special Catch-Up Sunday envelopes using the red envelopes already on hand, and Laurie will set up a display in the narthex featuring the ketchup bottle from the basement. Laurie will also share a brief message prior to worship.

Pastor Niveen will be reaching out to members that we haven't seen in a while to reconnect with them, let them know they are missed, encourage them to reengage with the life and ministry of St. Mark's, and ask if there is anything she or the church can do to support or assist them.

Continued on page 9

Continued from page 8

The 2027 offering envelopes have been purchased and have arrived. The team was asked to research stewardship program ideas for sharing and discussing at our August meeting.

Laurie reported that the Technology Team met with TDS to consider switching phone/internet services from AT&T to TDS. TDS will have fiber infrastructure down Green Bay Road in mid-August and we can be set up 4-6 weeks after. This change will assist with higher upload & download speeds and will also be less expensive than our current provider. Tech also will be recommending to the council the purchase of a Smart Board using Designated Technology account funds.

Closed at 7:15 PM with the Lord's Prayer.

Next regular meeting is August 18, 2026, at 6:30 PM.

Approval of Ministry Team reports: MSC by Tara Dieck/Tammie Kersten to approve the reports.

Old / Unfinished Business:

Topic	Updates
Music Ad Hoc Update	Recommend moving updates to quarterly – as long as Pat is getting the support and backing that she needs to continue with the currently momentum to bring diversification to our music experiences
Lighting	No update / changes

New Business:

Topic	Updates	Motion to Approve
Approve (officially): <i>Treasures in the Trunk</i>		Motion: Laurie Olson Second: Tom Frantz
Catch-Up Sundays	Stewardship Committee + Finance Committee launching Catch Up Sunday offering opportunity during church services on July 19, 2026	
Smart Board Purchase	Technology team (Laurie Olson, Tom Frantz, Pat Westphal) requesting approval to purchase portal smart board with cart/stand with a \$2,000 expected purchase point Funded via the technology account that is funded via a gracious donation from Ellen LaMarche (Thank you, Ellen)	Motion: Pastor Niveen Second: Tammie Kersten

Adjourn: 8:20 pm MSC to adjourn by JT Rose/Pastor Niveen.

Next Meeting: August 20, 2026, at 6:30 pm.

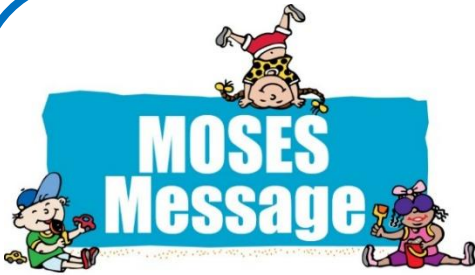
Is There Bingo in August? You Bet There Is!

Join us once again in the Fellowship Hall on August 17th for a fun-filled afternoon of BINGO, food, and fellowship! And, of course, there will be prizes for the winners. The fun starts at 1:00 pm. Be THERE!



Time for an Outing?

The Racial Equity Team is planning a church excursion to the NEW Oneida Museum at 760 Airport Road in Oneida/Green Bay. The Museum is open T-F from 8:30-4:00 and Saturday from 9:00-1:00. The proposed guided tour is for **Tuesday, August 10th**. (A stop at the ice cream shop (**Two Guernsey Girls**) in Freedom is likely.) A sign-up sheet will let us know if there is interest in such a trip.



Hope everyone had a wonderful Fourth of July! Here it is August already! Our summers seem to be going faster all the time. Hope you haven't forgotten about Vacation Bible School at Our Savior's Lutheran Church in Neenah on August 3rd thru the 6th. Have a good time!! Time to think about back-to-school activities and school supplies, and time for Christian Education Ministry team to start thinking and planning for the new Sunday School year. Our Sunday School will start on September 20th.

Enjoy the rest of your summer!! Stay safe and enjoy God's wonderful world.



BIRTHDAYS

Lyla Rose 8-19

HAPPY BIRTHDAY LYLA!!!

With God's Blessings,
Gwen Hoehne



It seems we will never run out of families needing our help. We now seem to have more families with several generations living together. Can you imagine trying to feed 7 or 8 people every day? We also have quite a few of older people needing our help, We don't really know their back stories---just that they need our help. We did have a blessing this month, though. We benefited from the cereal collection sponsored by Fox Community Credit Union. Thanks to all who contributed. This month we had 90 families trying to feed 239 people. Thanks for all your help donating food and money. We appreciate your donations greatly, Right now we are desperately in need of paper towels, Hamburger Helper, Kool-Aid, hot dogs, and Spam. —Karen Jordan

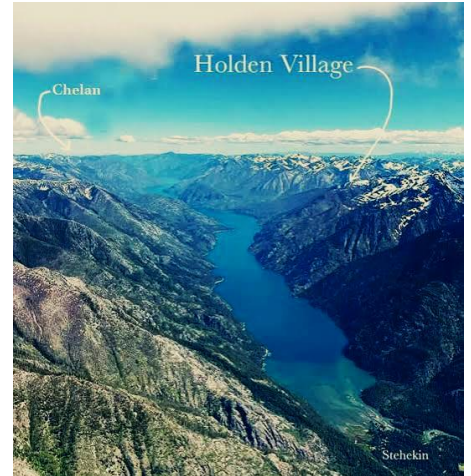
Connections Donation Acknowledged by the City of Neenah

Our Connections Ministry Team sent a donation (from the Craft Sale proceeds) to the City of Neenah for the Kimberly Point Lighthouse Preservation Project. This past week, we got a note of thanks for that donation and an announcement that our church will be included on a list of donors that will be affixed to the lighthouse after the renovations are complete. This donation board will also be on display at the National Lighthouse Day Celebration on Friday, August 7th from 4:30-7:30 pm at the Kimberly Point Lighthouse! Although we never expect any acknowledgement of our gifts, it is nice to be permanently recognized for this donation! Check out our name on the lighthouse in the future!

Holden Village Retreat a Time of Learning and Renewal

On Saturday, July 25, four St. Mark's members (Pennie Linna, Mary Jane Hartley, Pat Westphal and Jean Memken) made their way to Lake Edge Lutheran Church in Madison to attend a special afternoon and evening of learning, worship, praise and prayer that was organized by some staff members from the Holden Village Retreat Center in the North Cascade Mountains near Chelan, Washington.

We learned a bit about Holden Village between sessions. To get there, one must take a plane to SeaTac airport in Washington (Seattle-Tacoma area). Then there is a 4-hour drive from the airport to Chelan which is the closest community to Holden Village. But there are no roads that connect Chelan to Holden, so you must catch a Ferry Boat for a 2-hour or 4-hour boat trip to the shore of the mountain where Holden Village is located. From there, it is a 10-mile drive up the mountain to Holden Village.



Several years ago, wildfires swept through the Cascade Mountains and destroyed most of the vegetation at the base of Holden Village's mountain. Then, this past year, flash flooding washed much of that barren land down the mountain and over the one road leading up to the village. The staff described the harrowing experience of being told one evening that helicopters would be there the next morning to evacuate the village and everyone could take one small suitcase or backpack and leave everything else behind. This happened in December of 2025.

Since that time, Holden Village has been closed to the public and will be until 2027. The staff has scattered, but three of them have been bringing Holden Village to the rest of the country in the form of all-day retreats like the one we attended.

For the Madison, retreat, they asked Pastor Niveen to give the sermon at the opening worship service and make a 2-session presentation. Her topic was "Love in Bloom: Ecology and Desire in the Song of Songs." She spoke for almost two hours and did a great job. There were also some interesting breakout sessions. Some of the group took a hike to a nearby park and got to see some very interesting sculptures there. There others participated in a song circle which is a common event at Holden Village. They learned some of the beautiful songs that the residents and visitors to Holden sing on a daily basis.



Our retreat concluded in the evening with a catered dinner and a chance to be in fellowship with other attendees. It was fun to see and reconnect with Jerry Nickoli there, Pastor's friend from Wausau. Following the meal, we had a closing service that was almost all sung and it was beautiful.

In all, it was a tremendous experience, and I am very glad I went. I hope someday I can visit Holden Village in Washington and spend a few days there in retreat. I think it would be a tremendous experience! —*Jean Memken*

Get it On Your Calendars!

On September 12, 2026, Jane Frantz will conduct a Healing Touch Workshop here at St. Mark's. Look for more information and a sign-up sheet in the weeks ahead!

Catch-Up!

We're in a pickle, let's catch up!

We haven't contributed to meet our **monthly** needs.

Let's work together to get back on track and keep St. Mark's mission strong!

Small steps make a big difference!

LET'S CATCH-UP FOR ST. MARK'S!

Every gift makes a difference!

St. Mark's LUTHERAN CHURCH
Growing in Faith. Sharing God's Love.

Your gifts sustain our ministry, our community, and our future.

Thank you!

Please consider a catch-up gift today. Together, we can meet our needs and continue the work God is calling us to do.

Give with generosity. Grow in grace.

*"And all things, whatever you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive."
- Matthew 21:22*

ST. MARK'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

TREASURES IN THE TRUNK

140 S. Green Bay Rd., Neenah

VENDORS WANTED

Saturday, September 19
8AM - Noon **NEW DATE!!!**



Clean out your garage, attic, or basement and turn your treasures into support for a great cause!

Reserve a parking space and sell your gently used items while helping provide food for local families in need. No vendor fee. All proceeds from sales benefit the St. Mark's Food Pantry.

Contact St. Mark's with your interest in a space by September 7.
920-725-2828 or office@stmarksneenah.org



God's work. Our hands.



September 13, 2026

Time to Help our Neighbors

In September, our congregation will once again engage in service work right here in our community. We are one of over 8,300 congregations participating in "God's work. Our hands." on September 13. Across the country, thousands of ELCA members will work to make a positive change in our communities, build and deepen relationships, and share God's love. Join us as we do God's work with our hands! Stay tuned for more information. But plan on staying after church on September 13 to help out our neighbors near and far. A light lunch will be served by Jean Memken and Sarah Rogers. And then we will all get to work! It should be a fun and rewarding afternoon for all who sign-up.



The International Children's Fund is more than a charity; it is a lifeline to those in dire need. For over 50 years, ICF has been recognized among the top global charities working to transform lives. Since 1978, ICF has focused on helping children and their families in Africa, India, and Pakistan survive and grow into self-sufficiency. What sets them apart from similar organizations is their operational model. They have built a network of caring, intentional relationships with local African missionary workers and native partners to deliver tangible hope and essential services to the world's most impoverished children and their families. This grassroots approach ensures aid is not only timely and culturally relevant but also addresses the most critical needs of these communities.

Please consider supporting this worthwhile non-profit agency (headquartered in Neenah!) by including a donation in your offering envelope for "Mission of the Month" in May or by making an electronic donation with VANCO.



Our Sunday Servants

Date	Assisting Minister	Reader	Greeters	Ushers	Counters
August 2	Judy Hellman	Pennie Linna	Joe & Linda Rehorst	Sherri Denney J.T. Rose	Jeff Tharp Fern Fuhrmann Lorrie Wood
August 9	Dom Christofilis	Jeff Tharp	Doug & Renie Sebstead	Joy Case Jenny Case	Pat Westphal Jason Blank Jenny Blank
August 16	Jean Memken	Pat Westphal	Jeff Tharp Wanda Webster	LaVerne Arndt Rosemary Cermak	Gwen Hoehne Doug Sebstead Renie Sebstead
August 23	Jeff Tharp	Bruce Grundman	The Clifford Family	Linda Anderson Nancy Maslow	Bruce Grundman Lois Kemp Linda Anderson
August 30	Dom Christofilis	Pennie Linna	Jeff Tharp Wanda Webster	Judy Fowler Ginny Schieck	Dom Christofilis Dawn Jones Laurie Olson

Communion Assistants:

August 2 – (At the Rail) – Dom Christofilis, Gwen Hoehne, and Pennie Linna
 August 16 – (Intinction): Judy Hellman, Laurie Olson, and Ginny Schieck

Altar Guild: Jean Memken

What is Happening on August 9th?

Healing Service – Sunday, August 9 at 10:00 a.m.

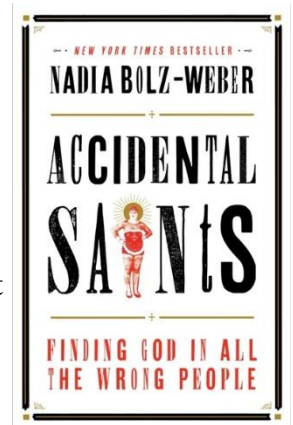
Join us for a special **Healing Service** on **Sunday, August 9, at 10:00 a.m.** Come and experience a time of prayer, hope, and God's healing presence. Whether you are seeking physical, emotional, or spiritual healing, or wish to pray for someone you love, all are welcome. Let us gather in faith, trusting in God's grace and love as we pray for healing together.

ELCA Youth Gathering Information Meeting – Sunday, August 9

All youth, parents, and guardians are invited to an **ELCA Youth Gathering Information Meeting** on **Sunday, August 9, at 11:30 a.m.**, following worship. Join us in the conference room to learn more about the 2027 ELCA Youth Gathering, ask questions, and discover how you can be part of this exciting faith-filled experience. We hope to see you there!

Thursday Bible Study will be a Book Study in September

Our Thursday afternoon Bible Study will be finishing up their intensive study of the Book of Acts in August. For something a little different, we will be doing a book study on “Accidental Saints – Finding God in all the Wrong People” by Pastor Nadia Bolz-Weber, an ELCA pastor who serves the Lost Sinners and Saints Lutheran Church in Colorado. This is a fascinating book about Pastor Bolz-Weber’s church, the rather unorthodox services they have, and the unique and interesting people she ministers to there. It’s a short easy read, but the stories she tells and the messages for the reader are unforgettable! If you would like to join us, let Jean in the church office know, and she will order a book for you. We meet Thursdays starting at 1:30 pm. Hope to see you there!



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

