

ST MARK'S
LUTHERAN CHURCH

ST. MARK'S MESSENGER

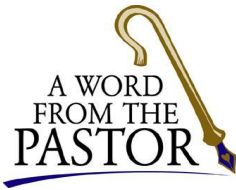
December 2022

Valley, Nebraska

www.StMarksValleyNE.com

402.359.2315

from the Pastor...



A WORD
FROM THE
PASTOR

And an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." Matthew 1:20b-21

We as a church community here at St. Mark's have had a rough time of it in this last month. But, not just in the last month, but really in the past 6 or 7 months we have lost many dear and faithful members. And so, as we begin a new church year, and as we enter the season of Advent we are deeply aware of our loss and also of our faith and the stories that form the bedrock foundation of our Christian faith.

We believe that the coming of our Savior Jesus, as a human being, entering the world as a vulnerable, defenseless child, dependent on his mother and father's care and protection is THE story that makes all the difference in a world of suffering, darkness and pain.

In Advent we remember this story with quiet joy and wonder—amazed that our God wasn't willing that we should perish in our sin with no advocate, no one to help us. We remember Joseph, Mary's betrothed who would be the first person to doubt this story that Mary told about being pregnant by the Holy Spirit. But, he would not be the last.

As many have learned who have suffered loss, perhaps the most comforting thing one can hear is "I understand, I too have been there." Those words, if they are true, wash over us with

comfort and reassurance. Someone truly has also been where we are, they understand. God knew too, that we would need a Savior, one like ourselves who would have endured our annoyances, our joys and our sorrows. Jesus is called the Man of Sorrows in Scripture—simply because he has been through it all himself as a human. When our Lord, who is called Emmanuel, God with us, says I am with you always—we can believe Him.

He has been to hell and back for us. He has been loved and held by his mother—had annoying little brothers—understands the joy of family and the difficulty of losing one to death, as he lost Joseph. He has endured his own dark night of the soul in Gethsemane, and so he understands and will see us through our own doubts and isolation. It is with that understanding of our sense of loss or grief, that we have continued to hold our Longest Night Service on Dec. 21st. It is the longest night of the year. It is a quieter service—a service of pastoral care where sadness is accepted and understood as part of our human condition. Yet, we still proclaim our faith and our belief that our savior has come and that his coming has indeed made all the difference for us.

That child that we celebrate at the end of this month is our hope. He is truth, and he has come ‘for the joy that was set before him’. To bring us back from eternal death, and to present us to his Father in great love. *‘For he will save his people from their sins.’*

This month can be full. It can be tough. It can be stressful. But I pray that there will be time for you to set aside some time—which is admittedly in short supply, to contemplate the wonder of the Savior’s love—the awe of the angels, that Jesus would come to us in this way—and the angels awe over us—for we do something they will *never* be able to do—we witness to them how to live by faith, not sight. They will never live by faith. Only we do.

In this hectic time, may you also sense the holy. In this time of loneliness for some, may they be reminded by us, their sisters and brothers, that they are still loved.

May we dwell in wonder at the thought of Mary, Jesus' mother, holding her first born child, looking into the eyes of the one who authored time, but seeing only the face of her beloved son. As he grasps her finger, would she comprehend that he had designed animals and mountain ranges, had determined the courses of stars, and yet was as close as her skin, and was crying to be fed? A mother, holding her Creator. The Creator being held, loved and fed, by his own creation. It boggles the mind.

It is the season of wonder, the miracle of the Incarnation. His coming and our freedom is at hand. The light of the world is come.

May He continue to surprise you with his love, his care and his listening attention. He is your Savior, our Savior— may heaven and nature sing, and sing, and sing!!

Glory to God in the highest and peace to God's people on earth!
Blessed by him to be your pastor—Merry Christmas, dear church,

Pastor Barbara
2022

from the PMA...

YOUR GIFT

I sat at the railroad crossing waiting for the train to pass by. Three engines rapidly pulled the long line of freight cars on their journey to the east. It was a long train and I had plenty of time to wait for it to pass. As I watched the cars go by, it was like a mobile art gallery in which I sat still and the art passed before me. Brightly colored words and symbols decorated most of the cars. I came to appreciate the talent of those that created them. Who were these artists and how did they come to use their God given talent of art in

this way? Aside from several crude messages on the cars, the majority were of beautiful and creative fonts. I imagined them created in an isolated railyard under cover of night with primitive supplies like cans of spray paint and not fine sable brushes. Did the artists realize the gift that God had given them? Do you realize the gifts that God had given you? Yes, we all have them. Sometimes we use them in isolated places and under cover of darkness. They are gifts none the less. Give thanks for your gifts and use them to praise God in whatever manner it may be. Using your gift to glorify God is an excellent way to praise him.

Karen

CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP
Saturday, December 24th
3:00 and 5:00 p.m.

Worship livestreamed on stmarksvalleyne.com



[stmarksvalley](http://stmarksvalley.com)

THE LONGEST NIGHT SERVICE
Wednesday, December 21, 2022
7:00 p.m.

Our Longest Night is designed for people who are desiring a more quiet celebration of the Lord's birth. Often people can be sad around holidays that are festive for everyone else, because they are missing loved ones no longer here. This service is a way to honor all of our feelings around the hectic holidays in our culture.

A PRAYER FOR ST MARK'S COUNCIL

Heavenly Lord, be present with our leaders in a special way.
They have been your gift to us this year.
Help us always see them in this way. Amen.

Welcome to St. Mark's Council

Matthew Allen, Chris Bonacci and Kirsten Kurtz are new to the St. Mark's Council. Please keep them and the rest of the Council in your prayers as we seek to provide wise leadership for the congregation.

CHRISTMAS FOOD BASKETS

*Looking for a way to help others
this Christmas Season?*

COPE, West 'O' Chamber of Commerce sponsors the Christmas food basket program. They are helped by many area churches (us!), and local organizations.

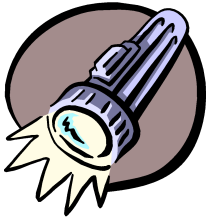
NEEDED: Donations of: Cash
Food for baskets
Volunteers

WHEN: December 16th. to pack baskets
December 17th beginning at 9:00 a.m. to _____
deliver

WHERE: Deliver from DC West Elementary School and
Bethany Church

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED: to pack December 16th
to deliver baskets December 17th
9:00 a.m.

Come spread some help and Christmas cheer!



This is a synopsis of the Council meeting held on November 1, 2022.

- An Annual Report from Pastor, PMA, President of Congregation and all committees will be available at the next Annual Meeting in 2023.
- The Property Committee is looking into a lock box for a key to the church for the Police and Fire Department to gain access in case of a situation.
- The \$500 that is left in the Valley Days Fund will be used towards the St. Mark's Member Appreciation Breakfast on Sunday, November 13. Pancakes, sausage, fruit and coffee will be served. All are invited.
- A drawing will be held at the Appreciation Breakfast for gift cards.
- The Care-A-Van Fundraiser raised approximately \$8,000.
- It was put forward to explore starting Men In Mission up again. There will be a meeting of interested men at some point to discuss details. Watch for further details about the reorganization of this important ministry.
- Christmas Eve, Saturday, December 24, will have services at 3 and 5 p.m.
- Christmas Day service will be Lessons and Carols at 9:30 a.m.
- The new Council will be installed on Sunday, January 8, 2023.
- The first Council meeting will be on Monday, January 10, 2023
- Council will not meet in December.

SEPTEMBER MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORT

September Budget = \$22,406
September Expenses = \$20,271
September Giving = \$20,132

YEAR TO DATE FINANCIAL REPORT

January – September Budget = \$201,658
January – September Expenses = \$202,398
January – September Giving = \$323,885

End of year 2021 Balance in Savings = \$64,289
End of September 2022 Balance in Savings = \$64,321
End of September 2022 Balance in Checking = \$13,616
End of September 2022 Worship Enhancement Total = \$9,372

FLOWER CHART



Making its return this month is the Flower Chart. This sign-up sheet is provided for those people who wish to provide altar flowers for our sanctuary during the year. The chart is located on the secretary office door in the narthex. There are lines

provided for every Sunday for all twelve months of the year. Just sign up for the appropriate Sunday to provide two small bouquets for the plant stands on both sides of the altar. You may wish to celebrate birthdays, anniversaries or honor loved ones as a memorial. Jan Reis, our secretary can assist you to sign up if you have questions.



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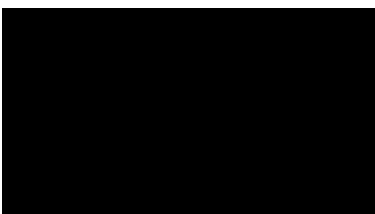
From Laughing with
Lutherans

"The best part was when they passed the money
around - I got two quarters."

MEN in MISSION

Men in Mission will be meeting the 2nd Saturday of the month at 8:00 A.M. at the church. We are a casual, laid-back group of men who are looking to better ourselves, and we'd like for you to join us. Hopefully this fits into your schedule - come as you are and stay if you can. We will be working out of the "Master Builders Bible for Men" book, and we have books available if needed. Please contact Jeff Richmond 402-740-8097 with any questions. Look forward to seeing you Saturday, Dec. 10th at 8 AM.

DISCIPLESHIP RECOGNITION FUND



Have you ever thought someone in our church family has stepped up and done something that's worth saying thank you for? Well, we have a great way to do just that. It is called the Discipleship Recognition Fund and here is how it works.

*Pick up an envelope in the Narthex with the nomination form inside and fill it out about the person you would like to thank for working so hard for the benefit of St Mark's.

·Drop it in the box in the Narthex and the Committee will take it from there.

The fund has been donated and set aside, only to be used for this type of gift, and does not affect the general fund of the church.

For Sunday morning closures,
please check our website, facebook, TV or
radio.

www.StMarksValleyNE.com
www.facebook.com/stmarksvalley

Worship Schedule

All services are livestreamed on stmarksvalleyne.com or
on Facebook at [stmarksvalley](https://www.facebook.com/stmarksvalley)

December 4
Second Sunday in
Advent

9:30

Worship with Communion

5:00 p.m.

Fire Pit Caroling

December 18
Fourth Sunday in Advent

9:30

Worship with Communion

Sunday School Christmas
program during Worship

December 24
Christmas Eve

3:00 & 5:00 p.m.

Worship with Communion

December 11
Third Sunday in Advent

9:30

Worship with Communion

December 21
Wednesday

7:00 p.m.

Longest Night

December 25
Christmas Day

9:30 a.m.

Worship of Lessons and Carols

No Communion

No Sunday School or

Confirmation

January 1, 2023
New Year's Day

9:30

Worship with Communion

Thank You

Dear St. Mark's family.

Thank you for caring so much about Gene. We sincerely appreciate your kind messages, comforting support, and prayers that blessed us richly during this difficult time.

Thank you.

Bev Griffin and family

Hey, St. Mark-e-teers.

Your tribute to Gene was a treasure. He named the ministry, assembled the stage up and down, gave voice to puppets, critiqued and wrote puppet scripts, road trips meant loading and unloading the van, and most of all, Puppet Ministry's number one supporter. He was a puppeteer, even if he could not put his hand into a puppet. Thank you for remembering my Gene so beautifully.

The other puppeteer, Bev

The WELCA Circle Board thanks all who gave Thankofferings in the amount of \$480.22 in gratitude for blessing received in the past year. This Offering supports church wide Life Changing Ministries of many kinds.

The kindness and support shown our family during the loss of our husband and father, Michael Finn, was very special to us. We are so blessed to be part of the St. Mark's Church Community. Many thanks for all those who supported us at the funeral, sent personal cards, messages and flowers. God's Blessings.

Marylou Finn, Kim Shunk, Micki Cardin & Stacey Vencil

DECEMBER NEWS FOR WOMEN OF ST. MARK'S

FAITH CIRCLE NEWS

FRIENDSHIP CIRCLE NEWS\

We met on Nov. 7th with 6 members present, Karen King lead our Study of Crafted in Christ from "Gather", Barb Kahlandt served as Hostess. We will start using "Gather Magazine" for our Study beginning in March when we resume our monthly meetings..

We met to assemble & pack 37 LWR Personal Care Kits for shipment on Oct. 24.

Thank You for your donations to this Project.

Our next meeting will be on March 7th with Linda Ryan leading our Study and Barb Kahlandt serving as Hostess.

JOY/PEACE CIRCLE NEWS

BLOOD DRIVE

Valley Community
St. Mark's Lutheran Church
115 West Meigs Street



**American
Red Cross**

Saturday, December 17, 2022
7:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Please visit [RedCrossBlood.org](https://www.RedCrossBlood.org) and enter: VALLEY to schedule an appointment

SCRIPTURES FOR SUNDAYS IN DECEMBER, 2022

December 4

Second Sunday of Advent

| | |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| First Reading | Isaiah 11:1-10 |
| Responsive Reading | Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19 |
| Second Reading | Romans 15:4-13 |
| Gospel Reading | Matthew 3:1-12 |

December 11

Third Sunday of Advent

| | |
|--------------------|-----------------|
| First Reading | Isaiah 35:1-10 |
| Responsive Reading | Psalm 146:5-10 |
| Second Reading | Luke 1:46b-44 |
| Gospel Reading | Matthew 11:2-11 |

December 18

Fourth Sunday of Advent

| | |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| First Reading | Isaiah 7:10-16 |
| Responsive Reading | Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19 |
| Second Reading | Romans 1:1-7 |
| Gospel Reading | Matthew 1:18-25 |

December 24

Christmas Eve

| | |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| First Reading | Isaiah 9:2-7 |
| Responsive Reading | Psalm 96 |
| Second Reading | Titus 2:11-14 |
| Gospel Reading | Luke 2:1-14 [15-20] |

December 25

Christmas Day

| | |
|--------------------|-------------------|
| First Reading | Isaiah 62:6-12 |
| Responsive Reading | Psalm 97 |
| Second Reading | Titus 3:4-7 |
| Gospel Reading | Luke 2:[1-7] 8-20 |

PRAYER CONCERNS

| | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| Lisa Olson | John & Lorrie Denker | Bev Griffin |
| Gwen Rittgarn | Mary Lou Finn | Rick & Janae |
| Larry Laughlin | Dan & Sharon Josoff | Gregg |
| Pete Brummels | Family of Bert Samson | The Family of Eileen Bills |
| Cindy Hemming | Karen Frost | Gary |
| Carolyn Chaffin | Erin Kahlandt | Paul Burkholder |
| Maxine Nash | Marla Peterson | Sandy Critel |
| Ruth | | |
| Lori Dyas | Helen Kirchmann | Care Center Residents |
| Caregivers Among Us | Covid Patients | Care Center Staff |

ALL OUR HOMEBOUND MEMBERS

| | |
|-----------------|------------------|
| Chet Ryan | Donna Fintel |
| Joan Kahlandt | Harvey Soll |
| Carl Seieroe | Dee Christiansen |
| Annie Hurt | Millie Richards |
| Donna Hovendick | |
| Jean Krahmer | |

For all military serving at home and around the world. We include prayers for their families as they hold things together in their absence.



PROJECT WARMTH

You can help!!! As you are cleaning closets and adjusting wardrobes for the changing seasons, please consider donating for those less fortunate. Donations of winter clothing, outerwear and accessories help individuals and families keep warm during the months when

temperatures are dipping. Suggested donation items:

- . Jackets and Sweatshirts
- . Sweaters and Scarves
- . Mittens and Hats

New or clean gently-used outerwear or accessories welcome. Please no underwear or socks.

Birthdays in December



It has been requested to have personal birthdates put in the newsletter. If we are going to do this we need you to be sure that we have your birth date.

Please let the church office know your date if you have not already done so.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO THE FOLLOWING"

- | | |
|------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 – Jenna Glidden | 14 – Blazek Muhleka |
| 2 – Kallie Hemphill | 16 – Judd Hayden |
| 3 – Mike Hamsa | 17 – Larry Bottger |
| 4 – Paul Burkholder | 17 – Erik Stubblefield |
| 5 – Elizabeth Mayer | 17 – Kaarin Stubblefield |
| 8 – Jeff Allen | 18 – Liz Karloff |
| 9 – Sharon Renshaaw | 18 – Jan Reis |
| 10 – Jocelyn Bakken | 19 – Teri Dreessen |
| 10 – Trevor Bills | 19 – Tami Floody |
| 11 – Clayton Kibbie | 19 – Hannah Flynn |
| 11 – Payton Saathoff | 24 – Christine Janke |
| 12 – Stan Benke, Jr. | 25 – Vernabelle Adams |
| 12 – Cindy Petersen | 26 – Kathryn Beers |
| 12 – Joe Timm | 26 – Joan Kahlandt |
| 12 – Alice Ann Johnson | 28 – Jason Arp |
| 13 – Zoella Bonacci | 29 – Kanneth Bills |
| 13 – Shane Kreager | 29 – Robert Mahaffey |
| 14 – Madelyn Hinrichs | 30 – Kyle Sake |
| 14 – Aaron Kreager | |

Merry Christmas





The community is welcome to join us for Christmas caroling around the fire pits in the parking lot at St. Mark's Lutheran Church, on Sunday, Dec. 4 beginning at 5:00 p.m. Come join us for the singing of beloved Christmas carols while staying warm by the fire and sipping cider plus enjoying treats, too! Bring chairs, warm blankets and your family and join in the fun yum on Sunday, December 4 at 5:00 p.m. . (Will cancel in case of inclement weather). Free cookies and hot drink available. Please bring a chair if you wish to be seated and warm blanket (if needed)..

Baby and Family Care Outreach

November 15 thru January 1, 2023

Joy and Peace Circle members will be collecting items for Baby and Family Care Outreach.

Baby Items (new or gently used for sizes from 3 to 24 months, such as Onesies, T-Shirts, sleepers, blankets, sweatshirts, sweaters, socks, disposable diapers, etc.

Family Items – Toothpaste, toothbrush, shampoo (please avoid sample/travel sizes, conditioner, shaving cream, bar soap, toilet tissue, paper towels, laundry soap, etc.

If shopping is not your forte, Joy and Peace Circle is happy to purchase items. Monetary donations may be given to Jan Reis or Karen Frost. Please see the display in the Narthex. Donations jointly shared with COPE, DC West Schools and the local community.

*“May the God of hope fill you with **joy** and **peace** as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.”*

Romans 15:13NIV