

ST MARK'S
LUTHERAN CHURCH

ST. MARK'S MESSENGER

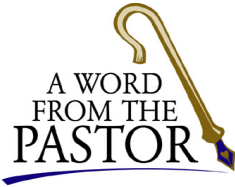
December 2023

Valley, Nebraska

www.StMarksValleyNE.com

402.359.2315

from the Pastor...



A WORD
FROM THE
PASTOR

By the time you are reading this, we will have celebrated the 'New Year of the church'-the first Sunday in Advent. We may wonder why, in all the hubbub of the run up to the holiday season, that we Christian church goers are confronted with a calendar that is 'off' from the rest of the world? What's that all about?

We are victims of the clock, of the calendar. This time of year our calendars, time itself...is a tyrant. There is so very much to do! Our days are planned very closely so that 'time' **Chronos**, will not be wasted. The church is also run by schedules and meetings and times-but there is another concept of time that is also at work here, and in our lives as Christians I hope—and that is the concept of **Kairos** time, rather than Chronos. Chronos refers to minutes, hours, days and weeks-where Kairos refers to Bible time—where things happen at *the perfect time* or moment. Kairos time is filled with God's presence and gracious actions—when promises are fulfilled and the 'fullness of time' had come, we hear, then He came. In Kairos time, time is viewed as a gift of God and filled with grace. When we worship, we step out of Chronos, and step into Kairos time-time out of time, filled with grace and blessing. And so, it is perhaps proper that our time-table is 'off' from the world's time. We have another focus since Jesus' coming (advent). Jesus coming into the world is spoken of in Ephesians 1:10 as a plan for 'the fullness of time'. Jesus came on Kairos time-at the perfect moment. His 2nd coming will also be the same-at the perfect moment of Kairos time. We can be frustrated by this, as most of our lives are lived according to 'Chrono's time. And this month-time--*any* kind of time seems short!!

There are many opportunities to step out of ‘chronos time’ for a while this month, and to step into God’s time- letting the story of Jesus wash over you and be experienced anew. I pray that you will find ‘time’ in this extremely busy time of our year to notice the subtle ways in which *the always present* Holy Spirit whispers to you in simple sights or sounds, reminding you that you are beloved of Christ and that He came for all-but, also...for you!!

For Christians you see, Christmas doesn’t end on December 25th. While others are de-decorating and focusing on post-Christmas sales, Christians are *still* in Kairos time- (one foot in it, at least!) Our Christmas season lasts Twelve Days. While we are free to contemplate Christ’s coming anytime, we are led by the Twelve Days to think about the many ways that Jesus’ coming affects our lives, our faith, and the Church.

On December 26th, St. Stephen’s Day, we remember the first Christian martyr who died by stoning after Jesus’ resurrection. He reminds us of fellow Christians willingness over the ages to witness to Jesus under threat of death-and that the world is not necessarily open to Jesus’ message. We remember that his coming brought life, grace and salvation for us all.

On December 27th we remember St. John the apostle and evangelist. He represents the great cloud of witnesses who took the news of the child grown to Savior and spread it to the world. We remember John’s beautiful words, many of which we repeat on Holy Days like Christmas and Easter.

On the 28th a ‘lesser’ festival commemorates the deaths of the Holy Innocents-the first to shed their blood because of Jesus’ coming to our world. These were the boys of Bethlehem under 2 years of age that King Herod had slaughtered as he tried to eradicate the ‘newborn king’ reported by the Wise Men who’s star they’d seen in the East. This reminds us of the solemn notes that are sounded by the promise of grace and forgiveness of Jesus-a kingly reign this world misunderstands.

Lastly, we celebrate the Naming of Jesus-or Name of Jesus. There is a lot to contemplate about Jesus’ name. We remember the obedient action of Joseph and Mary when it came to name Jesus on the day he

was also circumcised. They did as the angel told them and named him Jesus, for “he will save his people from their sins.” On this day that he was named—he shed his first blood for us, as his parents faithfully kept the law and had him circumcised—marking him as a Jewish child.

In this strange season of preparing and waiting, as we hear of God’s promises to the prophets, and as we contemplate Jesus’ promise to come again—we prepare our hearts, in prayer and action for the coming of the child who is ‘God with us.’ Who was, and is, and is to come.

May he make his presence known to you in many ways in this holy season. May you feel the gift of Kairos time this Christmas season! Blessed Advent, Blessed Christmas,

Pastor Barbara Oshlo

from the PMA...

Did You Know...Your Nebraska Synod?

As your PMA I have the opportunity to connect with our Nebraska Synod and many of the people involved. Our Synod office, located in Omaha, is a treasure trove of information and resources. They are very conscious of being good stewards of our offerings and the funds they shepherd. They no longer are able to send out the many mailings to each of the 230 congregations. Information necessary for congregations is now available online. The good news is that ANYONE can access that information!

By going to nebraskasynod.org you can log on and explore that treasure trove of information. Scrolling to the bottom of the page, you can sign up to receive emails from the synod on a variety of topics. You can receive a weekly Enews email and keep up with the congregations in the state.

Now you know.

PMA Karen



CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP
Sunday, December 24th
4:00 p.m.



Worship livestreamed on
stmarksvalleyne.com



stmarksvalley

THE LONGEST NIGHT SERVICE
Thursday, December 21, 2023
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

Welcome!

Roberta Harrifeld and Micky Nielsen are new to the St. Mark's Council. Lori Dyas was elected to serve another 3 year term. 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.

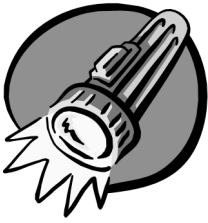
NEEDED: Donations of:
Cash
Food for baskets
Volunteers

WHEN: December 15th. to pack baskets
December 16th beginning at 9:00 a.m. to _____
deliver

WHERE: Deliver from DC West Elementary School and
Bethany Lutheran Church

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED: to pack December 15th
to deliver baskets December 16th
9:00 a.m.

Come spread some help and Christmas cheer!



COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

This is a synopsis of the Council meeting held on November 14, 2023.

- The Children's Christmas Program will be held Sunday, December 17 during regular worship time in the sermon slot.
- Christmas caroling will be Sunday, December 3 starting at 4:00 p.m. by going to Valhaven and make our way to Valley Lakes and end with fire pit carols in the parking lot.
- There will be only one service on Christmas Eve at 4:00 p.m.
- On Sunday, December 24 the regular 9:30 a.m. service will be our last Advent Service.
- The pictorial directories have been completed and are being passed out. Thank you to the Evangelism Committee for their many hours of work put in to complete the project.
- A call to an exterminator will be made to get someone to spray the flies to get rid of them.
- It has been decided to do away with the dishwasher in the kitchen. It is no longer being used. (We no longer have the dishes.)
- St. Mark's 70th Anniversary will be celebrated on Sunday, November 19th, with a potluck meal for the congregation following Sunday church service. The centerpieces on the tables from the Soup Supper will be given away through a drawing following the meal.
- The HR Committee met to work on job descriptions. The position of Bookkeeper will be in-house after the installation of software on a new computer in early 2024.
- There will be NO Council meeting in December. The next meeting will be January 9, 2024. Installation of Council members will be on Sunday, January 7, during regular service time.

COPE

The following items are in short supply at the COPE food pantry and they have requested that we concentrate on bringing these items: Canned Fruit
Canned Meat (tuna, chicken, Spam)

OCTOBER MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORT

October Budget = \$24,045
October Expenses = \$28,878
October Giving = \$23,571

YEAR TO DATE FINANCIAL REPORT

January - October Budget = \$240,461
January - October Expenses = \$240,200
January - October Giving = \$213,020

End of year 2022 Balance in Savings = \$64,404
End of October 2023 Balance in Savings = \$24,616
End of October 2023 Balance in Checking = \$14,613
End of October 2023 Worship Enhancement Total = \$2,212

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 in the Fellowship Hall. 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.



CREATED BY VELOCITYARTAL.COM

From Laughing with Lutherans

A 3 year old boy last Christmas said, "Mom, let's sing the door song." Puzzled, she asked him to sing a big of it. He sang, "O come let us adore him."

MEN^{IN}MISSION®

Men In Mission has been resurrected by Jeff Richmond and a number of other men who have been meeting the 1st Saturday of every month at 8 a.m. All men are invited for talk, donuts and coffee and are using the Master Builder Bible for Men. Come when you can. No homework, no previous Bible study necessary. We're just a bunch of guys talking and having coffee around the Bible.

D R F

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

December 3

First Sunday in Advent

9:30 a.m.

Worship with Communion

5:00 p.m.

Fire Pit Caroling

December 10

Second Sunday in Advent

9:30 a.m.

Worship with Communion

5:00 p.m.

Fire Pit Caroling Rain/Snow
Date

December 17

Third Sunday in Advent

9:30 a.m.

Worship with Communion

Sunday School Christmas
program during Worship

December 21

Wednesday

7:00 p.m.

Longest Night

December 24

Fourth Sunday in Advent

9:30 a.m.

Christmas Eve

4:00 p.m.

Worship with Communion

December 25

Christmas Day

No Worship

Church Office Closed

December 31, 2023

New Year's Eve

9:30 a.m..

Worship with Communion

DECEMBER NEWS FOR WOMEN OF ST. MARK'S

FAITH CIRCLE NEWS

Faith ladies will meet on Tuesday Dec 5, 2023 at the home of Sharon Renshaw for their Christmas gathering. We will share Chapter 4 of our book (leader Karen A.) and discuss other meeting items including charitable giving. We will also enjoy a White Elephant gift exchange.

FRIENDSHIP CIRCLE NEWS

We met on Oct. 2nd with 7 members in attendance. Barb Kahlandt led our Study from "Gather" and Teri Dreessen served as Hostess.

The items for LWR Personal Care Kits were sorted and Kits assembled and are ready to be boxed for sending to LWR. We were short on a few items that will be purchased so that all kits can be completed.

A big thank you to all that helped make our Soup & Pie Supper a successful event, all seemed to enjoy the food & fellowship. Our next meeting will be on Nov. 6th at 6:30 Teri Dreessen will lead our Study and Barb Kahlandt will serve as Hostess. Please join us if you can.

JOY/PEACE CIRCLE NEWS

BLOOD DRIVE

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



**American
Red Cross**

Saturday, December 16, 2023
7:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Please visit RedCrossBlood.org and enter: VALLEY to schedule an appointment



Quilters: No quilting sessions until January 9, 2024.



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, outdoor wear 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 outdoor wear or accessories welcome. Please no underwear or socks.

SCRIPTURES FOR SUNDAYS IN DECEMBER, 2023

December 3

First Sunday of Advent

First Reading	Isaiah 64:1-9
Responsive Reading	Psalms 80:1-7, 17-19
Second Reading	1 Corinthians 1:3-9
Gospel Reading	Mark 13:24-37

December 10

Second Sunday of Advent

First Reading	Isaiah 40:1-11
Responsive Reading	Psalms 85:1-2, 8-13
Second Reading	2 Peter 3:8-15a
Gospel Reading	Mark 1:1-8

December 17

Third Sunday of Advent

First Reading	Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11
Responsive Reading	Psalms 126
Second Reading	1 Thessalonians 5:16-24
Gospel Reading	John 1:6-8, 19-28

December 24

Fourth Sunday of Advent

First Reading	2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16
Responsive Reading	Luke 1:46b-55
Second Reading	Romans 16:25-27
Gospel Reading	Luke 1:26-38

December 24

Christmas Eve

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

December 31

First Sunday of Christmas

First Reading	Isaiah 61:10—62:3
Responsive Psalm	Psalms 148
Second Reading	Galatians 4:4-7
Gospel Reading	Luke 2:22-40

PRAYER CONCERNS

Lynda Donovan	John & Lorrie Denker	Wylie James
Gwen Rittgarn	Steve Whitley	Baby Hayes
Janet Pennington	Mary Enloe	Gregg
Kelsey & Stefan	Ruth	Jean Krahmer
Charlotte	Maxine Nash	Eryn Hamke
Cindy	Lawrence Bonacci	Julie Dunn
Lois Schaefer	Kari	Curt Tate
All Those Grieving Caregivers Among Us	Care Center Staff	Care Center Residents

ALL OUR HOMEBOUND MEMBERS

Chet Ryan	Donna Fintel
Joan Kahlandt	MaryLou Finn
Dee Christiansen	Annie Hurt
Millie Richards	Donna Hovendick

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

PRAYER BOX REQUESTS

THE NEW PRAYER BOX

No Names needed!

We are a congregation that believes in the power of prayer. We have the Prayer Tower – a phone/email chain. We request prayers for shut-ins and those we hear of who need prayers.

Now we have a Prayer Box – situated in the Narthex near the mailboxes. Why? The reason for this is that sometimes we need prayers for very personal things – or reasons Prayers and reasons we wouldn't want to publicize because they're deeply personal -but we need prayer all the same.

The Prayer Box allows for anonymous prayer. God knows who it's for and who asked – but we don't need to know. Karen and Pastor will pray these concerns and a very general request noted in the bulletin – i.e. prayer to forgive boss/spouse whomever. The Prayer Box keeps it all anonymous = except for you and the Lord. May it be a blessing!

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

Merry Christmas





The community is welcome to join us for Christmas caroling at Valhaven and Valley Lakes and return to the church parking lot for fire pit caroling on December 3 (alternate date is December 10 if weather is inclement). 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 3.
>Free cookies and hot drink available. Please bring a chair if you wish to be seated and warm blanket (if needed)..

Family and Baby Care Outreach November 15 thru January 1, 2024

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

We have partnered with COPE to understand those items which are most needed this year. Laundry detergent, full-size containers of shampoo, conditioners and body wash for adults. Baby Items such as baby shampoo/soap and wipes, are also needed.

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

“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