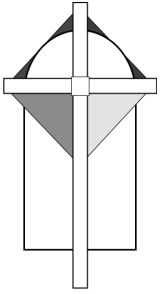




Happy Valentine's Day



ST MARK'S
LUTHERAN CHURCH

ST. MARK'S MESSENGER

February 2024
Valley, Nebraska
www.StMarksValleyNE.com
402.359.2315

from the Pastor...



How quickly we go from the hopes and promise of Jesus' coming in the season of Advent, to the joy and wonder of Christ's coming and living among us at Christmas, to the manifestations of Jesus as God -*now in the flesh appearing*-manifesting- during Epiphany. Very soon we will experience *another* church season's beginning this year, as we receive the ashes on Ash Wednesday (on February 14th this year) and enter into the inward and penitential meditations and self-examination that are significant parts of the Lenten seasons' journey. It can be a very fast ten weeks!

Many of us, in truth, were still trying to fathom how our God has combined things we would rather keep separate, in the sending of his Son Jesus to us; the glory and the scandal of God taking on human flesh, in becoming one of us for instance. We feel more secure when holy things are kept 'holy' and separate. It can seem confusing when the holy and the profane come together; like in a smelly, dirty stable and when the God of all creation and eternity is kept warmed by animal bodies, held and fed by his mother's milk-his own creation! That of course is normal for us...but, God??

As Thomas Merton, a famous writer and Trappist monk says, in Jesus "eternity enters into time, and time, sanctified, is caught up into eternity." Time, human flesh, water, all of nature has

been made holy by Jesus' coming here. It is a lot to take in. In fact, I don't think we often do take it the magnitude of it all.

The rapid change of church seasons can be disconcerting as well! We are living this story now, the church—in time. The goal of paying attention to the church year and the church calendar is to recover a more ancient way of looking at time and the mysterious relationship between the spiritual and the earthly realms. We are reminded that as church, we are now Christ's body in the world. We are in the world but we must find a way of navigating life so that we are not simply of it. Instead, we are travelers-aliens here-sent for a purpose—to do God's will and to make God's redemption plan known to all.

Life is messy, earthly living and the daily straddling of our lives *and* our faith can get messy—there's no doubt. We succeed and we also fail at the integration of both. We pick ourselves up and Jesus dusts us off, feeds us, and sends us back out there to do our best. The church calendar *can* be a way of calling us *out* of the demands of the world; of reminding us of who we are and whose we are.

I pray, though right now it may feel like we are in a toboggan, quickly sliding downhill through one church season after another, that the rhythm of the church year will give you some structure, some traction, some comfort and lead you always back to your Lord, who loves you with a love that is both tender and relentless- completely unwavering.

May we marinate a bit more in the stories that have enacted our salvation as we re-enact them in the Church year, for these stories are the backdrop, the foundation of our lives.

May the Lord bless you and keep you,

Pastor Barbara

from the PMA...

CHRISTMAS LEFTOVERS

Weeks have passed since we celebrated Christmas. Although I kept my decorations up through Epiphany, January 6, it seemed appropriate to return my house to its normal. I try to return my decorations in as careful manner as when I put them out, but, try as I may...I always find one or two items that escape the packing up of Christmas. It may be a stray night light or ornament hanger. I used to be really critical of myself for not being more thorough. Now I see this in a whole new light.

Each Christmas is an opportunity to meet Jesus on his terms. Everyone who came in contact with him on that first Christmas was forever changed. They had feelings of awe, God's glory, love and promises fulfilled. They didn't pack them away for a year nor could they. Of all the 'things' leftover from Christmas, the feelings or awe, God's glory, love and promises are something we need to keep before us. Jesus truly is the gift that keeps on giving.

PMA Karen

Joy and Peace Circle members wish to thank the St. Mark's family for the outpouring of contributions and prayers that benefited infants and family members of our community. Your generosity and support of this wonderful outreach was able to provide baby items of clothing, blankets, socks, disposable diapers, and baby care items. Much needed family care items of shampoo, laundry soap, paper products, personal care items, etc. were also donated. Donations are 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



ASH WEDNESDAY

LENT

Lent starts with Ash Wednesday on February 14th

The Season of Lent

The season of Lent is upon us! Lent officially begins on Ash Wednesday, February 14. We will observe this with a worship service that includes imposition of ashes and communion. For the five Wednesdays following, we will have Mid-Week Lenten worship at 7:00 p.m. Holy Week Services on Palm Sunday, March 24; Maundy Thursday, March 28; Good Friday March 29; and Easter, March 31.

All services will also be livestreamed.

DECEMBER MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORT

December Budget = \$24,045

December Expenses = \$25,795

December Giving = \$30,258

YEAR TO DATE FINANCIAL REPORT

January - December Budget = \$288,541

January - December Expenses = \$283,234

January - December Giving = \$261,48

End of year 2022 Balance in Savings = \$64,404

End of December 2023 Balance in Savings = \$24,282

End of December 2023 Balance in Checking = \$20,294

End of December 2023 Worship Enhancement Total = \$413.84

Listed below are the organizations & causes The Women of St. Marks WELCA chose to receive our Charitable Giving for the 2023/243 Fiscal year and the amount given.

We want to thank the members of St. Marks for their continued support of the Salad Luncheon, Soup Supper and Sale of Raffle Tickets that make these donations possible.

Charitable Giving for 2023/24

	<u>Amount</u>
Campus Ministries	\$300.00
Care-A-Van, Inc	700.00
COPE	600.00
Girl Scouts of NE-Troop 44853	300.00
Least of My Brethren	500.00
Lutheran Family Services	500.00
NE Children’s Home Society	200.00
Nebraska Lutheran Outdoor Ministries	500.00
Pastors Discretionary Fund	200.00
Prison Ministries	<u>400.00</u>
Table Grace Café	\$4400.00
Total	

FEBRUARY NEWS FOR WOMEN OF ST. MARK’S

FAITH CIRCLE NEWS

Faith Circe will meet on **Tuesday, Feb. 6 at 1 p.m.** in Fellowship Hall for their meeting and Bible Study. Sharon Renshaw will lead the study and Sandy Trofholz will provide refreshments. Come join us!

FRIENDSHIP CIRCLE NEWS

JOY/PEACE CIRCLE NEWS



Quilters will meet at **1 p.m. on Monday, Feb. 12th** and on **Thursday, Feb. 29th** (yes, it's Leap Year). God's work, Our Hands! Come help us help others!!

A PRAYER FOR ST MARK'S COUNCIL

Gracious God, help the council see with increasing clarity the gifts you have given our congregation for serving you by serving others. Amen.

PRAYER CONCERNS

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

ALL OUR HOMEBOUND MEMBERS

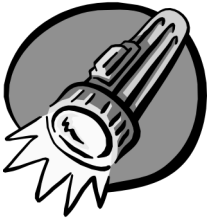
Chet Ryan	Donna Fintel
Joan Kahlandt	MaryLou Finn
Dee Christiansen	Annie Hurt
Millie Richards	Donna Hovendick

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

- For a cousin diagnosed with cancer.
- For someone to find work.
- For one who received a call back on a medical test.

For a place for an ill stepfather to live – for all the worries and concerns – for God's guidance and to know how much Jesus loves him – deep down.



COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

**This is a synopsis of the Council meeting held on
January 16th, 2024.**

- Election of Council Officers and Liaisons:
 - President – Debbie Hascall
 - Vice President – Lori Dyas
 - Secretary - Jan Reis
 - Evangelism – Joyce Snide
 - Discipleship Recognition Fund – Debbie Hascall
 - Chris. Ed. – Lori Dyas
 - Music & Worship - Matthew Allen
 - Stewardship – Kirsten Kurtz
 - Men In Mission – Jeff Richmond
 - Property – Jeff Richmond
 - Human Resources – Debbie Hascall
 - Sherron Fund – Jan Reis
 - Administrative Working Group – Chris Bonacci
 - COPE – Barb Kahlandt
- New Bank signatures will be Debbie Hascall, Lori Dyas and Jan Reis.
- The Insurance company will be contacted regarding the leaks in the ceiling in the Narthex.
- The Daisies will be selling Girl Scout Cookies on Sunday mornings, February 11 and March 10.

Birthdays in February



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 – Carly Welding | 19 – Shawn MacDonald |
| 2 – Kristi Eggen | 20 – Bryon Ueckert |
| 3 – Austyn Dye | 20 – Deanna Melton |
| 6 - MaryLou Finn | 20 – Bailey Josoff |
| 7 – Chad Karloff | 22 – Raygan Mitchell |
| 7 – Mary Peters | 23 – Marla Peterson |
| 8 – Glenyce Opfer | 23 – Jeff Richmond |
| 8 – Dave Mumm | 24 – Dee Christiansen |
| 9 – Jill Richmond | 26 – Dick Critel |
| 9 – McKinley Josoff | 26 – Jill Lamprecht |
| 9 – Reece Royuk | 27 – Kelly Hamsa |
| 14 – Jean Krahmer | 27 – Jade Lewis |
| 16 – Ryan Hardman | 28 – Linda Ryan |
| 16 – Lisa Nielsen | 28 – Daniel Josoff, Jr. |
| 19 – Michelle Grasmick | 29 – Teri Lehmkuhl |

ST. MARK'S JOB OPPORTUNITY

Part-time bookkeeper, flexible schedule. See Jan Reis for job description, application and/or more information.

SCRIPTURES FOR SUNDAYS IN FEBRUARY 2024

February 4

Fifth Sunday after Epiphany

First Reading	Isaiah 40:21-31
Responsive Reading	Psalms 147:1-11, 20c
Second Reading	1 Corinthians 9:16-23
Gospel Reading	Mark 1:29-39

February 11

Transfiguration of Our Lord

Last Sunday after Epiphany

First Reading	2 Kings 2:1-12
Responsive Reading	Psalms 50:1-6
Second Reading	2 Corinthians 4:3-6
Gospel Reading	Mark 9:2-9

February 14

Ash Wednesday

First Reading	Joel 2:1-2, 12-17
Responsive Reading	Psalms 51:1-17
Second Reading	2 Corinthians 5:20b—6:10
Gospel Reading	Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

February 18,

First Sunday in Lent

First Reading	Genesis 9:8-17
Responsive Reading	Psalms 25:1-10
Second Reading	1 Peter 3:18-22
Gospel Reading	Mark 1:9-15

February 25

Second Sunday in Lent

First Reading	Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16
Responsive Reading	Psalms 22:23-33
Second Reading	Romans 4:13-25
Gospel Reading	Mark 8:31-38

NEWSLETTER MAILING

One of the important jobs of your council is to be good stewards of your giving. We work diligently every year at financial planning time along with all the different groups within St Marks to keep expenses as low as possible. With that being said, one way we feel we could save money is to go paperless and start emailing as many of the monthly newsletters as possible. We acquired emails while compiling information for the pictorial. I realize there are some of our congregations that do not have email addresses or prefer to receive a hard copy. We will be mailing to home bound in this situation and will have hard copies available at the church. By doing this it would not only allow newsletter information to be received in a timelier manner, it would save money in paper used, copier ink, & postage not to mention time. What normally would take 1 to 2 days to get ready to mail would go out to you with a click of a button. Our plan is to have the March newsletter to go out this way.

Debbie Hascall
Council President



TITHE.LY



**Evangelical Lutheran
Church in America**

God's work. Our hands.

MANAGE YOUR GIVING ELECTRONICALLY

St. Mark's would like to remind you announce that you can manage your giving electronically! It's **EASY**, **SECURE** and **AUTOMATED**! Giving electronically is easy and allows you to set up automatic recurring contributions or make one-time contributions anytime. It's completely **FREE** – download the free App (**Tithe.ly, Finance green leaf app**) to your mobile phone and get started. You can visit the Tithe.ly website at <https://get.tithe.ly/>



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From Laughing with Lutherans

The Grace Lutheran Church Women are planning an "English Tea Party," inviting the women of area Lutheran churches. All women are asked to wear hats and gloves; no slacks, please.



In 2023, the Calek family joyfully became members of St. Mark's Lutheran Church. Jay, a Creighton alum, manages procurement and fleet for Tabor Street, a division of Nebraska Machinery Company. He's passionate about classic cars, history, football, and genealogy. Hilarie, a resource teacher for the eighth grade at Fremont Middle School, graduated from Wayne

State. Hilarie likes to spend her time gardening, crafting, and spending time in Okoboji. Gracie has followed her mother's footsteps and is a freshman at Wayne State College. She is having the time of her life. Cacie attends Woodbrook Elementary School in Elkhorn and is a second grader. She enjoys reading, crafts, and cheerleading. At four years old, Jacie delights her grandparents daily with her lively demeanor while her parents are at work.

We are grateful for the opportunities we have had to engage in events and support the congregation in any way we can. We have thoroughly enjoyed our first year at St. Marks. Besides quilting, Hilarie loves to attend the women's Bible study group and teach Sunday school. As well as helping around the Fellowship Hall, Jay likes to participate in the men's Bible study group. Sunday school, Halloween parties, and being part of A Very Mixed-Up Christmas Pageant are activities that Cacie and Jacie have all enjoyed.

We are so happy to have found a church home and a church family here at St. Mark's Lutheran Church!