

ST. MARK'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

messenger

"Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature." Mark 16:15

October 2019



Bring your kids to our Community Trunk-or-Treat event!

Come and enjoy an autumn afternoon of family-friendly fun at our annual Community Trunk-or-Treat, to be held on Saturday, October 19!

Here, there will be many games for children to enjoy, as well as delicious snacks. At the end of this event, children will walk from car to car in our parking lot to Trick-or-Treat in a safe environment and get all kinds of candy! No registration is necessary. Be sure to have your kids come in costume! Open to all children age 3-10. The event will be held rain or shine and will begin at 2 p.m., with the trick-or-treating scheduled for 3:30 p.m.

We are also looking for event volunteers, as well as people to decorate their cars to hand out candy! We encourage all volunteers to dress in costume. Please contact the church office with any questions.



Come, celebrate the Reformation and enjoy a Fall Harvest Potluck too

We invite everyone to join with us on Sunday, October 27 as we celebrate the Reformation during the Divine Service at 9:30 a.m. We'll be singing some of your favorite Reformation hymns, and also invite you to wear red that morning in honor of this special day. Following the service, we will meet in the basement Fellowship Hall to enjoy delicious food during our Fall Harvest Potluck.

The Reformation celebrates the reformation of the Christian church. On October 31, 1517 a Catholic monk named Martin Luther penned a document attacking the Catholic Church's corrupt practice of selling "indulgences" to absolve sin. His "95 Theses," which propounded two central beliefs—that the Bible is the central religious authority and that humans may reach salvation only by their faith and not by their deeds—was to spark the Protestant Reformation.

Watch for a sign-up sheet to appear in the church entryway soon where you can list the dish you'd like to bring and number of people you're bringing.

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The Messenger is the monthly newsletter of:

St. Mark's Lutheran Church

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Sunday

Divine Service with Holy Communion 9:30 a.m. Adult Bible Class 10:45 a.m. Sunday School (Sept. - May) 10:45 a.m.

<u>Wednesday</u> - The Gate worship service 7 p.m. (from the Wednesday after Easter until mid-November)

<u>One Saturday/month</u> - Men's Bible Study/Breakfast 9 a.m. Handicap accessible. BIBLE STUDY

OPPORTUNITIES

Several Bible studies are available for you to join!

Do you attend Bible study weekly at St. Mark's? If yes, awesome! If not, you're invited to do so! Our congregation offers several opportunities to study the Bible and we hope you'll take advantage of one or more of the following:

Sunday Adult Bible Class - The Book of Joshua

In the month of October, we will continue studying the book of Joshua in our Sunday morning Adult Bible Class starting at 10:45 a.m.

The book of Joshua is the sixth book of the Old Testament and picks up after the death of Moses, when the people of Israel have at last come to the border of the Promised Land after forty years of wandering in the wilderness. The book recounts the various battles of the people of God, beginning with the fall of Jericho, as they conquer the land of Canaan, in fulfillment of God's gracious promise to Abraham that His offspring would inherit the land.

So please come! This book has much to teach us about the ways of God in Christ and how He now works through His Church to overthrow the kingdom of Satan by the preaching of the Gospel, so that His people might at last inherit the true Promised Land of heaven. We look forward to seeing you there!

Children's Sunday School Continues

In October, we will be continuing our Children's Sunday School program. Here, children will join with others to learn the stories of the faith and the Truth of Christ in a fun and age-appropriate setting.

Please consider getting your children or grandchildren involved in this program! We'd love to have them there! Children's Sunday School meets weekly on Sundays at 10:45 a.m., after the Divine Service.

Men's Bible Breakfast Will Meet on October 12

Attention Men of St. Mark's!

We will be holding our monthly Men's Bible Study on Saturday, October 12. We will meet at Greek Jalapeno for breakfast from 9 - 10:30 a.m. (6636 Cooley Lake Rd.) and will continue our study of the book of Acts!

We'd love to have you there! This is a great opportunity to gather as men of God around His holy Word and to be formed together in the image of Christ! Please remember your Bible!

(See Bible Studies, Page 9)

Pastor's Page

Regarding a Possible Merger: Pastor's Reflections

My friends, as you will find detailed on page 4 of this newsletter, our Congregational Assembly recently voted (almost unanimously) to explore the possibility of merging our congregation with Peace Lutheran Church in Waterford for the sake of the Gospel. As mentioned in that article, the saints of Peace responded to our appeal with a unanimous vote on their part to explore this possibility with us. We will now be working with them to assess the feasibility of a merger and, if it does seem feasible, to come up with a merger plan for final approval by the Voters at a later date.

On page 10 of this newsletter, our vice-president, John Reardon, offered his personal thoughts on these developments. I would like to take this opportunity to also offer my own pastoral reflections.

In short, I would encourage you to approach the potential merger with this thought: "It could very well be that God Himself is leading us here into something new and exciting, something that will renew us together in the joy of the Gospel and advance the work if His kingdom in our community. This could very well be. Our job right now is simply to humble ourselves, explore this possibility with open minds, and allow God to direct the whole process according to His will."

Indeed, as is the case when we go through any big changes, there will be gains and losses of earthly things on both sides. We would be two communities coming together to form one. We will both have to make sacrifices for the sake of the Gospel and for the sake of one another. And that's never easy. As human beings, we build emotional connections to places, to rituals, to people. And that's not sinful, as long as it all remains within the proper bounds. Even Jesus wept at the death of His dear friend Lazarus (John 11:35). Grief isn't wrong, as long as we also allow God to lift us out from it in His time. For all the joy that can accompany change, there is also often a sense of loss and sadness. We should acknowledge that and remember that it's OK. And we should expect that it will be so here for many of us, even at this early, indeterminate stage.

But, as it relates to this potential merger, we should also remember what our purpose is as the Church of God in this world. It is as, Jesus says, to "make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:19-20a). This is our purpose. This is why we're here. This is the one reason that any

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Christian congregation exists. It is to be that place where God works upon us to make of us disciples. And it is to be that place where God works through us to make disciples of the world. We aren't here simply to acquire earthly things, no matter how beloved they might be. Rather, we are here to be disciples, and we are here to make disciples, for we want all people to share with us in the eternal salvation of Christ.

Therefore, every decision we make as a congregation should be directed toward this one overarching mission. Our question is simply, "How do we fulfill best the commission of our Lord, given our current circumstances?" Here, we should see our earthly blessings as resources, entrusted to us by God for a time, for us to use in the fulfillment this great commission.

And, what's more, God assures us that it is certainly a good work, pleasing to Him in Christ, when we are willing to sacrifice earthly things for the sake of His Kingdom. As Jesus instructs us, "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matthew 6:19-21). Again, He says, "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you" (Matthew 6:33).

But, as we strive to fulfill this commission, especially when it comes time to do hard things, we can always have this confidence: Jesus is with us. "Behold," He says, "I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20b). Yeah, Jesus is with us. He is with us as we consider this merger. He is with us as we make these decisions. He is with us as we set out towards the unknown and do battle with our sinful flesh. He is with us as we grieve.

And if Jesus is with us, then we have nothing to fear. He will lead us into the future. He will defend us against the devil. He will guide us to springs of living water. And He will wipe every tear away from our eyes (Revelation 7:17). We can walk confidently. And we need not be afraid. We can count on Him.

So, my friends, let's explore this merger with joy. What will come out of it? We don't know. Perhaps God has other plans for us. But maybe, just maybe, He is bringing us now into something new and exciting, something that will renew us together in the joy of the Gospel and advance the work of His kingdom in our community. So let's pray, let's trust God, let's walk in love and with humility, and let's see how God directs

(See Pastor's Page, Page 9)

Special Voters' Meeting on September 8 approves exploration of a possible merge

In August, St. Mark's Church Council met to review and discuss some membership, financial and demographic trends that they had been recently noticing. At the conclusion of this meeting, they decided to call a Special Voters' Meeting to take place after the Divine Service on Sunday, September 8, in order to make the voters aware of these trends, and also present a new, "think-outside-the-box" idea for a vote.

While our congregation's membership, attendance and contribution numbers have remained fairly stable over the last 10 years (thank you, Lord!), the majority of our members are age 50+ as the demographic breakdown below shows.

- 21 kids (ages 0 to 18)
- 23 young adults (ages 19-34)
- 6 middle aged (ages 35-49)
- 27 pre-retirees (ages 50-64)
- 36 retires (ages 65+)

History shows that our members age 50+ provide our congregation with the most support of their time, talents and tithing. And therefore, the trends we are now seeing include 1) a drop in the pool of volunteers able to serve on boards and assist with building and property maintenance (the average volunteer here is 63--retirement age!), 2) a decrease in contributions due to members going to be with Jesus, retiring, moving away, etc., and 3) our building and property (especially the parking lot) need some repairs and updates that are prohibitively expensive.

St. Mark's certainly isn't the only LCMS congregation where the majority of its members are age 50+. Many LCMS congregations are experiencing this same trend. But the question that St. Mark's officers, and then the Church Council, hoped to answer was: what can we proactively do now to ensure that we'll be able to share the Gospel and rightly administer the Sacraments in our community for many more years to come?

Earlier this summer, our church officers began to consider taking a look at a possible merge with Peace Lutheran Church in Waterford. Peace is located not quite 5 miles northeast of St. Mark's. Their congregation is very similar to ours. Their average weekend attendance is 74 (ours is 50-54), their budget is about \$10k higher than ours, and their membership make-up is similar.

Some initial research was done to look at other LCMS congregations that have merged very successfully. The merging congregations gave up their current constitution and bylaws to create a new set; both congregations gave up their church names in order to select a new name; and in some cases (but not always), both of their church buildings & property were sold in order to purchase, or build, a new building. Hence, the two became one, neither carrying more

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weight or authority than the other. Many of these congregations have reaped the rewards of a newly-energized parish that has grown by leaps and bounds, having access to a larger pool of resources--both in people and contributions--and much lower expenses.

And so, our Church Council thought it made sense to let the voters decide if they wanted to explore a possible merger with Peace Lutheran. A Voters' Meeting took place on September 8. Following a presentation on the current state of St. Mark's, the Church Council presented the following motion for a vote:

We, the Council, would like the voters to authorize the creation of a Merger Exploration Committee to work hand-in-hand with Peace Lutheran Church, Waterford, to assess the feasibility of a merger and, if it does seem feasible, to make plans for a merger for final approval at a later date.

Do you agree with the creation of this Committee for the above-stated purpose?

The results of the vote were: 33 - Yes, 1 - No. Therefore, the motion passed.

The next topic the voters discussed was whether or not to rescind a motion that was passed December 2, 2018 giving the Parsonage Committee permission to spend up to \$8,500 in order to get the 1-acre lot along Bywater Avenue assessed and prepared for sale with the proceeds of the sale being placed into a "Neighborhood Outreach" fund. The Church Council made a recommendation to rescind the previous motion because the sale of the 1-acre lot is no longer being considered. The Council's recommendation was seconded, voted on, and the motion carried unanimously.

Initial talks with Peace Lutheran about a possible merge have been very positive. They presented the same motion above (regarding a Merger Exploration Committee) to their voters on September 22. The voting results were unanimous in that their voters wish to explore the possibility of a merger with St. Mark's.

And so now the real work begins. The Merger Exploration Committee will consist of Pastor Vergin and Pastor Tkac (the pastor at Peace), and an equal number of officers and lay people from both congregations. The committee will be collectively reviewing each congregation's assets, liabilities, resources, etc. in order to discover if a merger is feasible. They will also seek guidance from our Michigan District as the District has helped several congregations successfully merge over the years. The committee's goal is to do a thorough job of collecting data, and to also be expedient with getting back to the voters so that a vote can take place.

Please keep the Merger Exploration Committee in your prayers as they do their work, and also pray for the people of Peace Lutheran, and for our own members here at St. Mark's.



THIS WEEK'S PRAYER'S:

Clarence Arnold—is having health issues.

Butch Fitzgerald—needs prayers for health issues.

Joan Freeman—needs extra prayers for health/family issues.

John Freeman—needs extra prayers for health issues.

Barbara Jewell-still needs prayers for medical issues.

Barbara Katterman—had a stroke; having memory issues.

Mac McConnell—needs extra prayers.

Angela & Jason Peters—need prayers for life difficulties.

Kay Reynolds—has health issues; is in rehab.

Frank Salo—needs extra prayers.

Marilyn Turner—needs extra prayers.

Art Vermeersch—is having health issues.

Dorothy Vermeersch—is having some vertigo issues.

Lynne Welty—is having health issues.

Sharon Williams—her cancer has returned; is participating in a cancer treatment trial.

Sharley Campbell's daughter, **LeAnne**—is battling alcoholism.

Joan Freeman's brother, Ernie Sampson—has health problems. Joan Freeman's mom, Betty Sampson—cancer has metasticized

to her brain.

Barbara Jewell's friend's daughter, **Rebecca Chipps**—is recovering from surgery for breast cancer.

Barbara Jewell's friend's daughter, **Diane**—diagnosed with esophageal cancer and is receiving chemotherapy; has been given only 3-6 months.

Barbara Jewell's niece, Pete Feiler—needs surgery.

Barbara Jewell's sister-in-law's mother, **Lillian**—fell and has stitches in her head.

Debbie LoCascio's acquaintance, **Brittany Able**—is having extreme ankle pain from an accident years ago. Might have to have her foot amputated.

Debbie LoCascio's friend's neighbor, Marilyn—health is failing and she doesn't believe in Jesus. Praying that she'll come to faith before it's too late.

The LoCascio's acquaintance, **Ann Tupiak**—is suffering greatly from cancer; is undergoing treatment.

The LoCascio's acquaintance, **Ron Valko**—diagnosed with Stage 4 lung cancer; prognosis with chemo treatments is only 2 years.

The LoCascio's sister-in-law, **Leslie Tippett**—is recovering from surgery.

The LoCascio's sister-in-law's father, **Tom Kwasnik**—is recovering from a brain bleed.

Mary Ann Lockwood's friend, **Sharon Richards**—is battling cancer.

The Lockwood children's (Anna, Christian, Michael) grandfather, **Milton Javery**—is battling cancer.

Cindy Parks' sister, **Jeane Schaefer**—recovering from back surgery.

Jason Peters' sister, Jocelyn Peters-needs prayers for

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difficulties in her life.

Jason Peters' dad and his girlfriend, **Sandy Baird & Karl Peters**—need prayers for difficulties in their lives.

Debbie Sidelinker's mother, **Dorothy Clayton**—will be undergoing surgery on 9/30.

Carolynn Taylor's grandson's wife, **Stephanie Payton**—is battling breast cancer.

Mike & Kyle Tolman's grandpa, **Dave Scroggie**—has health issues.

The Salo's daughter-in-law, Joni—is recovering from a stroke.

Former St. Mark's member, **Tony Pauza**—recovering from hip replacement surgery.

Mandy Vergin's father, Bruce Ketcher—has health issues.

Rob Wheeler's dad, Rick Wheeler—is recovering from a brain bleed.

Larry Whitehead's daughter, **Tracy Whitehead**—needs prayers for wisdom and guidance.

Lori Whitehead's sister, **Linda Head**—is recovering from medical issues.

Sharon Williams' friend, Carol York—is very ill; praying that she'll come to faith in Christ.

Sharon Williams' granddaughter, Erika Williams—needs extra prayers for guidance.

Sharon Williams' great-grandson, **Emmitt Reynolds**—diagnosed with Autism.

Joanne Wisti's friend, Paul Kascha—is battling cancer.

Matt Zavada (whose father, Ray, works at the LCMS Michigan District)—has leg and foot wounds that are healing.

ON-GOING PRAYERS:

Cathy Fitzgerald's niece, Kim Trombley—recovering from a very serious car accident

Cathy Fitzgerald's sister, Charlotte—recovering from a stroke Friend of St. Mark's, Thisvi Steiger—is having medical problems Barbara Jewell's neighbor's grandson—confined to home

Barbara Jewell's neighbor, Ed Perez—having knee problems Barbara Jewell's friend, Pam Perez—is having medical issues

Julie Kosmalski—her cancer is in remission
Tom LoCascio's cousin, Angelo Barduca—is battling lung
cancer

Mary Ann Lockwood's cousin's kids—Abigail and Amelia List—are ill

Cindy Parks' friends, Sheila, Mary, and Linda—all are battling breast cancer

Dorothy Vermeersch's cousin, Gloria Maire—has medical issues Cindy Park's brother, Jerry Mielke—is having medical problems Marlene Steck—needs extra prayers

The Tolman's grandma, Margaret Scroggie—needs extra prayers Sharon Williams' friend, Tina Fonville—is on oxygen

Sharon Williams' daughter-in-law's nephew's fiancé, Rachel—cancer is in remission

Sharon Williams' daughter-in-law, Pam Williams—has health issues



October Birthdays

- 6 Sherry Hyrkas
- 7 Michael Lockwood, Jr.
- 10 Andrea Benson, Lori Whitehead
- 12 Danielle O'Brien
- 14 Julie Kosmalski
- 17 Olivia Benson
- 22 Darryl Swainson
- 23 Carol Zienert
- 24 Barb Allen, Mandy Vergin

Now accepting 2020 Board nominations

We are now accepting nominations for open board and officer positions for 2020. Watch future bulletins for details on which positions will be open.

If you are interested in serving in this way, please let Pastor Vergin know.



October's special birthday wishes

We wish the Lord's richest blessings upon Lori Whitehead this month as she celebrates a special "decade birthday" (we can't say which one though!) on October 10. May your special birthday be just as wonderful as you are, Lori!



October Anniversaries

5 Carl & Carol Zienert	56th
9 Jim & Marlene Steck	48th
15 Derald & Barbara Katterman	70th



Wedding Anniversary

Congratulations to Derald & Barbara Katterman who will have been married 70 years on October15th! Thank you, Lord, for giving these two wonderful people so many beautiful years together, and may they be blessed with many more!

Special Fund Donations

We thank those listed below who made special donations in **August**.

Memorials (in memory of Sue Franklin): Butch & Cathy Fitzgerald, Gail Fitzgerald, Jennie Kaufman, Carolynn Taylor, Sharon

Vacation Bible School: Lynn Thomas Welcome Basket Outreach Program: Rod & Leslie Ochring

Williams.



Transferred to a sister congregation:

Lois Bidinger to Our Savior Ev. Lutheran Church, Hartland, on September 10th.



Please remember these folks in your prayers

Those shown below have lost loved ones this past month. Please keep them and their families in your prayers.

- The Kell family as Larry Whitehead's aunt, Elaine Kell, passed away on 9/16.
- The Dearth family as Lori Whitehead's sister's friend, Vicki Dearth, passed away on 9/3.
- Barbara Jewell and her family as Barbara's sister-in-law, Ruth, passed away in early September.



Summarized Council Meeting Minutes from September 17, 2019

<u>Attendees:</u> Pastor Vergin, Tom LoCascio, John Reardon, Kari Kosmalski, Debbie LoCascio, Nancy McInnis, Sue Ingram, Sharon Williams, Mandy Vergin, Ellen Rentola

Call to Order at 7:33 p.m. by Tom LoCascio

Opening Prayer and Devotion: Jer. 29:11 by Pastor Vergin

Vice President's Report per John Reardon

• Next PICO (Practical Ideas for Community Outreach) workshop is on Saturday, 10/26 at Faith Lutheran, Bay City from 8:30 a.m. until 12:30 p.m. if interested.

Pastor's Report per Pastor Vergin

- Mission Planning Workshop Saturday, Sep. 21 from 10 a.m. - 1 p.m. Includes lunch.
- St. Michael & All Angels Festival Sunday, 9/29
- Confirmation beginning in Oct. (Sophie H., Jay A.)

BOARD REPORTS

Elders per Pastor for Darryl Swainson

- We are short on elders. Larry is traveling; Darryl will be out of town for a few months. Jim O'Brien has agreed to help as an elder on duty.
- Pastor has had positive results from cold calls on inactive church members.

Family & Youth per Mandy Vergin

- Trunk-or Treat event 10/19 from 2-4 p.m. Volunteers will arrive at noon.
- Mandy is teaching Sunday School with Jennie Kaufman as a substitute

Gospel Outreach per Sharon Williams

- "Every One His Witness" follow-up workshop was held 9/29
- Looking for new neighbor addresses to deliver welcome baskets
- Will be putting on a second "Every One His Witness" workshop possibly in Nov.

Human Care per Pastor

- Serving dinner at St. Paul, Pontiac on Wed. 9/18 from 5:30 p.m. 7:30 p.m.
- Planning to participate in Christmas Adopt-a-Family program again this year

Parish Fellowship per Ellen Rentola

- Hosted Movie Night on 8/23. 25 people attended.
- Pastor Mahlburg visited on 9/4. 25 people attended. There was a dinner, then his presentation.
- Provided snacks for the Special Voters' Meeting on 9/8
- Pastor's Winkel to be held at St. Mark's on 12/10. Up to 12 pastors will attend. Will serve them breakfast and lunch.

LWML per Pastor

 LWML Multi-Lakes Zone Rally to be held on Sat., Oct. 26 at Holy Cross, Oxford at 9 a.m. The Zone Board meeting will be on Sat., Oct. 5. Pastor to attend.

Properties per All

- Fall Clean-up is scheduled for 10/6 after church, to include lunch. Need list of projects from Jim.
- Painting is finished: back stairwell, wall in office hallway (outside of Library), sacristy. Thank you, Jim!
- John made a motion that we allocate funds up to \$1,050 for tree removal following storm damage with the funds to be taken from "Properties Other" income account. Ellen seconded. Motion carried.
- If tree clean-up isn't covered, check to see if we can borrow someone's chipper

GENERALBUSINESS-ALL

- Merger Exploration Update Peace Lutheran will vote on 9/22 on whether or not to approve a merger exploration committee. If approved, the committee will get the MI District involved to assist.
- Distribution of blank budget spreadsheet for 2020 need initial budget numbers filled in before next Council meeting
- Any Human Resources items to discuss? Getting close to review time for our workers. Debbie to give Tom blank review forms if she can find them.
- Public Relations items to discuss? Per Sue, none.

Next meeting: <u>Business Meeting</u> on Tuesday, October 15, 7:30 p.m.

Debbie made a motion to adjourn at 8:31 p.m.; Mandy seconded. Motion carried.

Closed with the Lord's Prayer

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We enjoyed a nice visit with Pastor Mahlburg

On Wednesday, September 4, Pastor Steve Mahlburg—a son of our congregation—visited St. Mark's to report on the work that he and his

family have been doing in Sri Lanka. Pastor Mahlburg has been serving there as a missionary for the LC—MS for several years.

Pastor Mahlburg had many interesting things to say about daily life in Sri Lanka, as well as the main focus of his pastoral service: supporting a reorganization effort of the Lutheran Church in Sri Lanka. He also told us about how the Gospel of Jesus Christ is bearing fruit in that nation through the work of the Holy Spirit.

We welcomed Pastor Mahlburg with a potluck dinner and also supported him with prayer and a freewill offering. Special thanks to all who participated in this event! Please continue to keep Pastor Mahlburg and his family—as well as all of Christ's missionaries—in your prayers! (See our Facebook page for photos.)



A very successful dinner was served at St. Paul's

On Wednesday, September 18, some people from St. Mark's traveled to St. Paul's Community Lutheran Church in Pontiac to host a dinner for the needy. We have been doing this now for several years and, as always, it all went great!

In total, the dinner was attended by around 90 people—many more than in past years! However, we still had just enough food, and everyone enjoyed it! It certainly proved to be an excellent opportunity to serve our neighbors in the name of Christ.

Special thanks to all those who attended and to all who made donations! (See our Facebook page for photos.)

A great Movie Night was held in August!

On August 23, St. Mark's held another outdoor Movie Night! We watched the movie "Christopher Robin" on our outdoor screen and, in total, the event was attended by about 25 to 30 people, including many children. The weather was perfect and we had many delicious snacks provided by the Parish Fellowship Committee.

Thanks for all who helped make this event possible! It's a great way for us to build relationships with the people in our community!



"Faith Like a Mustard Seed" is this year's LWML Sunday theme

The first Sunday in October is traditionally set aside for the observation of Lutheran Women's Missionary League (LWML) Sunday. Therefore, St. Mark's will celebrate this special day during the Divine Service on Sunday, October 6.

"Faith Like a Mustard Seed" is the theme for LWML Sunday 2019, based on Jesus' words in Luke 17:6 that faith as small as a mustard seed can move a mulberry tree. We may long for a greater and more heroic faith, but what about the faith we have right now? LWML Sunday 2019 celebrates the power of a daily walk with Jesus to transform lives and multiply disciples. Little faith or great, there are mulberry trees to be moved!

The ladies of St. Mark's Missionary League, who are members of the LWML, will serve as ushers during the Divine Service on this day, and our colorful bulletin covers from the LWML will represent "Faith Like a Mustard Seed."

Also, be aware that all ladies of St. Mark's are welcome and encouraged to attend the LWML's **Fall Zone Rally** on Saturday, October 26 at Holy Cross Lutheran Church in Oxford. This will be a great opportunity to gather with other faithful women of the Multi-Lakes Zone to worship the Lord, study His Word, and enjoy a time of fellowship.

The Rally will begin at 9 a.m. and end at 1 p.m. Lunch will be served to participants.

Bible Studies

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The Gate Will Conclude in October

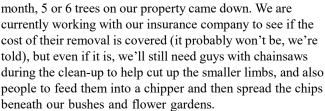
In October, we will be concluding our midweek Bible Study called "The Gate." Throughout the summer, we've been going through the book of Revelation and in October we will be bringing that study to a close (our last session will be October 30). We expect to resume The Gate again after Easter with a new study.

Please join us, if even just for these final weeks! The book of Revelation is one of the most encouraging and interesting books of the Bible, in which God reveals to His Church the final victory of Christ, so that we might face the devil and the Day of Judgment with confidence.

The Gate meets on Wednesdays at 7 p.m. There will be snacks afterwards. We look forward to seeing you there!

Help is needed here with Fall Clean-Up

Many hands will be needed on Sunday, October 6, following the Divine Service for our Fall Cleanup event. Unfortunately, during severe storms with high winds last



We'll also need the storm windows for the sanctuary to be washed and then re-inserted into the frames. There will probably be weeds needing to be pulled as well. If you're able to help on this day, please come!

Lunch will be served to participants around noon.

Pastor's Page

(Continued from Page 3)

things. In my opinion—though we are still at an extremely early stage—things are certainly looking very positive.

"For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope" (Isaiah 29:11).

Seeking crafters for November's Craft Show

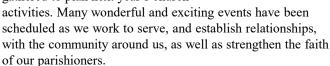
This year, St. Mark's Craft Show will take place on Saturday, November 2 from 9 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. We are seeking crafters of all ages who would like to sell their wares. We will provide a 6' table for \$30, as well as free morning coffee and a donut.

We'll also need volunteers to help set up for the event on Friday, November 1, and clean up after the show around 4 p.m.

For an application, visit St. Mark's website at: www.stmarkwb.org. Hover over the top tab titled "Contact/ Registration" and you will see the link to the application. Also, if you can help with set-up or clean-up, and/or help work the concessions in the kitchen that day, please let Gail Hardy know.

2020 church activities have been planned

During our annual Mission Workshop Planning Meeting held September 21, the leaders of St. Mark's gathered to plan next year's church



The complete list of 2020 events will be compiled into a calendar that will be available on the table at the back of the sanctuary beginning October 1.

Thanks to all who participated in this planning meeting!



A peep from the VEEP

by John Reardon, Vice President of St. Mark's



Wow! We have a lot ahead of us with the exploration of a possible merger with Peace Lutheran. There will be plenty of work before considering whether or not to join forces and resources, and there will be plenty afterward if both congregations agree to a merger.

In some ways, this seems much like a marriage, the looking forward in anticipation and hope while also considering that there will be a need for adjustment, joy and even grief. And, like a marriage it isn't done until both parties say "I do."

Like in a marriage, us joining together is not just a twoparty venture but involves us asking for and receiving the blessings of our Lord. After all, it is His Church.

During this process, we must remain ever aware that satan (I won't capitalize his name) will be active among us to do whatever to not let us, merger or not, fulfill our purpose as a church and bring others to Christ. He detests us because we are children of God. So we must be ever vigilant to pray and ask God for his guidance and protection.

If the joint merger committee recommends to each congregation that we merge and the members of both congregations concur, then, at least initially, when we combine our resources we may find each of us having a little breathing room. With more members under one roof we should be able to share the work or hold only one office, thus allowing us to concentrate our efforts while reducing the number of meetings we attend.

While under one roof we may find ourselves rejuvenated and reenergized. However, we may still feel some pain because, like in a marriage, there will be the need for some giving and taking. We must remember that all our resources (land, building, and etc.) are God's. He gave us this to do His work and we should use them as best as possible in that effort.

If a merger occurs, we must remember that we are joining forces in the same work and we must remain focused on the work Christ has given us: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you..." (Matt. 28:19).

As Christ's followers, that is our job. "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, that you <u>may declare</u> the wonderful deeds of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light" (underlining added; 1 Peter 2:9).

Like many congregations, Peace is facing the same demographic and financial challenges that we are. I've read several books and numerous articles on how to increase membership, but the answer I found was in the Bible. First, spread the good news of the Gospel and of our Lord Jesus; second, let God provide the growth.

Paul stated: "I planted and Apollos watered, but God gave the growth" (1 Cor. 3:6). If a merger occurs, then it is imperative that our new congregation be fully focused on our effort to spread the seed of the Gospel and the redemption we have through Christ. We leave it to God to provide the growth and increase our membership. So both churches, if combined, will still share the same mission.

That is our mission today, merger or not. Somehow, over time, while the church continued to tell us this was our job — indeed, our calling—the church failed to instruct us in "how?" That has now been reversed, and today the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod has, from various ministries, instruction in how to spread the Good News.

That mission is aptly printed on the wall in St. Mark's entryway. Take a second to read it the next time you enter the church. We have rewritten our Constitution and By-Laws to focus on this ministry through our various boards. And recently Pastor held a one-day training session titled *Everyone His Witness*. This fall, he plans on conducting it again. So if you missed the first one, please consider attending this next one. (It is not a boring study.)

If we merge, we will experience a combining of resources. That means we will have an increased membership and more than likely, an improved financial situation. However, if we fail to plant the seed of faith among our community then it is only a matter of time before we will be in the same situation again. Christ has called us to be His ambassadors, His laborers, in this effort.

It was our Lord who observed: "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few..." (Matt. 9:37). We, who have been saved and redeemed through Christ, have such good news to share!

And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Then I said, "Here am I! Send me" (Isaiah 6:8).

Finally, during our exploration of a merger and the possibility of reenergizing and renewing, we should remember what our Lord Jesus Christ said after giving us His Great Commission: "and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age" (Matt. 28:20).

(Continued next column)

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St. Mark's Lutheran Church



7979 Commerce Road West Bloomfield, MI 48324

Phone: (248) 363-0741 Fax: (866) 649-6870 Email: info@stmarkwb.org Website: www.stmarkwb.org

For the latest church news, visit our website



What types of information can you find on St. Mark's website (www.stmarwb.org)?

- Monthly church calendars
- Sunday bulletins
- Weekly announcements
- Monthly newsletters
- About St. Mark's
- Event Registration Forms
- Those on Duty (scheduled to help out at church)

...and more! Check it out for all of your worship/church needs!

Address Service Requested

Women from St. Mark's are making quilts for Lutheran World Relief

Imagine the comfort and care you feel when you snuggle under a comforter or wear a piece of clothing made or worn by a loved one. That's the feeling you share by making, and donating, a Lutheran World Relief Mission Quilt. Useful for shielding against the cold and rain, and for warm bedding, quilts can also be purposed as simple tents, floor coverings, or a wrap to hold a baby on a mother's back. In a simple combination of fabric and thread, you reach out to people in their time of greatest need with a strong message of hope – you are not alone

We are blessed to have several ladies from St. Mark's making quilts that will be dropped off at a Lutheran World Relief drop point on October 12. These quilts will be used by needy people all over the world! Our quilters are hoping to make 20 full-size quilts for this purpose. Before delivering them, they will display the beautiful quilts in the sanctuary so that you can check them out. (See photos on Facebook also.)

What a blessing it is to be able to serve the less fortunate in this way! Thanks, quilters, for all your hard work!

Sunday Divine Service: 9:30 a.m. Sunday Adult Bible Class:10:45 a.m. Sunday School (Sept. - May): 10:45 a.m.

October 2019

St. Mark's Lutheran Church

Men's Bible Study/Breakfast: First Saturday/month at 9 a.m.

Wednesday Worship: "The Gate" 7 p.m. (the Wed. after Easter through mid-Nov.)

For live, up-to-date versions of ANY St. Mark's calendar, visit our website at: www.stmarkwb.org.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1	2	3	4	5 9am LWML Zone Bd. Mtg.
		Pastor out of office in p.m.	4pm Confirmation Class A		4pm Confirmation Class B	
	_	7pm - Bd. Of Elders' Mtg.	7pm-The Gate			
6 16th Sunday after Trinity LWML Sunday	7 Pastor's Day Off	8	9	10 10am Quilting Bee	11	9am Men's Bible Study
Elder on Duty: Jim O'Brien			Secretary Debbie on vacation			
9:30am Divine Service 10:45am Sunday School 10:45am Fall Clean-Up		Pastor out of office in p.m.	4pm Confirmation Cls. A		4pm Confirmation Class B	
			7pm-The Gate			
13 17th Sunday after Trinit Elder on Duty: Tom LoCascio 9:30am Divine Service 10:45am Adult Bible Class 10:45am Sunday School	y 14 Columbus Day Pastor's Day Off	Pastor out of office in p.m.	4pm Confirmation Cls. A	17	18 DEADLINE TO SUBMIT NEWSLETTER ARTICLES 4pm Confirmation Class B	19 2pm Trunk-or Treat
		7:30pm Council Meeting	7pm-The Gate			
20 18th Sunday after Trinit Elder on Duty: Jim O'Brien 9:30am Divine Service 10:45am Adult Bible Class	y 21 Pastor's Day Off	Pastor out of office in p.m.	23	10am Quilting Bee	DISTRIBUTE NEWSLTR.	26 9am LWML Zone Rally Holy Cross, Oxford
10:45am Sunday School			4pm Confirmation Cls. A 7pm-The Gate		4pm Confirmation Class B	
27 Reformation Day (obs.) Elder on Duty: Tom LoCascio 9:30am Divine Service	28 Pastor's Day Off	29	30	31 Halloween Reformation Day		
11am Fall Harvest Potluck		Pastor out of office in p.m.	4pm Confirmation Cls. A			
			7pm-The Gate			TED C
		ACOLYTES:	GREETERS:	VIDEO TECHS:		ERS:
ALTAR GUILD: Gail Fitzgerald COUNTERS: Barbara Jewell & Sharon Williams		6 TBD 13 Grace or Sophie Hurley 20 TBD	6 Gail Fitzgerald 13 Sharon Williams 20 Mary Lockwood	6 TBD 13 Jim O'Bien 20 Tom LoCascio	6 - Scott Miller & Rudy Re 13 & 20 - Tom Kaufman 27 - John Reardon	ntola
		27 Jay Anderson	27 Tom & Debbie L.	27 TBD	27 John Reardon	