
ST. MARK'S MESSENGER

VOLUME 21 ISSUE 7 • JULY 2017

Pastor Dan Article

I'd love to invite you to read Ezekiel, chapter 1. I'll pause here for you to read the passage.....finished? Good! What a crazy text!. Ezekiel describes wheels inside of wheels; he sees four headed creatures; there's flashing of lightning and brilliant light and a throne. On the throne was a figure like that of a man, from the waist up appearing to be like glowing metal, surrounded by radiance, like that of a "rainbow in the clouds on a rainy day." It is the account of a vision the prophet had of Yahweh appearing to him.

I think to understand this, we first need to look at who Ezekiel is. If we look at verse 2, we'll see that he's a priest. As a priest he would have been at the center of the worship of Israel, working in the temple in Jerusalem. It was in this temple, that the people of Israel believe, Yahweh — their God — lived. So he was a part of the system that taught that Yahweh lived in His temple, in Jerusalem.

Yet if you notice in verse 1, it says he was among the exiles in Babylon. This was because Babylon marched an army to Jerusalem and conquered it, literally leveled everything in the city to the ground, including the temple. After destroying the city, they locked many of the people who had survived this in chains and marched them across the desert and forced them to live in exile in Babylon. Now when we think about one nation conquering another nation, we think in political terms, but the ancients thought about this in religious terms. When Babylon conquered Israel, what was really happening was that Marduk, the god of Babylonians, was conquering Yahweh, the God of Israel. This had a profound effect on the people of Israel, especially the priests.

The story of Israel was that there was one God, they were his special chosen people, and he had given them their land to be their home. So when Babylon conquered them, this would have been a blow to the understanding of who they were and what they believed. It tipped the apple cart completely upside down. So it is not just that Ezekiel has been captured and marched across the desert away from his home, but their belief in Yahweh was put into doubt, "*How could their God have been conquered by another God?*"

As you can imagine, the people were especially depressed about this. If you look through the Psalms, there are a couple of passages which reveal their level of despair. Psalm 137 is a classic example of this; it discusses how they're weeping by the rivers in Babylon, while being taunted about how Yahweh had failed them, their captors making fun of them, asking them to sing their songs of worship.

And it is in this setting in the middle of exile in Babylon, Ezekiel has a vision about Yahweh being present there. Can you imagine having this vision? Ezekiel thinks and believes his God Yahweh has been destroyed and conquered by Marduk, and yet here in Babylon, Marduk's home, Yahweh shows up. I imagine Ezekiel's experience is similar to a child who has only eaten vegetables their whole life getting to taste cake for the first time. Or somebody from Indiana getting to see the Rockies. And when he sees Yahweh in Babylon, verse 28 states, he fell flat on his face, completely blown away.

You see, Yahweh is showing Ezekiel something new. He's blowing up the understanding that this prophet had about the way things work. God is so much bigger than our understandings of the world. He is continually pulling us forward, calling us to see Him in a new light, asking us to put off old understandings of how we think the world works, moving us to see him in new ways for new days.

More than just the philosophical side of it here, is that Yahweh shows up in Babylon, the place of his people's despair. They're sitting by the rivers in Babylon being mocked by their captors, and Yahweh reveals to them that even in the darkest places, he walks with them. That they're never alone. Even in the places where they think Yahweh isn't, He's there with them. There isn't the shallow hope that Yahweh will make everything happy and joyful, but that he is there with them, helping them get through the toughest times of life.

I guess, for me this is why I love Ezekiel 1 so much. Far too often, I find myself "sitting by a river in Babylon" wondering where in the world God is and yet, here I am reminded that even in the midst of these times, God is with us, calling us forward in following him. And no matter where we go, we will always find him there.

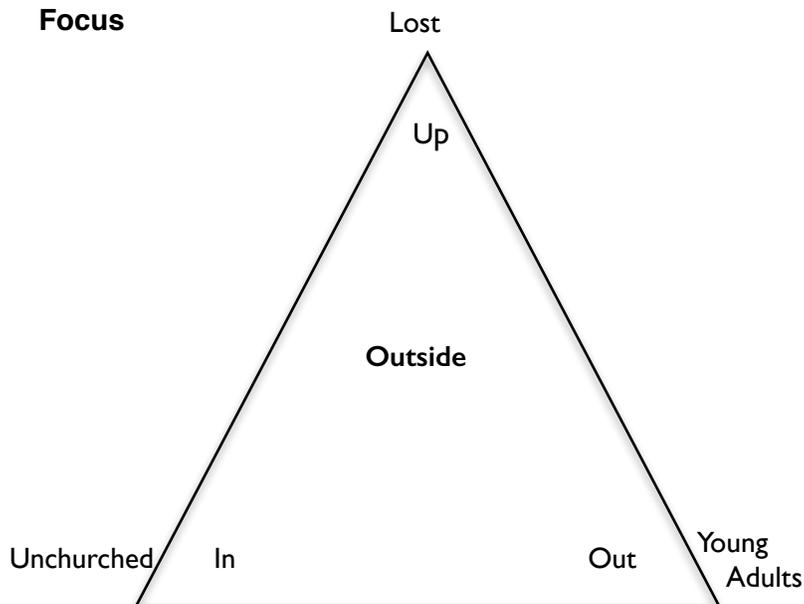
St. Mark's Culture & DNA

Our DNA:

While we are all unique and have our own unique DNA, we also as a church have a shared and unique DNA. We utilize the shape of a triangle to explain much of our ministry, vision and structure. This is rooted in the first triangle that represents the three dimensions or focuses of Jesus' life and ministry. Jesus lived his intentional life on earth through three relationships: up, in and out.

Outreach Focus: The Triangle helps us to understand the focus of the ministry of our church based on how Jesus lived his life, up-in-out with the Father, the disciples and the world. As a church, we have recognized our need to focus on outreach. For many years, like most other churches in our country, we have not done a good job at reaching out to those outside of the church, instead expecting people to come to us as they had in the past. Those days are over. As a church we have identified three areas of focus for our outreach, consistent with the life of Jesus and where we are weak as a church. The first is reaching in to those *in* our community that do not have a church home. The second is to reach *up* to those who are lost and do not know Jesus. Finally, we reach *out* to young adults who we have failed to reach and serve.

Outreach Focus



Our Vocabulary:

Most churches (along with other organizations) do not realize that the language and the vocabulary of the organization have great significance to the organization. One of the cornerstones of any culture is language or vocabulary. This month our vocabulary words are *culture and culture question*.

Person of Peace: the person or people God puts in our life or path who welcomes you and responds to you with openness to Jesus and the good news of the Gospel.

Prayer of the Month:

Come Holy Spirit, come
Come Holy Spirit, come
Come Holy Spirit, come
Amen

Culture Question of the Month:

What do you see God doing right now? What do you see God doing in your life? In our Church? In our Community? In the World?

Notes

Dear Members of St. Mark's Lutheran Church:

Thank you for the donations of soup and crackers and the personal hygiene items. Your continued support is greatly appreciated as we serve the residents of DeKalb County.

Shirley Johnson, Program Coordinator, RSVP

Thank You From The Altar Guild!

We have two gentlemen to thank for enhancing our facility which makes our job easier! Thank you John Foell for electrically lighting our Eternal Candle. We used to have to get up on a high stool and change those candles out probably once a week - sometimes a risky task. Now it truly is eternal thanks to John and will never go out! Thank you too Jeff Reese for lighting our sacristy as it's never been lit before with a new light! We haven't had that much light in that little room for a long time. It's nice to be able to see in that room again St. Mark's is lucky to have such wonderful volunteers as these two guys.

Save The Date

July 9	Kathleen Lutz Presents after Worship
July 11	Blood Drive at St. Mark's
July 16-19 (6pm to 8pm)	Vacation Bible School
August 10 & 11	Willow Creek Leadership Summit
August 20	Church Picnic
September 9	Gratitude, Cornerstone of Generosity Seminar w/Mark VanderTuig, head of the LCMC
September 10	Mark VanderTuig, head of the LCMC preaching
September 10-October 10	40 Days of Prayer
September 17	Faith in Action Sunday
September 19-Dec 5	ALPHA
September 25-30	Fair Parking
October 21	Oktoberfest
October 28	Church Work Day
October 29	Confirmation Sunday
November 11	All Church/ALPHA Retreat

Dates

July Birthdays

3 — Kara Robinett
4 — Vicki Marhenki
6 — Art Bartell, Adam Daniel
8 — Micah Carlson
9 — Ellen Bates
13 — Nick Wilhelm
16 — Alison Aldrich
17 — Richard Bowerman, Phyllis
Gobrogge
18 — Ava Aldrich

July Birthdays Cont.

21 — Bonnie Johnston,
Connie Myers
22 — Diane Bowerman,
Marge Norris
24 — Alison Konieczki
26 — Breanna Orwig
27 — Barb Knox
28 — Tyler Wilhelm
31 — Kathy Garrison

July Anniversaries

24 — Ron & Vicki Marhenke

Prayer Requests

Grief: Mildred Kruse, Sue Brown's Mom

Church Members

Evelyn Jungk, The Kaduk Family, Ruby Tuttle, Sue Brown, Joyce Springer, and Kathleen Lutz, our missionary in Kenya

Friends of St. Marks

Betty Deininger (Diann Hines friend's mother) ... Steve Grimes (son-in-law of Jerry & Joyce Springer) ... Tim Holcomb (friend of Rod & Barb Knox) ... Bonnie Danenburg (friend of the Foell's, recovering from heart surgery) ... Nancy Pearl (Mandy Kintz's mother) ... Jake Jacobsen (Mary Heyse's daughter-in-law's father) ... Teri Fritch (friend of Jane Foell & Peggy Badenhop) ... Leonard Hines (Mary Heyse's brother-in-law) ... Diana Raney (Cindy Warstler's sister) ... Mungumio Vine (Kristen Konieczki's sponsored child) ... Judith Berry (Sue Brown's sister) ... Bob Friend (cousin of Marge Norris & Marilyn Myers) ... Rosie Reade (friend of Marilyn Myers)

Shut-ins and Homebound Members

Alden Swenson, Joanne Ruger, Marilyn Imus, Dolores Souder, Thelma Myers, Richard Bowerman, Eleanor Thomas, Joyce Bidlack, Paul Lutz, Betty Saunders, Sandy Muckenfuss, Ella McClellan, Maxine Mason

**Prayer Requests will be kept on this list for two months, unless otherwise requested. If you would like to add a new request or update us on the status of a person currently on the list, please contact Kathy Fribley in the office.*

ANNOUNCEMENTS

KeyCards

The new entry system for the church is complete. The church will now be locked at all times unless a worship service, funeral or wedding is occurring. People will have to buzz in with the office or have a key card to gain access. Physical keys will no longer work and could hurt the doors, so please do not use them. If you did not get a card yet and you have a volunteer role in the church that requires you to access the church outside of office hours, contact the church office. If you have a key card, please note that it is critical that you do not lend these out or share them with anyone, including a spouse.

Bulletin Changes

We made some big changes to our bulletins last month. Given that the majority of people use the screen to follow the service and that very, very few are taking bulletins home with announcements in them, we are changing how we do things both to be more effective, but also to save money on printing and paper, better helping us meet our budget.

Each week, everyone will receive from the ushers an announcement sheet with a space for sermon notes. This will contain the information everyone needs to know and see and you will be strongly urged to take this home with you. A second document, of which there will be a limited number will contain the order of service for the day. The ushers will then ask each couple/family if they *need* a bulletin to follow service and if so, one will be given to them until we run out. The number of order of service bulletins available will be higher to start as we get used to this system, but will reduce to be closer to the actual number needed after a few weeks. Change, even small change, is not easy, but we know that we are a church focused on the things that matter most while trying to be thoughtful and effective in the small things. Thank you in advance for your flexibility and understanding.

5pm Gathering

The 5pm Gathering is off to a great start! This is our new Modern Worship Experience. All are welcome to attend. Our hope is to reach the unchurched, those who do not know Jesus and to better reach those we are currently not reaching. Even though that is the case, people of all ages may enjoy the service, while others may find that our Sunday morning service is more fitting for them. Please pray for this new ministry, consider serving and invite those without a church home to join us on Sunday nights! If you are interested in serving, please contact Jon Hunter at the church office or Jon@stmarksauburn.org. If you have general questions about the service see Marcus, Dan or Jon.

Blood Drive

St. Mark's will once again have a Blood Drive on July 11 from 10:30am to 7:00pm. More information will be in Kraus Korner.

5pm Gathering Sermon Series

This summer at the 5pm Gathering we will be preaching through the Gospel of John. Join us and bring an unchurched or non-believing friend!

Service Project

In July we will do condiments: mustard, catsup, salad dressings, BBQ sauce, pickles, relish, salt, pepper, and other seasonings.

Vacation Bible School: Mountains

Vacation Bible School starts on Sunday, July 16 — Wednesday, July 19 from 6pm to 8pm — and we are wondering if you would like to help. We are looking for people to help volunteer to teach, to help with crafts, to help with games, to help with food, and we're always looking for people to help invite the kids in their lives to come! Sign Ups are in Kraus Korner, as well as post cards to pass out to friends!

Wednesday Morning Prayer

We have a simple prayer service in the chapel every Wednesday from 8:30-9am. We hope you can join us and spread the word!

Chapel Use

The chapel is now open for private prayer, reflection, and time with God during church office hours. You may also use it anytime the church building is open. Anyone in the community is welcome to use this space as well. We have a time for drop in prayer and communion open for the community every Wednesday from 8-8:30am.

Visit from Kathleen Lutz

Kathleen Lutz, St. Mark's Member and Missionary in Kenya will be with us in worship the morning of July 9. She will join us for worship and coffee time and then will share a presentation and update on her work and ministry downstairs in the Fireplace Room after coffee time. Please plan on joining us for worship and staying to hear from Kathleen!

Lawn Mowing

The schedule for the mowing season is in Kraus Korner. Please sign-up for a time that works for you.

Weekly Bible Studies

Pastor's Bible Study

Pastor's Bible Study continues every Thursday at 10:00 a.m. Bring your Bible and join us!

Sunday Morning Adult Bible Study

We will be taking a break in July and August and will start a new class/topic in September.

Celebrate Recovery

St. Mark's has partnered with Celebrate Recovery--a place for people walking through hurts, hang-ups, and habits--at the Cupbearer Cafe. There is a community meal at 5:30 p.m. every Thursday with the Celebrate Recovery large group meeting at 6:30 p.m. If you would like more information about CR or are interested in attending, please see a pastor.

Weekly Flowers

If you do not want to keep your weekly flowers, Linda, the Preschool Director, would be glad to take them.

Did you Know?

As a part of their work and their meetings, the Council is always reading a book about ministry, the church or leadership. Each month the council discusses an assigned portion of the book they are reading and its application to our church. It is a wonderful practice and a significant commitment. If you ever want to see, borrow or have a copy of the book the council is reading, contact Pastor Marcus. If we do not have an extra copy free, we are sure a Council member will loan you their copy when they are done. The book the Council is reading for the rest of the year is *Growing Young* by Kara Powell.

Kenya Mission Trip

Plans are underway for our mission trip to Kenya in 2018. The trip will be open to a limited number of people, will be roughly 10 days in length and occur sometime mid-February to mid March. More information will be available at the beginning of August and information meetings will be held. We will be working with our missionary in Kenya, Kathleen Lutz and her various ministry connections in Kenya for this mission trip. We have received a grant from the Lutheran Foundation to assist in funding this trip! If you have questions, please email the church office.

Strategic Plan Update

Our 2017-2021 Strategic Plan is complete. To get a print or electronic copy of either the full strategic plan or the summary version, contact the church office. In case you have missed information on our Strategic Plan or did not make our Annual Meeting, we wanted to share our big, long-term specific vision for St. Mark's with you. Our specific vision is to be a church that revitalizes churches in Northeast Indiana. We want to work with and lead churches to vitality and health. The goal is to help churches be revitalized spiritually and in mission and vision. We want to equip, train, and educate

current and future leaders of churches that are in need of and desire revitalization in Jesus Christ, helping all churches become New Testament churches in our society today.

Mark VanderTuig

Mark VanderTuig, National Coordinator for the LCMC (Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ) of which we are a part is coming to St. Mark's in September! Mark is the head of the LCMC and a great leader and pastor. Mark will be leading a seminar on September 9 called 'Gratitude, Cornerstone of Generosity' and we hope you will all join us. He will also be preaching in service on September 10. This will also be the start of our 40 days of prayer together as a congregation.

Sunday Morning Sermon Series

Our summer Sprint through the Bible series runs through Labor Day. If you have to miss a Sunday, you can always watch or listen online to the sermon or request a DVD of the service from the church office.

Grief Share

The next 13-week Grief Share cycle will begin on Sunday, August 6th. The weekly sessions will be from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m. at the Auburn Methodist Church. Another resource that might be helpful is, www.griefshare.org.

Faith in Action

We have set the date for Faith in Action 2017! Sunday, September 17 will be our Faith in Action Sunday. We will have an early, short service and then go out and serve. We will be partnering with the Methodist Church again as well as inviting other churches to join us. Stay tuned for more information. We will need lots of help, so please let Pastor Dan or Ken & Mary Heyse know if you can help.

Opportunities to Serve

Prayer Team:

We are looking for additional members to join our prayer team. Prayer team members are scheduled to staff our prayer stations during

communion. Training is provided. Please let Pastor Marcus or the church office know if you are interested.

Property Team:

We are looking for a couple more members of our property team. Our property team works to maintain our building and property, helps make recommendations for improvements and works with the staff and the council to continue to sustain and improve our building. If you are interested in the property team, let the church office know.

Israel 2018

Plans are underway for our next trip to the Holy Land. This is an amazing and powerful trip where we get to walk in the footsteps of Jesus and see the historical and Biblical sites. This is a powerful and meaningful trip, one every Christian should take in their lifetime. The trip is planned for October 16-25, 2018, with an optional extension to Jordan October 25-28, 2018. The flyers are now available in Kraus Corner. Please see Pastor Marcus with questions.

New Initiative from the North American Lutheran Church (NALC):

Holy Families! is an initiative of the North American Lutheran Church provided through a generous grant from the Thrivent Foundation, in honor of the 500th anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation. Produced by Sola Publishing, this special initiative will include a number of Lutheran discipleship resources for families and congregations. Pastor Marcus was honored to be asked to be a part of this initiative and he and Jessica even filmed the video study for parents. Visit www.holyfamilytime.com to learn more.

Building Projects Update

We have recently completed a wide variety of projects made possible by grants and special gifts to the building fund, funding our future and other gifts without any impact on our operating fund and budget. We enlarged the preschool into one large classroom instead of three smaller rooms. We were able to repaint, redo

and carpet the chapel making it more usable for a variety of gatherings and events. We are also able to carpet the fireplace room and preschool. We have installed a new entry system for added security for our preschool and staff that also makes the building more accessible in a secure way. Finally, we are coming to the end of our multi-year work to improve the video and sound systems in the church. Other than one small project, the remaining small projects should be completed by the end of July.

Focus on Prayer

Perhaps our most consistent learning over the past couple years as we have hosted and gone to seminars, worked with other leaders and consultants and participated in immersion experiences is a need to have a great emphasis as individuals and as a church on prayer. This may seem simple or obvious, but it is in fact far more important and profound than we realized. We simply do not pray intentionally enough for our church and our community. We encourage you to continue to pray for St. Mark's and have invited everyone to pray for our church at least 5 minutes a day. We also invite you to take advantage of our prayer stations each Sunday. Please feel free to use the chapel for prayer anytime the church building is open. We have a time for drop in prayer and communion open for the community every Wednesday from 8-8:30am. We have a simple prayer service in the chapel every Wednesday from 8:30-9am as well. Finally, we will have a 40 days of prayer focus starting September 10.

Christmas 2017

This year we have one of those rare occurrences where Christmas Eve falls on a Sunday! After surveying the staff, the worship and music team, the council and random ministry leaders and church members, we have decided the schedule for our worship gatherings for Christmas Eve 2017. Please note that this decision applies only to 2017, as we will revisit it again for 2018. For Christmas Eve, we will have two evening services, one at 5pm which will be a Modern Worship Gathering and then a Traditional Worship Gathering with candles at

7pm. There will be no morning service or late night service this year.

Upcoming Sunday Morning Sermon Series

We encourage you to read the passage for each week the Thursday, Friday, and Saturday before worship and the Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday after worship as a way to further prepare for, reflect on, and listen to God as we look to the Bible together.

Sprint Through the Bible

- July 2 — Minor Proph: Zephaniah: Don't Settle [Zephaniah 1:1-18]

 - July 9 — Minor Proph: Haggai: Power [Haggai 2:1-9]

 - July 16 — Minor Proph: Zechariah: Believe [Zechariah 9:9-12]

 - July 23 — Minor Proph: Malachi: Light [Malachi 3:1-4]

 - July 30 — Epistles: 1 Peter: Soon [1 Peter 3:18-20]

 - Aug. 6 — Epistles: 2 Peter: Rescue [2 Peter 1:16-21]
-

Faith Forums

This fall we will be hosting three different faith forums on Sunday mornings after church (from about 11am-noon). Faith Forums are special educational opportunities for the congregation to learn about specific topic or experience and they have been very meaningful in the past. This years schedule of Faith Forums is:

- Sunday August 27: Presentation from the people who went on the Reformation Tour in Germany & Italy
 - Sunday October 1: Presentation from those who attended our immersion trips to Arkansas & England
 - Sunday November 5: Presentation from Pastor Marcus on his Mission to Nepal & Bangladesh
-

Have you Considered?

We want to remind you that we offer electronic giving as a way to automate your regular weekly offering. Electronic giving offers convenience for individual congregation members and provides much-needed donation consistency for our congregation. Direct Debit Giving is used to automatically transfer funds from your checking or savings account to the church's bank account. Credit & Debit Card Giving allows you to make offerings automatically on a pre-determined schedule using a credit or debit card (for a fee to the church, which you can elect to offset).

Online Giving allows you to go to stmarksauburn.org at any time to set up an automatic donation plan, change your donation plan, make a one-time donation or view your online donation history. As you contemplate future contributions, please consider electronic giving. Authorization forms and additional information are available from the church office.



The July Challenge

[Each month we announce a challenge for the entire church congregation! The challenge is in the newsletter, there are copies in Kraus Korner, and it is posted on the Facebook page. Some months the challenges will be intense. Some months the challenge will be a simple act; we hope you'll join us. Here is June's challenge.]

July's challenge: To write down and record your God Moments

In the 5pm Gatherings we spend a few moments each week asking for people to share "God Moments." God moments are the times each day where we recognize that God is working in our lives. We believe that God is always working in our lives, even though much of the time we are unaware that he is, and God moments are when we are aware of his work. Sometimes, a God moment is a big thing that has happened, other times they are something small and insignificant.

For the month of July, we'd love you to, each day, keep track of God moments. Perhaps on your calendar, in a notebook, or a separate sheet of paper jot down one God moment for each day. At the end of the month you have 31 God moments, reminding you of how God is working in your life!

Worship Assistant Schedule July 2, 2017 - August 13, 2017

	July 2	July 9	July 16	July 23	July 30	August 6	August 13
Preaching	Jon Hunter	Pastor Marcus	Pastor Dan	Pastor Marcus	Pastor Marcus	Pastor Marcus	Pastor Dan
Assist. Minister	Rod Knox	Pastor Dan	Dave Hines	John Foell	Mason Reese	Jane Foell	Diann Hines
Children's Time	Kristen	Jon Hunter	Pastor Dan	Pastor Marcus	Rod Knox	Jon Hunter	Pastor Dan
Call to worship	Kristen	N/A	Pastor Marcus	N/A	Pastor Dan	Jon Hunter	N/A
Acolyte	Riann M.	Abby C.	Alex K.	Micah Carlson	Ashlyn Reese	Morgann Leslie	Camden Kuntz
Lector	Jayne M.	Marilyn M.	Sue Brown	Jane Foell	Marge Norris	John Foell	Bill Hathaway
Communion Asst.	Connie M., Janice T.	Marge N., Barry Trenary	Peggy B., Diann H.	Rod K., Glenn M.	Connie M. & Peggy B.	Barry Trenary, Marge Norris	Connie M., Janice T.
Ushers	Jerry, Rex, Dave & Jayne M.	Jerry, Rex, Tina M., Glenn M.	Jerry, Rex, Tony K., Russ H.	Jerry, Rex & Vicki B., Janice T.	Jerry, Art B., Jeff R., Stan B.	Jerry, Carolyn O., Dave & Jayne M.	Jerry, Rex, Rod K., Art B.
Greeters	Don & Connie Myers	Trenary	Ken & Mary Heyse	Nila & Mary Lee Muzzillo	Bozarth	Hathaway	Linda W., Tina M.
Nursery	Cindy Warstler	Linda W. & Kaitlyn	Carol R., Jessica	Mandy Miller	Jessica & Judy B.	Alison Aldrich	Jessica & Kaitlyn
Sunday School	N/A				Cindy R. & Helper		
Tech	Barry, Alex K.	Micah, Justin A.	Barry, Connie M.	Barry, Alex K.	Jarrett R., Micah	Justin A., Connie M.	Barry, Micah
Coffee	Tina M.						
Altar	Judy Bozarth	Judy Bozarth	Judy Bozarth	Judy Bozarth	Judy Bozarth	Judy Bozarth	Judy Bozarth
Prayer Team	Sue B., Brian M.	Esther, Jon	Jessica, Pastor Marcus	Sue B., Brian M.	Cindy R., Pastor Dan	Jessica Carlson, Jon Hunter	Brian M., Jayne M.

Why do we???....

This is the eighth in a series of articles we will publish in our newsletter every other month or so. It is an opportunity to look at the 'why' of what we do.

Why do we???. Have a Newsletter?

This is a question we as a staff have been asking ourselves a lot lately. Each month the pastors, staff and volunteers take a significant amount of time to put together a monthly newsletter for the congregation of St. Mark's. It is an important task and one we take seriously. We hope you take the 10-15 minutes a month it takes to read it. We find that it answers 90% of the questions and concerns that we are asked. Please be sure to read it each month! Why do we have a newsletter anyway, you ask?

Communication is important. Our church, like all churches is a family. Communication is key in any relationship, organization or family. Our hope is that we over communicate most things without overwhelming the congregation and those who call St. Mark's home. If we do not communicate enough, we run into problems such as people missing things, having questions, worrying or making assumptions. If we give too much information, people get overwhelmed and stop paying attention bringing us back to the same problems that come from not communicating!

Transparency matters. Transparency is important. We try to be as transparent as possible and make sure that there are few significant surprises here at St. Mark's. While we must keep confidentiality in certain things, such as who gives what and personal pastoral care matters, in all other things we want to readily share key information with you, without overwhelming the congregation with information. Its a tightrope, but one that matters. We want you to know what is going on!

There is a lot going on. While we are not a program driven church, we are a church on the move. We are a church with a clear mission and vision and there is a lot going on at St. Mark's. As a result we need to make sure to let you know what has happened, is happening and what is coming up so that you know, do not miss anything and have the opportunity to share with others.

Information is power. Information is power. Knowledge is power. The more we know about our church, ministry and church family, the more we can do for the Kingdom of God. The more we know, the more we can do to serve one another and the community around us.

We need to share. What is shared in the newsletter (and other sources) and what happens here at St. Mark's is not just for members, the congregation and those who call St. Mark's home. The vast majority of what we do and who we are is for anyone and everyone. We use the newsletter to share information with you so that you can share it with others, giving you easy opportunities to minister to those you know and help them connect to God and a church family.

A special thanks to all who make the newsletter possible each month. A greater thanks to all you who take the time to read it each month and share the information in it with others. We are thankful for our church family!

Our construction is complete! We have started moving furniture back into our classroom! We are so thankful for our larger learning space and can't wait to fill it with children! Over the next two months we will continue to set-up our environment. If you have a chance stop down and take a look at our progress, as we get ready for the first day of the new school year in August!



Events

Registration for the 2017-2018 school year is now open.

If you know of any families that might be looking for a preschool please have them call the office at 260-925-3882 or contact Linda at linda@stmarksauburn.org to schedule a tour.

Help Needed

The Preschool is always looking for items for our practical life shelves. Most of the items we use in this area can be found at garage sales or Good Will. If you would be interested in helping with some of these items we would truly appreciate the donations.

Items Needed: Baskets (all sizes), Trays (plastic or wood), small glass bowls, pitchers, vases, cups, unique small spoons, ladles, tongs, wooden puzzles, blocks, legos.

We Are All Ambassadors for Christ

“What do we pay the pastor for?” This is a question sometimes heard in U.S. congregations—and not just Lutheran, but all denominations. Often we carry out the ministry of the church much like a professional sports team ... a few people do the work while most of us sit and watch. But there is change going on, and some would call it a new paradigm but in fact it is old—about 2,000 years old. The apostle Paul talks about it in 2 Corinthians 5 as the “*ministry of reconciliation,*” and that we are each “*Ambassadors for Christ.*”

A fundamental part of the role of a pastor is to train and equip God’s people for the work of ministry (see Ephesians 3: 11-13.) Many of us who went to seminary were never taught how to “*train and equip*” and to be honest, it is easier just to do it ourselves. But in so doing we keep called and gifted people from carrying out what the Lord of the church has put in their heart, mind and spirit to do—the work of ministry. Much of the teaching and talking about discipleship addresses this very thing. What could happen in our congregations if every person in the pew knew to what God had called them, and the church had trained and equipped them? What could happen if all members of every congregation had been sent out into their daily lives as ministers of the Gospel?

This is a very different way of thinking about the work of a pastor and the calling of our people into ministry. This “*priesthood of all believers*” has been fundamental to the formation of LCMC from the beginning. I believe we knew something had to change; we needed to encourage every person in our congregations to hear the call of their baptism, the call to follow Jesus into their everyday lives. We saw that the front line of ministry was not the association or its staff, but the pastors and people of our congregations. The days of people sitting in the pew watching the pastors and leaders do the work are over. It is time for the whole church to hear the call to “*pick up your cross and follow me.*”

How does this paradigm once again take hold in the church? It is the work of the Holy Spirit, moving through the hearts and minds of God’s people. It is the work of the Holy Spirit to inspire, encourage, transform and renew the passion for the Gospel of Jesus that sets people free. It is the Spirit of the Living God who will create another reformation of the church that remembers the Reformation!

[Article by Mark Vander Tuig, Service Coordinator of the LCMC]

St. Mark's Financial Update

Due to timing of bank statements, reconciliation and council meeting schedules, we will always be presenting information from the end of the month occurring two months before the date of the newsletter.

Operating Fund Snapshot

General Fund/Budget/Operating Fund

The Operating Fund is our yearly budget. This is also called the general fund. This is what Pastor Dan likes to describe as the 'regular' income and expenses of the church. The Operating Fund covers those things that occur on a regular basis such as compensation for Pastor Marcus, Pastor Dan, Kathy and Laura and things such as utilities, insurance and other regular expenses for our staff, building and ministries. This is different from the special (restricted/designated accounts) that cover new initiatives and one-time or special expenses.

<i>Through May 31, 2017</i>	Income	Expense	Net
			<i>Operating Fund Reserve Remaining: \$15,722.56</i>
Budget	\$102,083.33	\$108,661.02	-\$6,577.69
Actual	\$93,140.55	\$104,297.15	-\$11,147.60
Difference	-\$8,942.78	\$4,363.87	<u> </u>

July Finance Note

May was our weakest month of giving so far. While this is not unusual, it is something to be aware of. While our assets and special funds are strong, our Operating Fund is struggling. While we projected a negative budget for this year, it is current worse than anticipated. So far, our expenses are slightly less than budgeted, but our income is significantly less that expected. There is good news however. If those who are not currently meeting their pledge were to meet their pledge, not only would we meet our budget projection, we would be in the black. In order to continue to have two Pastors for our wonderful congregation for years to come, it is critical that we meet the regular expenses of our Operating Fund.

Financial Picture

Through May 31, 2017

Assets

<i>Total of all Accounts</i>	<i>\$489,134.80</i>
 <u>Special Funds (Restricted/Designated Accounts)</u>	
Building Fund	\$5,032.91
Memorial Fund	\$10,180.09
Youth Group	\$7,034.53
Funding Our Future (\$83,000 earmarked)	\$87,863.79
Preschool	\$43,944.88
Grants	\$8,912.74
Endowment Fund (investment held at Lutheran Foundation)	\$180,911.78
Funding Our Future Reserve (investment held at Lutheran Foundation)	\$106,499.91
Other Restricted Designated Accounts	\$20,496.81
<i>Total Restricted/Designated Accounts</i>	<i>\$470,877.44</i>
 <i>Operating Fund Reserves</i>	 <i>\$15,722.56</i>
Bills to be Paid/Accounts Payable	\$2,534.80
 Total	 \$0

JULY 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
25 9:30 AM Worship Service with Communion 3:30 PM Modern Worship Practice 5:00 PM Spm Gathering (Modern Worship)	26 Pastor Dan's Day Off	27	28 8:00 AM Open Prayer & Communion 8:30 AM Prayer Gathering 5:30 PM Modern Worship Practice	29 5:30 PM Celebrate Recovery	30 Pastor Marcus' Day Off	1
2 9:30 AM Worship Service with Communion 3:30 PM Modern Worship Practice 5:00 PM Spm Gathering (Modern Worship)	3 Pastor Dan's Day Off	4 Church Office Closed Independence Day	5 8:00 AM Open Prayer & Communion 8:30 AM Prayer Gathering 9:30 AM Pastors & Kathy Meeting 5:30 PM Modern Worship Practice	6 10:00 AM Pastor's Bible Study 5:30 PM Celebrate Recovery	7 Pastor Marcus' Day Off	8
9 9:30 AM Worship Service with Communion 3:30 PM Modern Worship Practice 5:00 PM Spm Gathering (Modern Worship)	10 Pastor Dan's Day Off	11 10:30 AM Blood Drive	12 8:00 AM Open Prayer & Communion 8:30 AM Prayer Gathering 9:30 AM Pastors Meeting 5:30 PM Modern Worship Practice	13 10:00 AM Pastor's Bible Study 5:30 PM Celebrate Recovery 6:00 PM Auburn Community Band Practice	14 Pastor Marcus' Day Off	15
16 9:30 AM Worship Service with Communion 3:30 PM Modern Worship Practice 5:00 PM Spm Gathering (Modern Worship) 6:00 PM Vacation Bible School	17 Pastor Dan's Day Off 6:00 PM Vacation Bible School	18 6:00 PM Vacation Bible School	19 8:00 AM Open Prayer & Communion 8:30 AM Prayer Gathering 9:00 AM All Staff Meeting 9:30 AM Pastors Meeting 12:00 PM Genealogy Group 12:30 PM Senior's Lunch 5:30 PM Modern Worship Practice 6:00 PM Vacation Bible School	20 10:00 AM Pastor's Bible Study 5:30 PM Celebrate Recovery	21 Pastor Marcus' Day Off	22
23 9:30 AM Worship Service with Communion 3:30 PM Modern Worship Practice 5:00 PM Spm Gathering (Modern Worship)	24 Pastor Dan's Day Off	25	26 8:00 AM Open Prayer & Communion 8:30 AM Prayer Gathering 9:30 AM Pastors Meeting 4:30 PM Preschool Board Meeting 5:30 PM Modern Worship Practice	27 10:00 AM Pastor's Bible Study 5:30 PM Celebrate Recovery	28 Pastor Marcus' Day Off	29
30 9:30 AM Worship Service with Communion 11:30 AM Immersion Team Gathering 3:30 PM Modern Worship Practice 5:00 PM Spm Gathering (Modern Worship)	31 Pastor Dan's Day Off	1	2 8:00 AM Open Prayer & Communion 8:30 AM Prayer Gathering 9:30 AM Pastors & Kathy Meeting 5:30 PM Modern Worship Practice	3 10:00 AM Pastor's Bible Study 5:30 PM Celebrate Recovery 6:00 PM Church Council Meeting & Dinner, host TBD	4 Pastor Marcus' Day Off	5

Hello from Kenya! I am Missionary Kathleen Lutz of St. Marks serving in Kenya. I appreciate your support to my mission work as I continue working with Heart to Heart in Nairobi helping orphans to have schooling, providing training for HIV and AIDS support groups and food for children in the slum areas. When you have little food or shelter, food is more urgent than a book. So, I am working to provide the poor with Bibles, developing Bible study groups and equipping people to do Bible studies. Together we offer food for the hungry and the Word of Jesus as the Bread of Life.

World Mission Prayer League, a Lutheran organization of about 100 mission workers, has over 6,000 praying members devoted to prayer. We pray for God's mission to a world in need. (See wmpl.org) I invite you to become a prayer partner in my mission. Please pray for my mission work, Bibles, materials for teaching and funds for transportation as I travel to reach more people. I've been invited to teach Bible among the Maasai tribe near Narok, a days journey into the bush. My mission funds are running low and I need help to continue. Just as the early disciples needed partners in the early Christian church so too, missionaries today need partners in spreading the Word. Pray with me for God's help for provisions in order for His mission to spread and grow in sharing the Good News... News that is much needed in todays difficult world.

If you would like to receive my mission newsletters just send me an email to kathleenmlutz@yahoo.com

With prayer support, you may also send tax deductible contributions to:



World Mission Prayer League
232 Clifton Ave.
Minneapolis, MN 55403

with a note: LUTZ Ministry Fund OR go to wmpl.org and see "gifts" to contribute online for: LUTZ Ministry Fund. If you are able to help with my much needed living expenses in Kenya, note: LUTZ Support Funds.

Prayers and support are truly appreciated!

In Christ's service with you,
Kathleen

(Kathleen after meeting with a Maasai community.)

ST. MARK'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

211 West Ninth Street

Auburn, IN 46706

Web Page: www.stmarksauburn.org

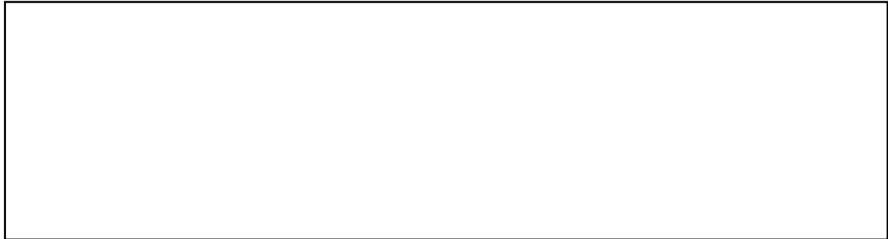
Pastor Marcus: pastormarcus@stmarksauburn.org

Pastor Dan: pastordan@stmarksauburn.org

E-mail: office@stmarksauburn.org

US POSTAGE PAID
Permit #20
Non-Profit Organization

Return Service Requested



St. Mark's
— LUTHERAN CHURCH —

**Building Relationships
Transforming Lives**

St. Mark's Messenger is published monthly by St. Mark's Lutheran Church

The Rev. Dr. Marcus J. Carlson	Senior Pastor
Rev. Dan Bellinger	Family & Outreach Pastor
Jon Hunter	Pastoral Intern
Laura Deckard	Director of Music
Kathy Fribley	Church Secretary
Linda Vandemark	Preschool Director

Our Mission: To bring about transformation in individuals, families, our community, and the world through Jesus Christ