
ST. MARK'S MESSENGER

VOLUME 21 ISSUE 9 • SEPTEMBER 2017

Pastor Dan's Article

[*Jeremiah 1:1 The words of Jeremiah son of Hilkiyah, one of the priests at Anathoth in the territory of Benjamin.*]

So the book of Jeremiah the prophet begins with the information that Jeremiah was from the line of priests that lived in Anathoth, in Benjamin. When books start like this I get really excited, because I have so many questions! It gives us a picture of who Jeremiah the prophet is, but to understand we have to dig around to find out whether Hilkiyah and Anathoth actually mean anything.

When Yahweh gave the people the land of Canaan, several cities (and the nearby fields) were set aside for the Levites to live in. If you remember, the Levites were the worship leaders of Israel. The priests in Yahweh's temple were from one clan of the Levites, and the rest of the tribe performed all kinds of religious duties (singing and/or playing music in the temple, being guards, carrying items for worship). So Jeremiah, the son of a priest, lived in a Levitical town called Anathoth.

Anathoth had a particular history as David's first priest, Abiathar, was from there. He had been a friend and supporter of David even before he was King. Yet, after David died, he was exiled by Solomon when he came to power. Instead, Solomon wanted a priest who was more of a political insider. So Jeremiah's hometown was a quiet place outside the flow of the power brokers in Jerusalem.

The Levites were called to be different from the rest of the people, because they had a job to do. They were tasked with remembering what it meant to be an Israelite; their duty was to be a sacred measuring stick. If they failed to do their job, Israel as an entire nation would be in danger of forgetting that they were Yahweh's special people. So this was a very important job indeed. In fact, we find that at one point in time, the people had lost the temple scroll, and were without the words of the LORD...which is absolutely mind blowing to think about... and it was Jeremiah's father who found them.

Perhaps we shouldn't be surprised that a prophet would come from people who are tasked with remembering the people's story, that's the starting point for a good prophet. Prophecy isn't about future casting; it's about calling people to remember their story. Jeremiah did it in creative ways: Jeremiah wore dirty underwear, wore a cattle yoke on his shoulder. Growing up in a community like Anathoth could only have been a powerful launching pad for Jeremiah's ministry.

It's easy to forget your story. This was why there was a big need for the prophets. The people were forgetful, and God continued to call out to them. He continued to utilize the people who had the memory.

One of the most tragic scenes in the whole Biblical account is in Judges 19-21. We see a Levite traveling around the countryside with a concubine (*Hopefully reading that sentence will cause you to ask why a worship leader has a concubine*). When he is attacked, he offers this young woman up to the hoard coming after him, and she is abused so badly that she dies that night. As a result, the whole nation starts a Civil War that almost destroys the tribe of Benjamin. A massive loss of life, all because one of the people responsible to remember God's story, failed to remember, and lived out another story.

This is where it comes to us at St. Mark's. We've been called to constantly remind ourselves of our story, to constantly return to the story. We have the holy duty and sacred task of bearing this story and living it out in our homes, workplaces, and community. If we don't, what will happen to those places? Perhaps the problems that we're seeing in our society and world are the fact that the American church has failed miserably at remembering our story.

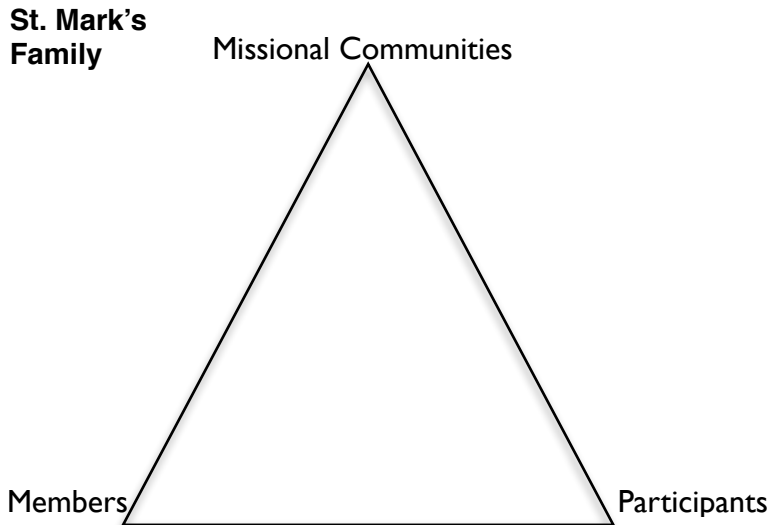
My hope and prayer is that our church would be a place like Anathoth. A place where we foster a memory for God's story. And that we would live out that story wherever we go!

Grace + Peace,
Dan Bellinger

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.



Service 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 service. For many years, like most other churches in our country, we have not done a good job at serving the community and world around us. Those days are over. As a church we have identified three areas of focus for our service, consistent with the life of Jesus and and the Scriptures. The first is reaching *in* to those who are seen as the 'least of these' in our church, community & world. The second is to reach *up* to those who are often seen as the last to be considered in our culture. Finally, we reach *out* to those who are lost and do not know Jesus.

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 *apprentice and equip*.

Least: those who are seen as having little value to a culture and society.

Last: those people in our culture who are often missed and the last on our minds. Their inabilities, personalities, awkwardness or even life choices may have put them in this category for us.

Lost: those who do not know Jesus or have completely walked away from Jesus.

Prodigal: Someone who has left a church or is protesting church or faith for various reasons.

Prayer of the Month:

A simple prayer for our 40 days of prayer as you pray for St. Mark's and our community: God, help St. Mark's to live in your will. Help us to reach the least, last and lost. Help us to care for those in our church family and minister to the prodigals around us. Help us to show the love of Jesus to everyone we encounter and help bring about the Kingdom of God to St. Mark's, Auburn, DeKalb County and the world.

Culture Question of the Month:

As you pray for St. Mark's this month, consider the prayers of Jesus in the Gospels. What would the prayers of Jesus be for St. Mark's?

Save The Date

September 9, 9am-2pm	Gratitude, Cornerstone of Generosity Seminar w/ Mark VanderTuig, head of the LCMC Council Retreat
September 10	Mark VanderTuig, head of the LCMC preaching
September 10-October 20	40 Days of Prayer
September 17	Faith in Action Sunday
September 18-Dec 4	ALPHA
September 25-30	Fair Parking
October 1	Faith Forum: Immersion Experiences
October 21	Oktoberfest
October 28	Church Work Day
October 29	Confirmation Sunday
November 5	Faith Forum: Pastor's mission to Nepal & Bangladesh
November 8	SpeakUp: A Conference on the Church & Mental Health
November 11	All Church/ALPHA Retreat
November 19	My First Bible class
December 3	Annual Congregational Meeting
December 16 4:00-10:00pm	Carlson Family Christmas Open House

YMCA Partnership

As many people know, we were approached by the DeKalb County YMCA to see if we would like to partner with them in running Alpha there. This process started the conversation about St. Mark's becoming a church partner with the YMCA!

By their own research, the YMCA believes that only half of their 9,000 members are connected to a local church. Since the organization is committed to reach unchurched people with the life-changing hope that is found in Jesus Christ, they want to find ways to help connect their people to the local church. This is the purpose of the The YMCA Church Partnership Program.

We have joined this partnership, because we want St. Mark's to think about the YMCA as our own local mission field. If you are a member there, we would love for you to be intentional with your time there. Specifically, we would love for you to do two things while you're there. First, to commit to pray regularly for the people who go to the Y who don't know Jesus. Second, let's commit to see your time there as a place to reach people for the Kingdom.

If you are a member and are wondering if there are ways for you to be more intentional about this, please see one of the pastors.

Mark Your Calendars! It's not too early to save the date for the annual Carlson Family Christmas Open House. This year it will be December 16 from 4:00pm to 10:00pm.

Dates

September Birthdays

5 — Norma Yoder
10 — Kristen Konieczki
11 — Linda Wolff
15 — Nila Muzzillo
19 — Linda Wolf
23 — Jill Kaduk

Sept. Birthdays Cont.

26 — Sue Brown
27 — Tony Konieczki
29 — Kevin O'Malley
30 — Jackie Robinett

September Anniversaries

20 — David & Cheryl Treckman
21 — Greg & Linda Wolf

Prayer Requests

Passed Away in August: Thelma Myers (Larry & Cheryl Myers mom)

Church Members

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

Friends of St. Marks

Randy Young (member of our community) ... Mike Buchs (son of friend of Nila Muzzillo) ... Gerry Nagel (Konieczki family) ... Steve Dwyer, Bun Mettert, Katlyn Kucharik (friends of Mary Heyse) ... Gladys Girado (Barry Trenary's cousin) ... Karen Ackelbargar (Bonnie Trenary's cousin) ... Betty Deininger (Diann Hines friend's mother) ... Bonnie Danenburg (friend of the Foell's, recovering from heart surgery) ... Nancy Pearl (Mandy Kintz's mother) ... 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, 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

Mark VanderTuig

Mark VanderTuig, National Coordinator for the LCMC (Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ) of which we are a part of 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 from 9am-2pm, called Gratitude, Cornerstone of Generosity and we hope you will all join us. He will also be preaching in services on September 10. This will also be the start of our 40 days of prayer together as a congregation.

40 Days of Prayer

This year we will be joining together as a congregation for 40 days of prayer from September 10-October 20. During this time we are asking everyone in the congregation to take 5-10 minutes to pray each and every day for St. Mark's, its people and ministry as well as offering prayer for our community. Additionally, we are encouraging everyone to use these 40 days of prayer to expand their own prayer life and develop a deeper habit of prayer. Finally, we are encouraging everyone to take time to read a book on prayer during this time each day. The book is *Draw the Circle: the 40 Day Prayer Challenge* by Mark Batterson. You can purchase the book on your own or order it from the office no later than September 6 for \$11. We believe that these 40 days can change your life, our church and the community and we hope that you participate.

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. We need willing workers, helpful hands, and loving hearts in service for Faith in Action Sunday. We also need desserts made for the lunch. There will be a sign-up sheet in Kraus Korner soon.

Fair Parking Is Here!

Our annual fundraiser for our children, youth and family ministry is coming September 25-30! We are looking for all church members to help us with this fundraiser which is also an opportunity to meet and greet people in our community. *We have divided the days into 2-hour slots, and would ask if you would please consider signing up for one or more spots!* The vast majority of activities for our children and youth are funded by this event and we need your help. Watch for the sign up and contact the church office or Pastor Dan with questions!

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:

-Germany & Italy Presentation (complete)

-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

October Faith Forum

Our October Faith Forum will be led by the 7 individuals who have participated in one of our immersion trips to England or Arkansas. The group will be sharing their experiences and learnings and their application to St. Mark's. The group will also be talking a bit about future plans and will launch a new discipleship initiative at St. Mark's. Please be sure to join us!

Service Project

In September we will be collecting any kind of paper project.

Confirmation Fall 2017-Spring 2018

We're getting geared up for Confirmation to start back up again! Confirmation is a 2-year process, and all students, 7th grade and above are welcome to sign up. Classes are on Sundays from 11am until noon, every other week, starting on September 10th. If you are interested in your student signing up for confirmation, please talk with Pastor Dan.

Weekly Flowers

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

Grief Share

This cycle runs thru October 29th. The weekly sessions on Sunday's 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.

Oktoberfest 2017

Our Oktoberfest will be on Saturday October 21 this year at the Moose Lodge as usual. This is a great event with time for fellowship, food, music and a silent auction. If you have silent auction items, please contact the church office or Jessica Carlson. If you can help in any way that day or before from setup to cooking, to clean, ticket sales, silent auction etc. contact Jessica Carlson. Last years proceeds from the Oktoberfest are being used for Mark VanderTuig's visit. The proceeds from this years Oktoberfest will be placed into the account for Faith in Action to ensure we have funds to support future Faith in Action Sundays.

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.

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. We have also added several of the recent books to our church library. 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.

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.

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 and will be roughly 10 days in length. *We have recently adjusted the dates to June 2018 instead of February/March 2018 to allow for more time to plan and prepare.* More information will be available this fall 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. If you have questions, please email the church office.

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

The Sunday Morning Adult Bible Study will begin on Sept. 10 - Dec. 3. We will be using Phillip Yancey Study - The Jesus I Never Knew. Philip Yancey offers a new and different perspective on the life of Christ and his work—his teachings, his miracles, his death and resurrection—and ultimately, who he was and why he came. From the manger in Bethlehem to the cross in Jerusalem, Yancey presents a complex character who generates questions as well as answers; a disturbing and exhilarating Jesus who wants to radically transform your life and stretch your faith. The Jesus I Never Knew uncovers a Jesus who is brilliant, creative, challenging, fearless, compassionate, unpredictable, and ultimately satisfying. "No one who meets Jesus ever stays the same," says Yancey. "Jesus has rocked my own preconceptions and has made me ask hard questions about why those of us who bear his name don't do a better job of following him."

Sept. 10 -The Jesus We Thought We Knew

Sept. 24 -The Beatitudes and Sermon on the Mount

Oct. 8 -The Revolutionary Grace

Oct. 22 -Jesus Miracles

Nov. 12 -Jesus Death and Resurrection

Nov. 19 or Dec. 3 -The Difference Jesus Makes

Come and learn about Jesus! We meet in the Council room after worship. All are welcome! See Diann Hines for a study guides. Cost is \$7

Sunday Morning Sermon Series

On Sunday mornings in September we finish our summer series, have a couple special Sunday mornings and then we begin a two week series on Stewardship. On October 8 we start a three week sermon series on prayer! 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.

5pm Gathering

Our 5pm Gathering is off to a great start even with the challenge of summer attendance and help. We have seen many visitors and new people come, especially younger people. Our average attendance has been good so far, which is great accounting for the summer slump! 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 continue to pray for this new ministry, consider serving and invite those without a church home to join us on Sunday nights!

We certainly covet your prayers and welcome those at St. Mark's to consider serving for this service. It would be a great way to help reach people with little time. There are many needs like tech, prayer team, serving communion, nursery, children's church, music team and much more. 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.

5pm Gathering Sermon Series

Starting after Labor Day, the 5pm Gathering will be in the same sermon series as the morning service, but with a slightly different sermon and usually a different person preaching. Join us and bring an unchurched or non-believing friend!

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!

Building Projects Update

With the exception of a few minor tweaks, all building projects have been completed for 2017. We have made this happen without using a penny of the operating fund, instead utilizing grants, preschool funds, special gifts, funding our future and the building fund to accomplish these goals.

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.

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.

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.

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.

Ever Wonder?

Ever wonder or have questions about the various policies and procedures of St. Mark's? Over the past year we have been collecting all of the various policies and procedures of St. Mark's to ensure that can be found in one place both in print and electronically. If you ever want to see a printed or electronic (uneditable) copy of a policy or procedure, please contact the church office. We are also hoping to add staff job descriptions to this list pending Personnel Team and Council approval.

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.

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 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.

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.

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

- Sept. 3 — Epistles: Jude
[Jude 1:17-25]
 - Sept. 10 — Mark VanderTuig, LCMC Preaching
Who's on First? [Matthew 6:25-34]
 - Sept. 17 — Faith in Action Sunday
Shortened service-Devotion TBD
 - Sept. 24 — Stewardship
TBD [Luke 18:18-30]
 - Oct. 1 — Stewardship
Delivery [1 Corinthians 4:1-5]
-

Mental Health

Mental Health challenges are not uncommon in our culture today and not uncommon amongst those who call St. Mark's home. They vary in name, nature and severity, but they often have a tremendous impact that goes unnoticed. If you remember our testimony series from the past, you know just some of the stories from those in our congregation. The Lutheran Foundation has placed an emphasis on this unmet need not only in Northeast Indiana, but in the churches of the region. A while back, they formed a Mental Health task force made up of pastors, lay people and professionals. Invited to be a part of this team was our own Jessica Carlson. The task force has been working on putting an event together for churches and will host this event on November 8, 2017 from 8:30am-4pm. We are encouraging as many staff, leaders and lay people in our congregation to attend this event as possible. It will be a great event and is an important ministry need. The cost for the event is \$25 and we would be glad to register you for the event and if needed, pay the cost of your registration (not from the Operating Fund). If you have questions or would like to register, please contact the church office. Let's have a strong representation from St. Mark's for this important event with one of our most significant partners in ministry, The Lutheran Foundation.

SpeakUp: A Conference on the Church & Mental Health

Recognizing the growing need in our churches for assistance and guidance in mental and behavioral health, the SpeakUp Conference presented by The Lutheran Foundation, Brotherhood Mutual, and Parkview Health brings together nationally recognized experts and speakers to help equip and inspire pastors, priests and church & lay leaders of all denominations to better serve their congregations, parishes, and communities.

Church Work Day

The Church Work Day will be Saturday, October 28 from 10:00am to 1:00pm. We will have more information later this month.



The Loft Returns

Our Sunday night gathering for 6th-12th grade students, the Loft, will return to normal schedule starting September 10. This year, we will again be meeting every other week, starting directly after the 5pm Gathering. Students are encouraged to attend the 5pm before going upstairs for a meal. If you are a parent of a 6th-12th grader, there is a regular parent's email with Loft information. If you would like to receive the email, let Pastor Dan know and he'll get you on the list!

Loft September Information

Our theme for this fall is "A Real Faith." Our goal is to ask the question, "What does it actually mean to live out being a Christian?" In September we're going to talk about "Too Hard", a couple of chats on when life gets hard. In October, we're going to talk about Friends. In November, we're going to talk about depression and suicide.

We hope that you student can join us after the 5pm Gathering on September 10th and 24th!

The September Challenge

[Each month we will be announcing a challenge for the entire church congregation! We will have the challenge in the newsletter, have copies in Kraus Korner, and will post it in the Facebook page. Here is September's challenge.]

This month the challenge is to re-write Genesis 1 in your own words.

The goal is use your own words and experiences to catch the heart of what this chapter is saying. We would for you to think about how would this poem sound if you were the one describing how God created the world!

We are excited to see your work. On Sunday, Sept 24th we will have a board in Kraus Korner where you can post your thoughts!

Worship Assistant Schedule 9:30 a.m., September 3, 2017-October 15, 2017

	Sept. 3	Sept.10	Sept.17	Sept.24	Oct. 1	Oct. 8	Oct. 15
Preaching	Pastor Marcus	Mark Vander Tuig	Faith In Action	Pastor Dan	Pastor Marcus	Pastor Dan	Jon Hunter
Assist. Minister	Kristen K.	Pastor Dan	N/A	Diann Hines	John Foell	Dave Hines	Brian Moeller
Children's Time	Pastor Marcus	Jon Hunter	N/A	Jon Hunter	Pastor Marcus	Pastor Dan	Pastor Dan
Call to worship	Jon Hunter	N/A	N/A	N/A	Pastor Dan	N/A	Pastor Dan
Acolyte	Camden K.	Abby Carlson	N/A	Morgann L.	Abby Carlson	Tyler W.	Morgann L.
Lector	Mary Heyse	Kathy Garrison	N/A	Jerry Springer	Jane Foell	Mary H.	Barry Trenary
Communion Asst.	Glenn M., Jane F.	Rex & Vicki B.	John & Jane Foell	Rod K., Barry Trenary	Marge N. & Glenn M.	Diann H. & Peggy B.	John & Jane Foell
Ushers	Jerry, Rex & Vicki B., Stan B.	Jerry, Tony K., Janice T., Tina M.	Jeff Reese, Mason Reese	Jerry, Rex, Art B., Carolyn O.	Jerry, Rex, Dave & Jayne M.	Jerry, Rex & Vicki, Tina M.	Jerry, Rex, Russ H., Dave M.
Greeters	Marge N. & Marilyn M.	Cindy W. & John C.	N/A	Carol Reese, Carolyn O.	Foells	Ken & Mary H.	Nila & Mary Lee Muzzillo
Nursery	Cindy Warstler	Jessica & Kaitlyn	N/A	Barb Hoff	Aldrich	Jessica & Kaitlyn	Carol R. & Linda W.
Sunday School	N/A		N/A				
Tech	Barry, Connie M.	Justin A., Barry T.	Jarrett R., Micah C.	Barry, Connie M.	Connie M. & Justin A.	Barry & Justin	Justin A. & Connie M.
Coffee			N/A				
Altar	Barb Knox	Barb Knox	Barb Knox	Barb Knox	Kathy G.	Kathy G.	Kathy G.
Prayer Team	Sue B., Brian M.	Jayne M., Jon H.	N/A	Jayne, Jon	Jessica & Pastor Dan	Brian M. & Sue B.	Esther H. & Jayne M.

Our classroom family has grown to 16 as we welcomed another student to the class this week! These first couple weeks of school have been spent getting to know each other and introducing some of the beautiful materials in the room. Our Wednesday morning Chapel time began this week with Pastor Dan sharing the Godly Play lesson. Since the makeover of our classroom, we now have a Godly Play area. Each Wednesday after Chapel the lesson that is presented will be placed on the shelf in the Godly Play area and the children will be able to continue exploring and learn. We are so excited to be able to have this special area of Faith in our room.



Events

We still have a couple open spots for our school this year. If you know of anyone looking for a preschool please give them our information. There are brochures and post cards that you can give to family, friends or businesses. Make sure you check out our Facebook page and share our posts. This is a great way to help advertise the school.

Help Needed

We have a wish list posted in Krause Korner for cooking supplies. If you would be interested in donating any items off of the list please cross it off and write your name next to the items. You can bring them downstairs and place them on the table in front of our bulletin board. Thank you for everyone's help.

5pm Worship Assistant Schedule September 3, 2017-October 15, 2017

	9/3	9/10	9/17	9/24	10/1	10/8	10/15
Preaching	Pastor Dan	Mark VanderTuig	N/A	Jon H.	Jon H.	Jon H.	Pastor Dan
Emcee	Jon H.	Pastor Dan	N/A	Jon H.	Pastor Marcus	Jon H.	Jon H.
Communion	Jon H.	Jeff R.	N/A	Marilyn M.	Pastor Marcus	Jon H.	Pastor Dan
Prayer Team	Jessica C.	Cindy R.	N/A	Cindy R.	Jessica C.	Cindy R.	Jayne M.
Greeter & Hospitality	Jessica C.	Esther	N/A	Esther	Esther H.	Esther H.	Esther H.
Nursery	Heidi M.	Carol R.	N/A	Heidi M.	Carol R.	Jessica C.	Linda Wolf
Tech	Pastor Marcus & Micah	Mason & Micah	N/A	Micah & Pastor Dan	Pastor Dan & Micah	Micah & Esther H.	Esther H. & Jeff R.

Alpha Update:

Alpha season is approaching! I am excited to announce we will be partnering with the YMCA for our Fall Alpha starting **September 18th**. Each session will be held in the YMCA Chapel in Auburn. We want to create a relaxed environment to invite friends who are not Christians yet to explore faith and life. Alpha will be held on **Monday evenings 6pm-7:30pm from September 18 thru December 4**. The Alpha Retreat will be November 11. Child care is provided by the Y.

There are three things that you can do now that will make this the best Alpha ever:

1. **Pray.** Please begin to pray for the people that you would like to invite. Think about people in your social network. I.E. Friends, work colleagues, family, etc.
2. **Plan.** Put the dates listed below in your in your calendar. It is a commitment, but it is worth it all when a friend comes to know Jesus!
3. **Promote.** Be bold and ask new people to join you in coming to Alpha! Pass on the word to other churches to invite their friends who are not Christians. Share on social media and by word of mouth! Let's invite ALL of Auburn to experience Alpha! Postcard flyers will be coming soon!

*Please only come to Alpha if you are bringing a friend who doesn't know Jesus yet, as it is important to have an even mix of Christians and people outside the church.

For any questions please email me at jon@stmarksauburn.org.

Where Do Our Pastors Come From?

I have been reading some things about the average age of pastors in the church in the U.S. It is not good news. The average age of clergy in the U.S. is 54. Only one in seven pastors is under 40, and half are over 55. The percentage of church leaders 65 and older has nearly tripled in the last 25 years, meaning there are now more pastors in the oldest age bracket than there are leaders younger than 40 (from a study published by Pepperdine University). I do not believe that it is any better in the Lutheran community than anywhere else, and may be worse. But where do pastors come from?

I was asked this question in a workshop: “So, what are you doing about training the next generation of pastors?” My response: “What are you doing?” Where do pastors come from, except out of the mission and ministry of the local church? I remember my home congregation having a fund set aside to send people to the seminary and paying their entire tuition! They celebrated the number of people they had sent. What are we doing about that today?

We have been criticized for not having our own seminary. But why re-invent the wheel when there are a number of great seminaries already doing the work and doing it with integrity, creativity and on-the-job training? On our website you can find the seminaries and pastoral training agencies with whom LCMC has a working relationship. Our Ministry Board meets with the leaders of these seminaries on a regular basis. We are grateful for the 75+ students who are preparing to serve LCMC congregations. But we need to do more.

If you add 10 years to your own life and the life of the congregation of which you are a part, what do you think will happen? All across the U.S., congregations will be searching for pastoral leadership, but the demand will far outstrip the supply. I don't think it is too late—although we are getting close! It is time for us to look around at the people God has called into the congregation, your own members, and ask: “Do any of these people have the gifts for the vocation of ministry? If so, has anyone asked them to consider it? And if there are, is our congregation willing to find a way to support them as they get trained?” Given the creative and faithful use of technology, we can now train people in place—they don't have to move away, leave their jobs and homes, but can begin right now to prepare for the vocation of ministry!

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

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??...

Pledge

We have only done pledges and estimates of giving at St. Mark's four years. It has been helpful for our budget planning and planning our ministries and staffing. It has also been a challenge to get the kind of participation we want and need for more accurate planning. While we understand the resistance to offering a pledge or estimate of giving, it can make it difficult to budget and make decisions. We have seen a challenge in the last two years in coming up with an accurate estimate and/or meeting our Operating Fund needs particularly around staffing. So, why is making a pledge or estimate of giving so important?

It is critical for an accurate budget. Much like your family budget, we have to have a good idea of expenses and income to plan an accurate budget. Also like our family budgets, there is no exact way to plan every penny of income and expense, but if we do not have a budget at all or a budget that is clear and accurate, we could run into trouble. If you aim for nothing, you hit your target every time. Our families need an accurate budget as does our church family.

It is needed to plan the ministries of the church. Ministry costs money. Buildings cost money. Bulletins and newsletters cost money. In order to plan what we can and cannot do we have to have an idea of what we need as well as what we have. That way we can make decisions as to the priorities of the church. Decisions such as staffing, mission support, programs and attending denominational gatherings hinge on having a good idea of our income.

It is critical in determining staffing. The vast majority of our budget is staff compensation: Pastor Marcus, Pastor Dan, Laura and Kathy. We need to have a good idea of what to expect in terms of income to decide the number, level and compensation of our staff. This will be especially important the next two years as the funding assistance for Pastor Dan's position goes away.

It helps us to know how and when to move forward. The decisions that are made to help St. Mark's move forward are decisions that are made prayerfully and practically. We make decisions based on the Scriptures, our mission and vision, the strategic plan and resources. Having an idea of income helps us to know what resources are available outside of special gifts and grants to help us move forward and implement our mission and vision using the strategic plan.

There are no grants for operating costs. We have been blessed to receive more than \$300,000 in grants in the last four years. There are many things we would not have without grants - from sound and recording to Pastor Dan and the preschool. There are no grants for churches for operating funds, utilities, repairs & maintenance and sustaining staff compensation. As such, we need a budget that represents these needs and giving to match.

As we enter our stewardship season, we hope that you will consider helping the church in this way. A special thanks to all who work to plan and make decisions for the church and for the generosity of a congregation that loves the Lord and seeks to care for each other and reach people for Jesus!

SEPTEMBER 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>27 9:30 AM Worship Service with Communion 11:00 AM Confirmation Information Meeting 11:00 AM Faith Forum-Germany Trip 3:30 PM Modern Worship Practice 5:00 PM 5pm Gathering (Modern Worship) 6:00 PM Grief Share (Auburn Methodist Church) 6:00 PM Loft Kick-off</p>	<p>28 Pastor Dan's Day Off</p>	<p>29</p>	<p>30 8:00 AM Open Prayer & Communion 8:30 AM Prayer Gathering 9:30 AM Pastors Meeting 5:30 PM Modern Worship Practice 7:00 PM Chancel Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>31 10:00 AM Pastor's Bible Study 5:30 PM Celebrate Recovery (Cupbearer Cafe)</p>	<p>1 Pastor Marcus' Day Off</p>	<p>2</p>
<p>3 9:30 AM Worship Service with Communion 5:30 PM Modern Worship Practice 6:00 PM 5pm Gathering (Modern Worship) 6:00 PM Grief Share (Auburn Methodist Church)</p>	<p>4 Labor Day Pastor Dan's Day Off</p>	<p>5 7:00 PM Hold: Alpha Leaders Training</p>	<p>6 8:00 AM Open Prayer & Communion 8:30 AM Prayer Gathering 9:30 AM Pastors & Kathy Meeting 5:30 PM Modern Worship Practice 7:00 PM Chancel Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>7 10:00 AM Pastor's Bible Study 5:30 PM Celebrate Recovery (Cupbearer Cafe) 6:00 PM Finance Team Meeting</p>	<p>8 Pastor Marcus' Day Off</p>	<p>9 9:00 AM Seminar w/Mark Vander Tug 2:30 PM Council Retreat 6:00 PM Council & Staff Dinner with Mark</p>
<p>10 40 Days of Prayer 9:30 AM Worship Service with Communion 11:00 AM Confirmation 11:00 AM Sunday Morning Adult Bible Study 3:30 PM Modern Worship Practice 5:00 PM 5pm Gathering (Modern Worship) 6:00 PM Grief Share (Auburn Methodist Church) 6:00 PM The Loft</p>	<p>11 40 Days of Prayer Pastor Dan's Day Off</p>	<p>12 40 Days of Prayer</p>	<p>13 40 Days of Prayer 8:00 AM Open Prayer & Communion 8:30 AM Prayer Gathering 9:30 AM Pastors Meeting 12:00 PM Pastoral Team Planning Meeting 4:30 PM Preschool Board Meeting 5:30 PM Modern Worship Practice 7:00 PM Chancel Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>14 40 Days of Prayer 10:00 AM Pastor's Bible Study 5:30 PM Celebrate Recovery (Cupbearer Cafe) 6:00 PM Learn how to Plan, Save, and Grow Together (YMCA of DeKalb Co.) 7:00 PM Church Council Meeting</p>	<p>15 40 Days of Prayer Pastor Marcus' Day Off</p>	<p>16 40 Days of Prayer</p>
<p>17 40 Days of Prayer Faith in Action Sunday 8:30 AM Worship Service with Communion 5:30 PM Modern Worship Practice 6:00 PM Grief Share (Auburn Methodist Church)</p>	<p>18 40 Days of Prayer Pastor Dan's Day Off 6:00 PM Alpha Session 6 (YMCA of Auburn)</p>	<p>19 40 Days of Prayer</p>	<p>20 40 Days of Prayer 7:30 AM All Staff Meeting 8:00 AM Open Prayer & Communion 8:30 AM Prayer Gathering 9:30 AM Pastors Meeting 12:00 PM Genealogy 12:00 PM Senior's Lunch 5:30 PM Modern Worship Practice 7:00 PM Chancel Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>21 40 Days of Prayer 10:00 AM Pastor's Bible Study 5:30 PM Celebrate Recovery (Cupbearer Cafe) 6:00 PM Learn how to Plan, Save, and Grow Together (YMCA of DeKalb Co.)</p>	<p>22 40 Days of Prayer Pastor Marcus' Day Off</p>	<p>23 40 Days of Prayer</p>
<p>24 40 Days of Prayer 9:30 AM Worship Service with Communion 11:00 AM Confirmation 11:00 AM Sunday Morning Adult Bible Study 3:30 PM Modern Worship Practice 5:00 PM 5pm Gathering (Modern Worship) 6:00 PM Grief Share (Auburn Methodist Church) 6:00 PM The Loft</p>	<p>25 40 Days of Prayer Fair Parking Pastor Dan's Day Off 6:00 PM Alpha Session 6 (YMCA of Auburn)</p>	<p>26 40 Days of Prayer Fair Parking</p>	<p>27 40 Days of Prayer Fair Parking 8:00 AM Open Prayer & Communion 8:30 AM Prayer Gathering 9:30 AM Pastors Meeting 5:30 PM Modern Worship Practice 7:00 PM Chancel Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>28 40 Days of Prayer Fair Parking 10:00 AM Pastor's Bible Study 5:30 PM Celebrate Recovery (Cupbearer Cafe) 6:00 PM Learn how to Plan, Save, and Grow Together (YMCA of DeKalb Co.)</p>	<p>29 40 Days of Prayer Fair Parking Pastor Marcus' Day Off</p>	<p>30 40 Days of Prayer Fair Parking</p>

OCTOBER 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>1 40 Days of Prayer 9:30 AM Worship Service with Communion 11:00 AM Faith Forum-Immersion Trips 3:30 PM Modern Worship Practice 5:00 PM 5pm Gathering (Modern Worship Church) 6:00 PM Grief Share (Auburn Methodist Church)</p>	<p>2 40 Days of Prayer Pastor Dan's Day Off 6:00 PM Alpha Session 6 (YMCA of Auburn)</p>	<p>3 40 Days of Prayer</p>	<p>4 40 Days of Prayer 8:00 AM Open Prayer & Communion 8:30 AM Prayer Gathering 9:30 AM Pastors & Kathy Meeting 12:00 PM Ministry Calling Group 5:30 PM Modern Worship Practice 7:00 PM Chancel Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>5 40 Days of Prayer 10:00 AM Pastor's Bible Study 5:30 PM Celebrate Recovery (Cupbearer Cate) 6:00 PM Learn how to Plan, Save, and Grow Together (YMCA of DeKalb Co.)</p>	<p>6 40 Days of Prayer Pastor Marcus' Day Off</p>	<p>7 40 Days of Prayer</p>
<p>8 40 Days of Prayer LCMC National Gathering 9:30 AM Worship Service with Communion 11:00 AM Confirmation 11:00 AM Sunday Morning Adult Bible Study 3:30 PM Modern Worship Practice 5:00 PM 5pm Gathering (Modern Worship Church) 6:00 PM Grief Share (Auburn Methodist Church) 6:00 PM The Loft</p>	<p>9 40 Days of Prayer LCMC National Gathering Pastor Dan's Day Off 6:00 PM Alpha Session 6 (YMCA of Auburn)</p>	<p>10 40 Days of Prayer LCMC National Gathering</p>	<p>11 40 Days of Prayer LCMC National Gathering Pastor Planning Retreat 8:00 AM Open Prayer & Communion 8:30 AM Prayer Gathering 9:30 AM Pastors Meeting 5:30 PM Modern Worship Practice 7:00 PM Chancel Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>12 40 Days of Prayer 10:00 AM Pastor's Bible Study 5:30 PM Celebrate Recovery (Cupbearer Cate) 6:00 PM Learn how to Plan, Save, and Grow Together (YMCA of DeKalb Co.)</p>	<p>13 40 Days of Prayer Pastor Marcus' Day Off</p>	<p>14 40 Days of Prayer</p>
<p>15 40 Days of Prayer 9:30 AM Worship Service with Communion 3:30 PM Modern Worship Practice 5:00 PM 5pm Gathering (Modern Worship Church) 6:00 PM Grief Share (Auburn Methodist Church)</p>	<p>16 40 Days of Prayer Pastor Dan's Day Off 6:00 PM Alpha Session 6 (YMCA of Auburn)</p>	<p>17 40 Days of Prayer</p>	<p>18 40 Days of Prayer 7:30 AM All Staff Meeting 8:00 AM Open Prayer & Communion 8:30 AM Prayer Gathering 9:30 AM Pastors Meeting 12:00 PM Genealogy Group 12:00 PM Senior's Lunch 5:30 PM Modern Worship Practice 7:00 PM Chancel Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>19 40 Days of Prayer 10:00 AM Pastor's Bible Study 5:30 PM Celebrate Recovery (Cupbearer Cate) 6:00 PM Learn how to Plan, Save, and Grow Together (YMCA of DeKalb Co.) 7:00 PM Church Council Meeting</p>	<p>20 40 Days of Prayer Pastor Marcus' Day Off</p>	<p>21 3:00 PM Oktoberfest</p>
<p>22 9:30 AM Worship Service with Communion 11:00 AM Confirmation 11:00 AM Sunday Morning Adult Bible Study 3:30 PM Modern Worship Practice 5:00 PM 5pm Gathering (Modern Worship Church) 6:00 PM Grief Share (Auburn Methodist Church) 6:00 PM The Loft</p>	<p>23 40 Days of Prayer Pastor Dan's Day Off 6:00 PM Alpha Session 6 (YMCA of Auburn)</p>	<p>24 40 Days of Prayer</p>	<p>25 8:00 AM Open Prayer & Communion 8:30 AM Prayer Gathering 9:30 AM Pastors Meeting 5:30 PM Modern Worship Practice 7:00 PM Chancel Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>26 10:00 AM Pastor's Bible Study 5:30 PM Celebrate Recovery (Cupbearer Cate) 6:00 PM Learn how to Plan, Save, and Grow Together (YMCA of DeKalb Co.)</p>	<p>27 Pastor Marcus' Day Off</p>	<p>28 10:00 AM Church Work Day</p>
<p>29 Confirmation Sunday 9:30 AM Worship Service with Communion 11:00 AM Confirmation Lunch & Faith Project 3:30 PM Modern Worship Practice 5:00 PM 5pm Gathering (Modern Worship Church) 6:00 PM Grief Share (Auburn Methodist Church)</p>	<p>30 Pastor Dan's Day Off 6:00 PM Alpha Session 6 (YMCA of Auburn)</p>	<p>31 40 Days of Prayer</p>	<p>1 8:00 AM Open Prayer & Communion 8:30 AM Prayer Gathering 9:30 AM Pastors & Kathy Meeting 5:30 PM Modern Worship Practice 7:00 PM Chancel Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>2 10:00 AM Pastor's Bible Study 5:30 PM Celebrate Recovery (Cupbearer Cate) 6:00 PM Learn how to Plan, Save, and Grow Together (YMCA of DeKalb Co.) 7:00 PM Executive Council Meeting</p>	<p>3 Pastor Marcus' Day Off</p>	<p>4 40 Days of Prayer</p>

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.

Through July 31, 2017

Operating Fund Reserve Remaining: \$12,822.59

	Income	Expense	Net
Budget	\$142,916.67	\$152,183.76	-\$9,267.09
Actual	\$132,488.49	\$146,545.06	-\$14,047.57
Difference	-\$10,428.18	\$5,638.10	

Financial Update

We wanted to provide another clear update to our financial standing, particularly the Operating Fund. As you know we sent a letter out in July. Since that letter went out, several things have happened. First, as mentioned in the newsletter last month, the Endowment Trustees approved \$10,000 to assist the Operating Fund. We anticipate that check posting in August. Also, at the August Council meeting, the Council approved \$15,000 to be moved from the reserve set aside to protect Dan's position. This should post in August or early September. We are also thankful for the response of the congregation. July was our best giving month of the year! In fact, if every month were like July, we would be able to meet our Operating Fund needs each month. While we are thankful for the response, we must be cautious as it is critical that we maintain an increased level of giving. We know that many may have made a one time gift that we cannot count on each month and July was a month with 5 Sundays instead of the usual 4. We are hopeful and the finance team is monitoring the situation. We appreciate your prayers and support.

Finance Education for September

Stewardship is an important part of our congregation and something we must address on a regular basis not only for the good of our church, but because it is an important part of our faith as well. Money was the second most talked about topic by Jesus and compromises 15% of the Gospel message. Stewardship is not just about finances, but also the use of our time, talents, skill and spiritual gifts. The Finance Team will be working on this years stewardship initiative in September as we prepare for the budget process for 2018. This is especially important in light of the Operating Fund challenge we have faced this year. The grant for Dan's position ends this year, though we have to maintain the fourth year at minimum. We do have \$5,000 in Funding Our Future that we set aside when we called Dan to help with 2018. The Finance Team will also be working on a budget projection beyond 2017 for the remainder of our Strategic Plan (2019-2021) so that all have a clear idea of our needs as a church both in the present and in the future. Please be sure to read these materials carefully and prayerfully consider your role in supporting the ministries financially here. Many choose not to pledge for a variety of reasons, however having a pledge or an estimate of giving is important as we make decisions about the future. It is especially essential the next 2 years as we make decisions about Pastor Dan's position here at St. Mark's. If you have any questions do not hesitate to contact Pastor Marcus, a Finance Team Member or a Council Member.

Letter

The Council recently received this unexpected letter in reference to Pastor Marcus' trip to Nepal and Bangladesh. The Council felt it should be shared with the congregation in the newsletter. Also, we have received a couple questions about the funding for this trip. Funding for the trip came from a variety of sources. Two mission organizations provided most of the funding. Pastor Marcus raised some funds and spent some personal funds. The Council also contributed a small amount from an estate gift the church received. Absolutely zero operating funds were used for this trip.

~St. Mark's Council



August 1, 2017

St. Mark's Lutheran Church
Missions Board and Congregation

Dear friends,

Greetings in Christ,

From time to time, Christians are called upon to risk their lives, their resources, and their health for the sake of the Gospel taking root in other nations and parts of the world. In much of the developing world, Christianity is very recent, and numerical growth has been exponential. Many missiologists are warning that the church in those places is a "mile wide and an inch deep". They have also stated that if well trained pastors from the West don't get out of their comfort zone and go help, in another fifty years many of those people groups will have to be re-evangelized.

With your support and blessing, your Senoir Pastor, Rev. Marcus Carlson, responded to this urgent call. In May, he and I and several others committed themselves to teaching in Nepal and then to three Lutheran groups in Bangladesh - one of the more difficult and high security risk nations on the planet. His contribution was huge. In referring to ALWM and the work of these pastors we have sent, one church leader offered the following words, "*I know one reason God made you is to educate the Bible ignorance of . . . servants of God at this part of the world. This is a blessing to us and we feel picked from ashes by God because of what you are doing.*"

In Jesus name, and on behalf of *Awakening Lives to World Missions*, thank you for your gracious support of your pastor and ALWM.

Global missions to your congregation has become so much more than an occasional check to some denominational bureaucracy. You have chosen the costly road of obedience to the Great Commission of our Lord. Indeed, He will bless you for it.

Please prayerfully consider ALWM in future missions support.

May you continue in the joy of the Holy Spirit bearing much fruit for the Gospel.

Pax Christi,

Rev. Tom Curry
Midwest Regional Representative
Awakening Lives to World Missions

www.alwm.org

505-803-5271

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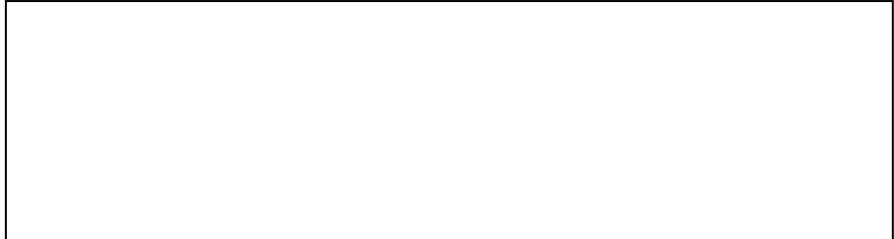
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St. Mark's
— LUTHERAN CHURCH —

**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