

St. Mark's Lutheran Church

Publisher
Church Mouse

Issue Number
154

Date
March 2024

Upcoming Events

- Sat., Mar. 9th – 9:00 a.m. – Men's Breakfast
- Wed., Mar. 13th – 5:00 p.m. – NET Dinner
at OLV Catholic Church
- Sat., Mar. 16th – 5:00 p.m. - Movie Night
- Sun., Mar. 17th – 12:00 p.m. – Church Council
Meeting
- Wed., Mar. 20th – 5:00 p.m. – NET Dinner
at the Reformed Church
- Thurs., Mar. 21st – 7:00 p.m. – Community
Lenten Service at OLV Catholic Church
- Tues., Mar., 26th – 5:00 p.m. – Seder Passover
Meal and Prayer Service at OLV Catholic
Church
- Wed., Mar. 27th – 5:00 p.m. – NET Dinner
at St. Mark's Church
- Thurs., Mar. 28th – 6:00 p.m. – Maundy
Thursday Service at OLV Catholic Church
- Fri., Mar. 29th – 12:00 noon – Walk of the
Cross; meet at OLV Catholic Church
- Fri., Mar. 29th – 6:30 p.m. - Good Friday
Service at Christian Community Church in
Richmondville
- Sat., Mar. 30th – 6:00 a.m – 6:00 p.m. – Vigil at
St. Mark's Church
- Sun., Mar. 31st – 6:30 a.m. – Easter Sunrise
Service – location to be determined
- Sun., Mar. 31st – 10:30 a.m. – Easter Worship
Service at St. Mark's Church

Prayers and Concerns for February

Family of Valerie Smith
Family of Karen Coons

Brenda Lammers
John Motta
Linda Zaqzouq
Eric Mattson
Doni France
Tracy Argenzio
Elizabeth Haley
Jean Guarino
Catherine Jane Cross
Susan G.
Bonnie Hall

Bible Verse for March:

*Therefore, as God's chosen
people, holy and dearly loved,
clothe yourselves with
compassion, kindness, humility,
gentleness, and patience.*

Colossians 3:12 (NIV)

Thought for the Day:

*Contentment is not the fulfillment
of what you want but the
realization of how much you
already have.*



St. Mark's Church Information

Pastor David Houck
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St. Mark's Phone: 518-827-5318
St. Mark's Email: stmarks@midtel.net
Website:
stmarkslutheranmiddleburgh.com

St. Mark's Lutheran Church

Servers for March

Mar. 3rd:

Reader – Edna
Prayer – Carolyn
Ushers – Dennis / Carrie
Counter – Sharon

Mar. 10th:

Reader – Bob
Prayer – Cheryl
Ushers – Aaron / Allison
Counter – Diane

Mar. 17th:

Reader – Lori
Prayer – Ron
Ushers – Lisa / Nannette
Counter – Carrie

Mar. 24th:

Reader – Deb P.
Prayer – Carolyn
Ushers – Deb P. / Pat
Counter – Deb P.

Mar. 31st:

Reader – Marie
Prayer – Cheryl
Ushers – Lori / Dean
Counter – Sharon

March Birthdays:

Carrie Foland	Mar. 1
Mark Beeler	Mar. 6
Mike Sharkey	Mar. 8
Jim Brigadier	Mar. 14
Dylan Hillicoss	Mar. 14
Cheryl Cater	Mar. 19
Dean Roney	Mar. 22
Linda Amond	Mar. 26
Ginny Tinny	Mar. 27

March Anniversaries:

Pastor Dave / Melody Houck Mar. 24

St. Mark's Income vs Expenses

Here is the summary of income and expenses for January 2024:

Income	\$5,719.15
Expenses	5,550.45
Balance	\$168.70

Humorous Church Announcements

“Don't let worry kill you off – let the Church help.”

“This being Easter Sunday, we will ask Mrs. Lewis to come forward and lay an egg on the altar.”

Holy Week Events

Lenten Community Service

Thursday, March 21st – 7:00 p.m. at Our Lady of the Valley Catholic Church

Palm Sunday

Sunday, March 24th – 10:30 a.m. at St. Mark's Lutheran Church

Seder Passover Meal and Prayer Service

Tuesday, March 26th – 5:00 p.m. at Our Lady of the Valley Catholic Church
Service. A leader from a local Jewish community will lead us in the ancient seder service. A chicken and dumplings dinner will be served after prayer.

Maundy Thursday Service

Friday, March 28th – 6:00 p.m. at Our Lady of the Valley Catholic Church

Good Friday Ecumenical Walk of the Cross

Friday, March 29th – 12:00 noon starting at corner of Wells and Main Street
at Our Lady of the Valley Catholic Church

Good Friday Service

Friday, March 29th – 6:30 p.m. at Christian Community Church

Saturday Vigil

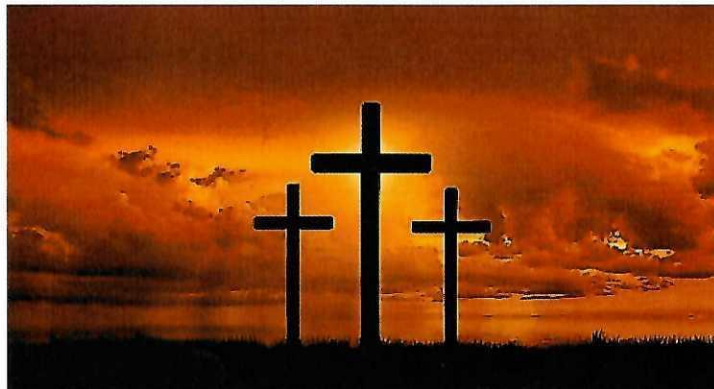
Saturday, March 30th – 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. at St. Mark's Lutheran Church
Church will be open so you may come at any time, stay as long as you would like to
spend quiet time with our Lord

Easter Sunrise Service

Sunday, March 31st – 6:30 a.m. – location to be determined
Breakfast to follow at Reformed Church

Easter Sunday Worship Service

Sunday, March 31st – 10:30 a.m. at St. Mark's Lutheran Church



The Sacrifice and Persecution of Jesus Continues Today

In these months, March and April, we are in our Lenten journey and will then enter the post resurrection experience following Easter. Our worship services have been building on what it means to die to self and rise again with Christ in sweet surrender of our lives to God. The 40 days of Lent leading up to Easter are a call to repentance and believing in the Gospel. As we approach the cross where our Savior sacrificed himself for us and our salvation, we are asked to focus on the trilogy of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. We are asked to think about what sacrifices we are willing to make as we deny ourselves, take up our crosses, and follow Jesus.

Matthew 5:10 Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Globally, more than 360 million Christians suffer at least "high" levels of persecution and discrimination for their faith. This number represents 1 in 7 Christians worldwide. This is occurring in 76 of the 195 countries on our planet today. In the top 50 alone, 312 million Christians now face very high or extreme levels of persecution. These 50 countries are located on the continents of North, Central, and South America, Africa, and Asia. Worldwide Christians now experience at least "high" levels of persecution or discrimination with 1 in 5 in Africa, 2 out of 5 in Asia, and 1 in 15 in Latin America. China's model of oppression is spreading throughout authoritarian states. Authoritarianism plus nationalism plus sophisticated technology is a powerful combination contributing to a rise in persecution across authoritarian governments. China has clamped down further on Christians, introducing sweeping new rules on churches' use of the internet. Through digital persecution, China is intensifying the persecution of Christians and other religious minorities. The Chinese Communist Party is extending its repression of Christians via surveillance, censorship, and disinformation, using technology to control and coerce behavior through its Social Credit System. Through economic and political influence, China is also becoming an incubator and legitimizer of persecution around the world, and as China exports its invasive technology, it is de facto exporting its authoritarian ideology. North Korea returns to No. 1, with its highest levels of persecution ever. The rise follows a new wave of violence under its new "Anti-reactionary thought law". Jihadist violence is becoming commonplace across Sub-Saharan Africa, with 26 countries in the region scoring very significant levels of persecution. The Islamist campaign of terror is fueled by a lethal mix of trafficking, changes to the climate and an influx of mercenary soldiers from the shadowy Kremlin-backed Wagner Group.

I keep up on this information through organizations like: The Voice of The Martyrs, Christian Global Relief, and Open Doors US. With all that is going on in our world each day, these statistics and those affected do not make the headlines. Over the 30 years of the Open Doors World Watch List reporting, the global phenomenon of Christian persecution has grown alarmingly. The truth is that the persecution of Christians has continued to intensify globally, reaching the highest levels since the list began nearly 30 years ago. A country's overall persecution scores are an amalgamation of six different scores: pressure levels in private life, family life, community life and national life, and of church communities, along with violence levels.

During this Lenten season of reflection, I pray that we thank God for the freedom and privilege we enjoy being able to practice our faith. I also pray that we realize we cannot say or believe "It can't happen here". The growing tide of persecution in the world is a devastating flood which is destroying an individual's pursuit of a God first life. Let us find ways to change the tide through our Lenten practices of "Praying, Fasting, and Almsgiving". Let us pray for our fellow Christians who refuse to yield to the pressures where they live and who truly understand and live this verse: Romans 8:18 *For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.*

In God We Trust / Love and Prayers, Pastor Dave and Melody

St. Mark's Lutheran Church

Special Congregational Meeting

St. Mark's ended the year 2023 financially sound. We were blessed to be able to meet our financial obligations with some extra funds now available.

Council is requesting approval from the congregation to make a donation of \$5,000 to Marathon for a Better Life.

For those who may not know, Marathon for a Better Life seeks to provide residents of Schoharie County, who are fighting cancer, with financial assistance and other necessary resources to enable them to overcome personal obstacles as well as pay for medical treatments and other expenses in their battle against cancer.

There will be a special congregational meeting on **Sunday, March 10th, immediately following our worship service.** Your input and vote are important so please plan to attend.

Sale of Property Approved

The results of our special congregational meeting held on February 18th regarding the possible sale of a plot of land (plot #25 on village map) to Middleburgh Hardware was approved by the congregation. Ballot votes were 17-yes, 8-no, 1-abstention.

Easter Lilies



At Easter time, our Altar Guild adorns our sanctuary with beautiful lilies. Once again, we are asking for financial assistance to help purchase them. As God leads, please consider making a donation toward this endeavor. Please place it in an envelope, indicate it is for the lilies and place it in the collection plate. Thank you!

Council Members

President – Ron Lower
Vice-president – Georgia VanDyke
Secretary – Debbie Roberts
Treasurer – Debbie Palmatier
Member-at-Large – Diane France
Member-at-Large – Eric Mattson
Member-at-Large – Dennis Foland

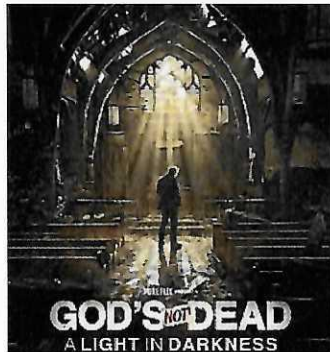
Food Pantry

Pat McCoy – 518-827-5318
Hours are by appointment only

St. Mark's Lutheran Church

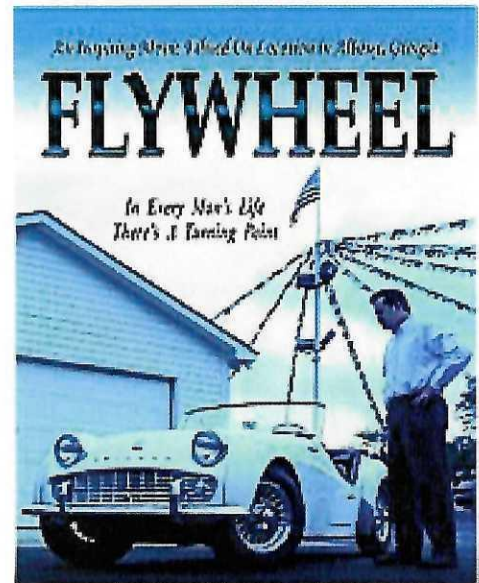
Movie Night

"In life's darkest valleys, a small flame can light the way toward healing and hope." This is what the attendees of our February 17th movie night learned as they watched "God's Not Dead 3: A Light in the Darkness". How ironic that the eyes of the main character (a pastor) who was struggling in the darkness of despair, were opened as he was praying in the shell of his burned-out church. Among the ashes, he saw the light of God showing him the way. The movie serves as a reminder that God lights our way too if we only seek His will and not focus on our own.



Yummy snacks
(Notice the chips for Cheryl 😊)

Our next movie night will be on **Saturday, March 16th, at 5:00 p.m.** in our fellowship hall. The feature will be "Flywheel".



This is the story about the unexpected pitfalls that a used car dealer experiences as he suddenly goes honest. The dealer intentionally overcharges his customers until reaching a turning point in his life where he decides to end his shady business practices and become a Christian.

Please join us to watch this Christian film and witness how God can change anyone who gives their life to Him. As always, there will be snacks to enjoy as well. 😊

St. Mark's Lutheran Church

NET Dinner

If you came to St. Mark's on the evening of February 28th, you would have been greeted with the aroma of roast turkey and would have seen potatoes, stuffing, and vegetables being cooked. Our NET meal was as good as it smelled... delicious!

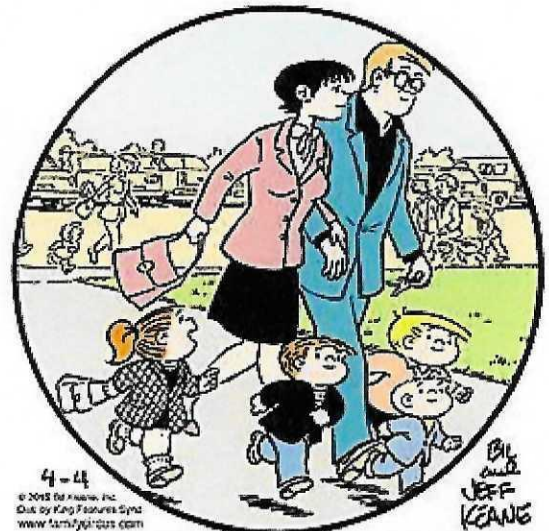


On March 27th we will be serving a delicious pulled pork dinner for our NET dinner. See you there!

Thank You!



Thank you to all who made a donation for Operation Christmas Child's "The Greatest Journey". Children around the world are continuing to be blessed by our congregation through their lesson books and New Testament Bibles that your contributions purchased. God bless you!



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By
and
JEFF
KEANE

"I like it when everyone in church sings about that Ollie Louya guy."

St. Mark's Lutheran Church

New Members

Sunday, February 18th, was a day of celebration for St. Mark's as Allison, Aaron and Alyssa Coons became the newest members of our church. Welcome!



Pastor Dave, Alyssa, Allison, Aaron

"Souper" Bowl

Thank you to all who "played" in our Souper Bowl game on February 11th. There will be many winners through your generous donations of soup to our food pantry. May God bless you!



Handbells

Special music on Sunday, February 4th was performed by our handbell choir. While the feedback has been overall positive, one negative comment is that no one in the choir smiles while playing their bells.

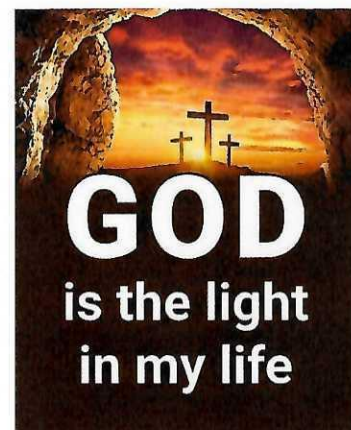


So...



Here we are smiling... 😊

Join us on Easter Sunday when our handbell choir will be blessing us with more special music.



St. Mark's Lutheran Church



Chili Cook-off Winners

If there was ever a doubt about how talented people are at St. Mark's when it comes to cooking, it would have been dispelled at the chili cook-off sponsored by the Reformed Church at their NET dinner on Wednesday, February 22nd. Members of St. Mark's took first, second and third place with our church as the overall winner of the chili cook-off.



We will have our trophy on display for one year. Then there will be another chili cook-off in 2025 when the trophy will either go to a different church or will remain with St. Mark's, depending on who will be the winning church.



Peggi Meunier, 1st Place



Nikki (Gordon) Paluzzi, 2nd Place



Edna and Ron Lower, 3rd Place

St. Mark's Lutheran Church

Please pray for the safety of our armed forces, protection of our country and guidance for our leaders.



Four Chaplains Service



Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends.

-John 15:13

Four Army chaplains, Father John P. Washington, Rabbi Alexander D. Goode, and the Revs. George L. Fox, and Clark V. Poling, showed this kind of love as they gave their life jackets to four other soldiers while their transport ship was sinking. Last seen, these four men were in prayer as the ship went down.

The story of their sacrificial love was shared by the American Legion during our worship service on February 11th. Their message was thought provoking as we ask ourselves, would we be as willing to give the ultimate sacrifice for the sake of others? May we pray for God's strength to say "yes" if that time ever comes.

Thank you, American Legion!