

St. Mark's Lutheran Church

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Date
January, 2026

Upcoming Events

Wed., Jan. 14th – 5:00 p.m. – NET Dinner
at OLV Catholic Church

Fri., Jan. 16th – 5:30 p.m. – Movie Night
Featuring “Unconditional”

Sun., Jan. 18th – 12:00 p.m. – Annual
Congregation Meeting. Potluck lunch.

Wed., Jan. 21st – 5:00 p.m. – NET Dinner
at Reformed Church

Wed., Jan. 28th – 5:00 p.m. - Net Dinner at
St. Mark's (Please note back to 4th Wed.)

Annual Congregational Meeting

Please plan to attend our annual
congregational meeting on **January 18th**.
The meeting will be held immediately
following our worship service and a potluck
lunch.

Committee leaders – if you have not
already done so, please submit your
reports to the church office no later than
Monday, January 5th. Thank you!



Communion Bread for December

Prayers and Concerns for December

Family of Janet Tinkler
Family of Joe Cooper, III

Jeff
Dan Kircher
Joe Bender
Don
Sharon Nesbitt
Bruce Wollaber

Bible Verse for January:

*Do nothing out of selfish
ambition or vain conceit. Rather,
in humility value others above
yourselves, not looking to your
own interests but each of you to
the interests of the others.*

- Philippians 2:3,4 (NIV)

Thought for the Day:

*The God who sustained us
through 2025 will walk with us
through 2026.*



St. Mark's Church Information

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Servers for January

Jan. 4th

Reader – Alyssa Coons

Prayer – Cheryl

Ushers – Bill / Holly

Counter – Carrie

Jan. 11th

Reader – Ted

Prayer – Ted

Ushers – Ted / Ellen

Counter – Deb P.

Jan. 18th

Reader – Pat

Prayer – Ron

Ushers – Dan / Doreen

Counter – Sharon

Jan. 25th

Reader – Maria

Prayer – Carolyn

Ushers – Cathy / Barb

Counter – Diane



January Birthdays:

Michael Estro Jan. 4

Tom Nesbitt Jan. 5

Cathy Allen Jan. 5

Ted Langenbahn Jan. 18

Lisa Bartholomew Jan. 20

Helen Ruland Jan. 20

Dan Kircher Jan. 31

January Anniversaries:

Dennis / Carrie Foland Jan. 2

Tom / Sharon Nesbitt Jan. 17



Salvation Army Bell Ringers
Peggi, Bob, Alyssa and Ron



Greetings and Happy New Year! The image above hangs over the doorway in our home office to remind me that we shouldn't make things more complicated than they need be. It is also a reminder of how advancements in technology have made our lives more complex, hurried, and busy. We are able to connect with more people and more places each day than ever before, which can make it seem, at times, that every second of our lives is filled. Not saying that connecting with others is a bad thing but how often do we take time to: *Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth! - Psalm 46:10*

When life gets too complex, too complicated, we can over worry, over plan, and over do at times. If we can learn to share life together, in person, then we can appreciate how God wants us to be. To love God with all our heart, all our soul and all our mind, and love one another as ourselves is obeying the great commandments we have been given. When we love one another through the offering of our time together, we will gain a better appreciation for offering more time to God as well. What a great way to love God...offering God more of our time.

One excuse...sorry that sounds judgmental...one reason some people give for not believing is that it seems too "Simple" to receive salvation and forgiveness for all of our sins by putting our faith and trust in God and believing in Jesus Christ and believing that God sent Jesus to earth to become the ultimate offering for the penalty of our sins. Through Jesus' death the debt was paid for us. Through His resurrection we have the evidence, the proof, that God wants to resurrect us as well...not just resurrected into the life to come, but here and now...resurrected into a new life each and every new day, each and every new year that we are given.

In 1973 Ronnie Van Zant and Gary Robert Rossington wrote a song titled "Simple Man". Here are some of the words from that song that have touched my life. *Mama told me when I was young "Come sit beside me, my only son and listen closely to what I say. If you do this, it'll help you some sunny day. Take your time, don't live too fast, troubles will come and they will pass. You'll find a woman and you'll find love, and don't forget, son, **there is someone up above.** Be a simple kind of man, be something you love and understand. Be a simple kind of man. Won't you do this for me son, if you can? Forget your lust for the rich man's gold, all that you need is in your soul. You can do this if you try. All that I want for you my son, is to be satisfied. Don't you worry, you'll find yourself. Follow your heart and nothing else for you can do this if you try. All that I want for you, my son, is to be satisfied.*

Let us not make everything, especially our faith, so complicated. Some think that children are simple because of the amount of understanding and experience they have. It is written in *Matthew 18:2 Then Jesus called a little child to Him, set him in the midst of them, ³ and said, "Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. ⁴ Therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.* Having pure, simple faith as a child does.

When we accept the grace and mercy God offers us through His only begotten Son by believing in Him and asking Him to come into our hearts and teach us how to love and how to live, we will be shown the true light of a full and complete life. A life where hope, peace, and joy reign. A life that is less complicated and less hurried. A life with less stress and less worry for with God when troubles come, they will also pass. A life that succeeds by being "Simplified". May life be simpler, more faith filled and more satisfying. Amen.

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

St. Mark's Lutheran Church

NET Dinner

St. Mark's fellowship hall was once again filled with the sounds of conversations and laughter as friends and neighbors enjoyed a delicious ham dinner on Wednesday, December 3rd.



No wonder it was so tasty... we had seven "chefs" in the kitchen



Coffee was brewing



We will be hosting our annual "Soup"er Bowl Cook Off Contest at our **January 28th** NET dinner. The soups will be served with bread, tossed salad, a variety of desserts AND Cheryl says, "Don't forget the chips!!" 😊



Soloist, Linda Connors, with St. Mark's choir sings "The Birthday of a King" as we prepare for the celebration of Jesus' birth.

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Movie Night

Break out your favorite snack and beverage and join us at **5:30 p.m.** on **Friday, January 16th**, for movie night. Our feature film is "Unconditional" which is based on true events.



The story follows Samantha Crawford, a successful author and illustrator who lives a seemingly perfect life until her husband, Billy, is tragically killed in a violent incident. This loss causes her to lose her faith; however, a chance encounter with two children leads her to reconnect with her childhood friend, Joe Bradford. As she witnesses Joe's dedication to caring for the children in his impoverished neighborhood, Samantha begins to rediscover hope and the love of God.

See you there!

Community Christmas Caroling

The evening of December 14th the sanctuary of the Reformed Church was alive with the sounds of music as approximately 50 people gathered to sing Christmas carols. They became God's choir as their beautiful voices blended to make a joyful noise.

Blue Christmas

On December 21st 17 people participated in a Blue Christmas service led by Paul and Anne Ferenczy at St. Mark's. May this service help to fill the hearts of the attendees with peace during the holiday season.

Holy Humor

Mrs. Smart was fumbling in her purse for her offering when a large television remote fell out and clattered into the aisle. The curious usher bent over to retrieve it for her and whispered, "Do you always carry your TV remote to church?" "No," she replied, "but my husband refused to come with me this morning, and I figured this was the most evil thing I could do to him legally."

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Christmas Outreach

This year our congregation participated in Joshua Project's Adopt-a-Family. It is said a picture is worth a thousand words and the following speaks of our congregation's desire to bless others with a special Christmas through our gifts. Thank you, Carrie and Dennis Foland, for coordinating our "adoption".



Beautiful encouragement Christmas baskets were made by Janet Abrams. Thank you, Janet, for sharing your God-given talent in the creation of these wonderful baskets that bring so much joy to others.



On December 20th, our neighbor, Mrs. K's Kitchen, held their annual Christmas celebration and sponsored a raffle to benefit local food pantries. As a result of their raffle, St. Mark's and the Reformed Church each received a monetary donation of \$150. Thank you, Patty Wainwright, for helping us be able to provide fresh foods for those who come to our food pantry.



Thank you, MEVAC, for this beautiful decoration!

Please pray for all who selflessly serve in our armed forces.



2025 Christmas Eve Service



Lighting the Advent Candles



Cheryl and Kerri flute duet
"O Holy Night"



Pastor Dave delivering his message titled "Community"



St. Mark's Choir singing "Mary Did You Know"

Turning Point

The hand of the Lord was with them, and a large number of people believed and *turned* to the Lord. Acts 11:21

As I pondered what to share this year, and how to share it, I was drawn to how many people were affected by the death of a young, 31-year-old man, named Charlie Kirk. So close in age to my sons. Good or bad, people all over the world have been talking about it. Why?? Because we witnessed how his life was affected by the life, death, and resurrection of His Lord, Jesus Christ. Charlie wasn't ashamed of the Gospel. He knew what he believed, and he saw people the way God saw them. Not only did he share what he believed boldly, he challenged the way people think by **pointing** them to the truth of God's word.

At Christmas we always **point** to the birth of Jesus Christ. But this year I want to **point** to His life. Jesus Christ was the most controversial person to walk this earth. To this day, Jesus is still challenging people's way of thinking. When He walked this earth, He confronted people who thought that if they did enough good works it would get them to heaven. He **pointed out** human flaws, and the fact that there's nothing we do in our own strength that is good enough. No one here on this earth will ever measure up to God's holiness. Jesus also brought the bar to the next level. He linked murder to hate in our heart, and adultery to lust. Jesus also told His followers to love their enemies and made it clear that from the beginning God created male and female, uniting them as one in marriage. Does anyone feel convicted yet?

Many of us don't want to be challenged or confronted with God's word, because it makes us uncomfortable. When confronted with something that goes against God's moral compass, we come up to a crossroad, a **turning point** in our hearts. You see, God's word illuminates the fact that we all have sinned, and we all need to be saved from the chains of sin. Jesus challenges every one of us to make a choice. We either choose to **turn** from the direction we are headed and towards God, or we choose to continue on the path we are on and move further from God. I have to admit; change can be frightening. There are so many "what ifs!" We are creatures of habit and want what feels good. But I assure you, Jesus wants what IS good.

You see, God loves us in spite of our sin. He sees potential in all of us to become better, to live wiser, and to love deeper. God could've written us off, and with good reason. Sin separates us from Him. But because of His love for us, and because He knew how much help we needed, He developed a rescue mission. He sent His Son Jesus down from a sin-free heaven into a sin-filled earth. Jesus lived among us WITHOUT SIN and showed us the only way back to God. He made a way for us to be set free from the bondage and control of sin in our lives, and a way for us to be reconciled with God. His life, death and resurrection bring with it an opportunity for a new way of thinking, a new way of living, and a new **turning point** in our hearts that has eternal purpose and meaning.

Are you at a crossroads? A **point** in life where you need to decide what direction you need to go? I challenge you to **turn** your eyes upon Jesus. Allow Him to walk you through whatever you're going through. He is the way, the truth and the life, and He's the greatest gift you could ever give yourself this Christmas.

God bless you in the year to come. Robin 😊