

April, 2019

St. Mark's Lutheran Church, ELCA

Reaching Out with the Unconditional Love of God!

Worship Sundays at 9:30 am

605 Spruce St, Madison, WI 53715



Questions

Pastor Lisa Nelson

Good Friday is my favorite day of the Church year. I grew up in a liberal Missouri Synod Lutheran congregation in Fresno CA. Already, we have an oxymoron. Most Missouri Synod folks are not liberal, but some are. On top of that, my parents were faithful Christians and sociology professors at Fresno State. Another oxymoron. Most sociologists are not religious. They're observers of culture and people, not believers.

But what does this have to do with Good Friday? This combination of faithful and liberal allowed me to question my beliefs in a supportive environment. When I got to college, I actively questioned the way God did things. For instance, why did God become human and die for us? Why did anyone have to die for us? What does "dying for us" even mean?

I didn't believe in the divinity of Jesus during those four years of college. (Side note: I went to Lutheran Campus Ministry twice a week and worshipped in different congregations on Sundays through out this whole time!) During my last semester of college, I remember thinking about Jesus. I thought, "For a guy you don't believe in, he sure bugs you a lot."

I continued to wrestle with this during seminary and didn't really think I'd become a pastor until I went on internship and fell in love with the work. Even while at my first church, I wondered about Jesus. Did Jesus really make a difference? Did he real-



Pastor Lisa Nelson

ly need to save us? From what and why? Then, Sunday would come, or a funeral, and I would open my mouth to preach, and I would believe.

Good Friday was such a relief. All my questions and concerns would fall away, and I'd feel nothing but gratitude for a God who loved us so much as to become one of us and die for us. On that day, I could accept Jesus who said, "I am God, and I am here, whether you want me or not. I love this world, whether it loves me back or not. Nothing will stop me from loving."

I am much more at peace with this now. Time and a life of ministry can do that for a person. I am grateful for this peace, but it was a long time coming. Many people have serious questions about Jesus or God or Christianity. I welcome those questions, and I believe God welcomes those questions. Nothing will stop God from loving you—certainly not questions.

Peace, Pastor Lisa

Pastor Lisa will be installed Sunday, April 14, 2019 at 9:30 am.



Holy Week & Easter at St. Mark's

Please join us for Worship during Holy Week!



Pastor Lisa Nelson.

Palm Sunday, April 14 **Worship at 9:30 am**



Including the Installation of Pastor Lisa Nelson

Bishop Viviane Thomas-Breitfeld, South-Central Synod of Wisconsin, ELCA, will be officiating and will preach in worship. Join us in singing Hosannas as we hear again the story of Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem. Worship includes Holy Communion

Rev. Viviane Thomas-Breitfeld
Bishop, South-Central Synod, WI, ELCA

Good Friday, April 19 **Worship at 6:30 pm**

The ancient title for this day—the triumph of the cross—reminds us that the church gathers not to mourn this day but to celebrate Christ's life-giving passion and to find strength and hope in the tree of life. Join us as darkness falls and hear the passion story according to the Gospel of John from the arrest of Jesus to his burial. Pastor Lisa Nelson, preaching and presiding.

Easter Sunday **The Resurrection of Our Lord, April 21** **Worship at 9:30 am**

"I have seen the Lord!" Mary's proclamation is the culmination of the Gospel on this morning filled with joy and Alleluias! Join us in celebration of Christ's triumph over death. Worship includes Holy Communion, shouts of "He is Risen! Alleluia!" and the astounding news that Jesus has triumphed over death and the grave that we may know the saving grace of God. Pastor Lisa Nelson preaching and presiding.

Food Pantry Grant

St. Mark's Food Pantry has been awarded a grant from the 2019 Partners in Equity Food Grant Project from the Dane County Tamara D. Grigsby Office for Equity and Inclusion, in partnership with the Dane County Food Council. The grant is in the amount of \$1500 and it's intended purpose is to address issues related to healthy food access. St. Mark's was one of only three applicants to receive a grant. We are grateful for this support! The funds will be used to improve food security including access to foods for those with dietary restrictions.

Food Ministry Coordinator, Tony Esser, and volunteer Barb Zimmerman, frequently shop for food to supplement food pantry inventory. There are many items not provided by CAC or not often available. Thanks to Tony and Barb for making sure our pantry has what it needs!



From Our President

Lisa Manion

Finally, Spring is here. When we started Lent, it looked like we would still be standing in snow at Easter, but I'm glad the snow is gone and the world is turning a little greener.

We encountered some problems with water in the elevator as the thaw began. We didn't encounter this last summer during the extremely heavy rains, so we think it was caused by an ice dam on the roof. Jim is looking at ways to avoid that next year. If you see anything in the church that needs attention, please let me know. I'd rather spend a couple hundred dollars fixing something before it becomes a large project costing several thousand dollars!

I'm hoping Mad Plowing has done the last of the snow removal from the parking lot for the winter (fingers crossed). They did a good job and were cheaper than anyone else we received a quote from, but there was a lot of snow to remove this winter and their bills really added up (as Deb can attest)!

We're ready for Pastor Lisa Nelson to begin her ministry with us in April. The grant documents have been signed and we should start getting the money soon. We're currently working on the installation plans and will share more once we have details.

South Madison Unite!

Save Our Supermarket!

This organization, formerly known as Friends of Park Street, is a coalition of South Madison residents and their allies who seek to ensure equitable, convenient, and uninterrupted access to a full-service supermarket on South Park Street.

South Madison Unite has provided an information sheet entitled "Save Our Supermarket" which you will find on the back page of this newsletter.

To receive updates and news regarding this concern:

- join South Madison Unite at <https://www.southmadisonunite.org/join-us.html>
- "Like" us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/southmadisonunite/>

Because the bishop's schedule is very tight, we had some difficulty setting the date, but have now settled on Sunday, April 14 during worship at 9:30 am.

On the Food Ministry side, food donations are down this year from last for the food pantry. To add to that, usage is up in our food pantry. This is causing Tony to have to purchase more food this year. We are working on ways to improve food donations. There are specific things that Tony cannot get at CAC (Community Action Coalition) that are popular in the food pantry and we are having to purchase them (e.g., pineapple, canned peas, Hamburger Helper) and we want to encourage potential donors to donate those items to fill our shelves adequately. Our pantry is a vital way to feed the hungry in Madison!

Finally, Spring is here. The dark days of winter are behind and the promise of the resurrection is coming soon. I love this time of year.

Lisa Manion



You Can Help at St. Mark's! There Are Many Ways You Can Help!

We rely on volunteers for most of our maintenance and lawn care. The sanctuary and hallways need frequent vacuuming and dusting. Restrooms need to be cleaned regularly, and paper products re-stocked. Stairwells and lower level hallways need to be cleaned and mopped. Please look for ways that you can pitch in to keep our building looking great!

See Something That Needs to Be Done?

If you see something that needs to be repaired, cleaned, replaced, etc., please share your concern with President, Lisa Manion. Have an idea how to take care of the issue? Be sure to let us know how we can help! To leave a message at the church email StMarks@StMarksMadison.org. or call the office at 608-256-8463.

Faithful Innovation

What is Faithful Innovation?

St. Mark's is a participant in Faithful Innovation

This is a process, not a program, in which a group of congregations form an intentional “learning community.” Participating congregations will discern their unique answer to this question: *“As we listen to God, one another, and our neighbors, what future do we imagine God is bringing forth in our midst?”* The answer needs to come from Christ and our willingness to ask hard questions and listen for answers, as well as our ability to take risks, secure in our standing in Christ.

Through prayer, skill-building, action and reflection, participating congregations address the pressing questions about the future of God's church. The experience includes three Sunday afternoon workshops, listening experiments, and ongoing coaching calls with synod leaders and trained process coaches.

We will have a Guiding Team, the conduit through which our whole congregation is invited to participate. The team will receive coaching on how to engage others in our congregation throughout the process. Our coach will help answer questions that arise and address challenges we face in the process.

Dwelling in the Word

As we journey through this process of Faithful Innovation, we are invited to “dwell in the word.” We are encouraged to read Acts 16:6-15 (below) every day and consider what God might be saying to us, to

Asking God Questions

The questions we ask shape how we think about God, our congregation, each other, and our neighborhood. We want to learn to regularly ask “God Questions” of each other along this journey. We will listen for God's answers, dwell in scripture together, share stories about what God is doing at St. Mark's, and notice where God might be at work in our lives and in our neighborhood.

Examples of “God Questions”

- What might God be up to?
- What might God be saying to us?
- How do we sense God's presence in our daily lives (in our workplaces and in our neighborhoods)?
- What does God care about in our local communities?
- How might God be leading our congregation to join in something God is already doing?



notice new things in the scripture that we haven't noticed before, and to consider what these things might mean for us as individuals, as the community of St. Mark's and for our neighborhood.

Acts 16:6-15

They went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia. When they had come opposite Mysia, they attempted to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them; so, passing by Mysia, they went down to Troas. During the night Paul had a vision: there stood a man of Macedonia pleading with him and saying, ‘Come over to Macedonia and help us.’ When he had seen the vision, we immediately tried to cross over to Macedonia, being convinced that God had called us to proclaim the good news to them.

We set sail from Troas and took a straight course to Samothrace, the following day to Neapolis, and

from there to Philippi, which is a leading city of the district of Macedonia and a Roman colony. We remained in this city for some days. On the sabbath day we went outside the gate by the river, where we supposed there was a place of prayer; and we sat down and spoke to the women who had gathered there. A certain woman named Lydia, a worshipper of God, was listening to us; she was from the city of Thyatira and a dealer in purple cloth. The Lord opened her heart to listen eagerly to what was said by Paul. When she and her household were baptized, she urged us, saying, ‘If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come and stay at my home.’ And she prevailed upon us.

Installation of Rev. Lisa Nelson

With Reception to Follow

Sunday, April 14, 9:30 am

Please Join us for the Installation Service of our new pastor, Rev. Lisa Nelson, on Sunday, April 14 at 9:30 am worship.

Rev. Viviane Thomas-Breitfeld, Bishop of the South-Central Synod of Wisconsin, ELCA will preach and officiate. We are honored to have her joining us for this special event!

During the Service of Installation, Rev. Nelson and the People of St. Mark's Lutheran Church make vows to each other to be faithful to the teachings of Christ and the holy scriptures, to care for one another, to pray for one another, to support and encourage one another in our ministry together.

Installation Reception

Sunday, April 14 following worship, we will host a reception for Rev. Lisa Nelson to celebrate her installation. Please plan to attend! If you would like to help with planning or provide treats or refreshments, please speak to Lisa Manion, congregation president.



Blow, Spirit, Blow!

As we have made our journey through the past 8 plus months without a pastor, we have become profoundly aware of the whirl wind of the of the Holy Spirit blowing through the life and ministry of St. Mark's.

We chose not to be daunted by the shadows of financial and facility burdens or the many tasks that loomed, and have grown in faith and hope for what the future can hold.

We have been blessed with pastoral support from several pastors in our synod who have preached and presided at worship, helped us with pastoral needs and walked with us through this wilderness.

We have been blessed by a bishop and synod staff who listened to our needs, recognized the importance of our presence in this community and entered into our vision to be innovative in how ministry is done.

We have been blessed with the support of an ELCA grant that will help us as we begin this new chapter, and give thanks for Bishop Thomas-Breitfeld who pursued and secured this support.

We have been blessed by each other as we have risen to the challenge of sustaining our worship and ministries, as well as maintaining and improving our facility. Everyone has stepped up to take ownership in a variety of ways to meet the challenges.

We have been blessed by the many congregations, individuals, organizations and businesses who have supported our Food Ministries financially, as volunteers and with donations of food and supplies.

We were uncertain when we embarked on this journey. We had been told there was no hope for this tiny congregation in an old neighborhood on the south side of the city. But the Spirit blew. It blew fresh air into our bodies and into our minds. It blew away the shadows of negativity, and blew in new hope and new energy. It blew support for our worship and ministries not just to survive but to thrive and grow.

And now the Holy Spirit has blown Pastor Lisa to join with us as we continue our journey into the beautiful unknown with new ideas, new opportunities and new determination to hear God's call, hoist our sails and ride on the Spirit's tail!



St. Mark's Food Ministry

Food Pantry & Friday Meal Volunteers



One of the most unique things about St. Mark's Lutheran Church is our Food Ministry. Our Food Pantry and Friday Meal serve many people in our community. Volunteers are what keep this ministry running!

If you are interested in volunteering for the Food Pantry or the Friday Meal, please speak to Tony Esser or contact the church office.

Our Food Pantry is open on Tuesdays from 10:00 am to noon, and on Thursdays from 5:30 to 7:30 pm.

Volunteers help clients shop, restock shelves and help with cleaning and straightening the pantry. No experience or special skills required to volunteer!

Our Friday Meal volunteers work from 11:00 am to 2:00 pm to help setup the food serving line, serve food and clean up afterward. No cooking skills required! A great opportunity for both individuals and groups! Assemble a group of friends, relatives, co-workers, classmates, etc. and volunteer for a Friday Meal.



Assisting in Worship

We appreciate our worship assistants who greatly enhance our worship. You can participate by reading lessons, serving communion, offering prayers and more. Please check out the opportunities and add your name to the sign up sheet on the office door!

What Matters . . .

Stay connected to events and stories of faith in action in our synod! Email Synod Communicator & Event Manager, Deacon Vicki Hanrahan at vickih@scsw-elca.org to be added to "What Matters." Thank you for your partnership!



SAVE OUR SUPERMARKET!

South Madison will lose its only full-service supermarket in 2019.

WHO OWNS WHAT? WHO WANTS WHAT?

- The company that operates the Pick 'N Save at 1312 S Park wants to close their outdated store.
- Welton, a local developer, owns 1312 S Park and has a contract to sell it to SSM/Dean.
- The City owns the 3.5-acre Truman Olson lot south of Pick 'N Save; it may sell it Welton, so the local developer can build a new supermarket and affordable housing there.
- SSM/Dean wants to expand onto 1312 S Park and replace the Pick 'N Save with a new clinic.

HOW LONG COULD WE BE WITHOUT A SUPERMARKET?

SSM/Dean wants to buy 1312 S Park Pick 'N Save in April and begin demolition of the supermarket as soon as it can. So...

If the City says yes to Welton's plan in April 2019, we face a food gap of up to a year.

If the City says no to Welton's plan in April 2019, there may be no replacement supermarket for 2 years or more.

WHAT DOES THE CITY SAY ABOUT THE GAP IN SUPERMARKET SERVICE?

The City says it cannot prevent the food access gap. It is talking about two "solutions":

Transportation assistance: Free taxi service to stores. This did not work well when offered in the Allied and north Madison neighborhoods to deal with food access gaps.

Food delivery: Online ordering with free home delivery. However, the USDA has a rule that makes it illegal to use food stamps for online delivery purchases.



HOW CAN YOU PROTECT YOUR ACCESS TO HEALTHY FOOD?

- Join South Madison Unite! Write friendsofparkstreet@gmail.com to receive updates and take part in actions!
- Go to www.southmadisonunite.org to learn what's happening on this important health and social justice issue.
- Attend SSM's neighbor info meeting on April 4, 2019 at 5:30 PM at the Madison Labor Temple, 1602 S Park.