

St. Mark's Lutheran Church

Reaching Out With the Unconditional Love of God

605 Spruce St. – Madison, WI 53715 – 608.256.8463

www.stmarksmadison.org

December 2013 NEWSLETTER

I was sitting in the sanctuary praying as I do every morning (with my winter jacket on since we do not heat the sanctuary during the week) and realizing once again how much God loves each one of us. The focus of our Advent into Christmas season is recognizing how God comes into our waiting times, transforming the darkness into light. Leading us from broken heartedness into joy.

Thankfully and gratefully, we are not all brokenhearted as this season begins each year but for those who are, this becomes a season of hope. For the rest of us, there is always some part of our life, our ministry, our very selves that waits for the fullness of God to be revealed. This is absolutely something we know about here at St. Mark's. God's response is to offer love in the vulnerable, fragile, completely dependent gift of the child Jesus. It is a great truth that we get to observe and celebrate this Advent into Christmas season.

When the boys were three and four I took Christmas Eve day off. I had responsibilities for church that evening but I took the day off to teach them about the story of baby Jesus but also about the story of Santa Claus. I received several work phone calls and did not spend the day with the boys as I had intended. I demonstrated poor pastoral and parenting boundaries on that day. On the way to church that evening I tried to buy the boys off. I said, "tomorrow is Christmas and we are going to have so much fun". Nothing from the back seat. I said, "tomorrow is Christmas and that means Santa is coming and will bring presents". Nothing from the back seat. I tried once more, "I can hardly wait to see what Santa brings for us to play with". Finally Isaac sighed, the big heavy sign of the weary who are forced to put up with misguided souls and said, "Mom. Tomorrow will be fine. It will be fun but tonight we want to hear the story of how the angels sang because a baby was born. A baby was born, mom. That is what we want to celebrate tonight". I wasn't even sure Isaac knew the Christmas story and yet he taught me how desperately I needed to hear it again and let it change my heart. May the light dawn for all of us this Advent into Christmas season.

Pastor Lori



Pastor Lori Powell

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St. Mark's Food Pantry

Tuesday 10 a.m. - Noon & Thursday 5:45-7:45 p.m.



December food pantry needs are: Christmas Dinner fixings: yams, green beans, peas, gravy, cranberries. Thank you to all who partnered with us in our Community Foods Ministry this past year. Together, we can feed our neighborhoods...one family at a time. Merry Christmas! There has been an increase in the number of food pantry guests since the October reduction in food stamps. All contributions are welcome to meet this demand.

Weekly Prayer Focus

December

- 1 Debbie Thorp
- 8 Lillian Ulrich
- 15 Joann Wilson
- 22 Marilyn Withers
- 29 John & Donna Wrend

Happy
Birthday To
You....

December 4
Mel Gabriel

December 11
Betty Smith

December 26
Tom Taves



Financial Giving

Previous Month's Giving Summary

	Actual Giving	Budgeted Monthly
Members	\$2,287.00	\$8,500.00
Friends	\$ 470.00	\$ 850.00
Rent Rec'd	\$ 960.00	\$ 960.00
Soupalooza Fundraiser		\$560.00
Rent Rec'd from St. Mark's Community Foods		\$737.50

**Thank you to members and friends who help
St. Mark's serve in Christ's name.**

St. Mark's Community Calendar

Every Tuesday
Except on Holidays

Food Pantry 10 a.m. – 12 Noon

Every Thursday
Except on Holidays

Food Pantry 5:45 p.m. – 7:45 p.m.

Every Friday
Except on Holidays

Friday Free Meal 12:00 Noon – 1:00 p.m.

Sunday Dec. 22

Christmas Carols & Cookies 2:00-3:00 p.m.

Tuesday, Dec 24

Christmas Eve Service 4:00 p.m.

Christmas Carols & Cookies

Sunday, December 22, 2013

2:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

St. Mark's Lutheran ~ 605 Spruce St.

Come Join Us

for a Christmas Carol Hymn Sing
Choose your favorite Christmas Carol



and Christmas Cookies



*Christmas Eve
Worship*

**Come Join Us
Tuesday,
December 24
at 4:00 p.m.
for a
Service of
Lessons
and Carols**



Merry Christmas from the Staff at St. Mark's!

Council Corner

The Peace of The Lord Be With You,

In my last news article I started out by noting that "God is still speaking", a slogan our friends in the United Church of Christ like to use. This month I'd like to tell you that that is true. God IS still speaking. And God says St. Mark's Lutheran church is alive and well. How do I know this is what God is telling us? You may recall in the last newsletter both Pastor Lori and I mentioned the upcoming visit from the Mission Investment Fund on November 22nd. We wondered if they were coming to tell us that they would be closing St. Mark's because our MIF loan was too far behind.

Your Council

Officers

Lynn Miller
President

Jim Mayer
Vice-President

~

Members

Kate Krueger
316-1734

Jim Mayer
257-1136

Lynn Miller
224-0615

Tom Taves
798-3205

Debbie Thorp
255-2289

How could we reassure them that we have tried to meet our MIF obligation and will continue to submit as much as we could? But what if they said, "Sorry, we have to close the doors and sell the building." How could we tell you that St. Mark's time is up? What a blow to the congregation and the community that would be. But God is still speaking and told us through our friends at MIF that St. Mark's will continue. MIF, they told us, is not in the business to close down churches but to help them prosper. Praise God! I came out of that meeting feeling like a two hundred pound gorilla had been lifted off my back. Yes, we still have the mortgage and we promised to work closely with MIF to keep them informed of our status. But to hear them reassure us that they were not going to close the church was such a relief.

Now it is up to us to do our part. We need to continue to pay MIF as much as we can as regularly as we can. We need to send them our income and expense statements quarterly. We need to send them a realistic 2014 budget based on the best real numbers we can; not fantasy numbers we hope to achieve. Yes, God is still speaking. But God says "St. Mark's you still have a lot of work to do but with my help you can do it." This I believe and this is what I pray for. Will you join me in this prayer and work with me to continue the Good News of St. Mark's?

Have a blessed Christmas in the name of Immanuel, our Lord and Risen Savior!

Yours in Christ,

Lynn Miller



December 2013

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 ■ 9:30 AM St. Mark's Service ■ 10:30 AM FCCC Service	2	3 ■ 10:00 AM Food Pantry ■ 7:00 PM FCCC Bible Study	4 ■ 8:30 AM School Snack Program	5 ■ 5:45 PM Food Pantry	6 ■ 12:00 PM Meals For Madison	7
8 ■ 9:30 AM St. Mark's Service ■ 10:30 AM FCCC Service	9	10 ■ 10:00 AM Food Pantry ■ 7:00 PM FCCC Bible Study	11 ■ 8:30 AM School Snack Program	12 ■ 5:45 PM Food Pantry	13 ■ 12:00 PM Meals For Madison ■ 5:30 PM Scandinavian Club Prep	14 Scandinav...ub Dinner
15 ■ 9:30 AM St. Mark's Service ■ 10:30 AM FCCC Service	16	17 ■ 10:00 AM Food Pantry ■ 6:30 PM St. Mark's Council ■ 7:00 PM FCCC Bible Study	18 ■ 8:30 AM School Snack Program	19 ■ 5:45 PM Food Pantry	20 ■ 12:00 PM Meals For Madison	21
22 ■ 9:30 AM St. Mark's Service ■ 10:30 AM FCCC Service	23	24 ■ 10:00 AM Food Pantry ■ 4:00 PM St. Mark's Christmas Eve Service	25	26 ■ 5:45 PM Food Pantry	27 ■ 12:00 PM Meals For Madison	28
29 ■ 9:30 AM St. Mark's Service ■ 10:30 AM FCCC Service	30	31 ■ 10:00 AM Food Pantry ■ 7:00 PM FCCC Bible Study	1	2 ■ 5:45 PM Food Pantry	3 ■ 12:00 PM Meals For Madison	4