



The Forward

December 2022

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Www.stmarksheboygan.com



Worship and Sunday Programs in December

- You can watch a live stream of Sunday's service at Facebook.com/stmarksheboygan.com
- The sermon will be recorded and available after Sunday's service on our website
- Our Advent services have started and will be held every Wednesday at 6:30pm until December 21st.
- Christmas Eve Service will be held at 4:00pm on December 24th
- Bible study will continue to be held every Sunday @ 10am and Wednesday @9am

From The Pastor

"Fully Present"

"And they shall call his name Immanuel (which means, God with us)."

I don't know about you, but there's some days when it is just hard to be fully present. Whether it's not physically healthy, dealing with an emotional or mental issue, or just going through a difficult time in life or dealing with difficult individuals, it's hard to be fully present in the moment. It can be quite difficult especially during this holiday season, with so many extra things added to our plate. During this busy time of the year, it can be rather difficult to be fully present in the moment, taking in and enjoying everything that this season brings.

That's the wonderful thing about our Savior Jesus, the King of kings and Lord of lords, whose birth we celebrate each year at Christmas. In the midst of all the mess of this world that's going on around us, even in the midst of the individual messiness that each of us are dealing with in our own personal lives, when it's difficult for us to be fully present, God in the flesh comes down to earth to be fully present with us. He comes to live among us, in order to take all of the chaotic mess in our lives to make us whole, to restore us, to forgive us, to save us, and to live with us forever. So no matter what is bringing you down during this holiday season, no matter what is causing you to not fully be present at this time, know that your Savior, Jesus, comes to be fully present with you today and always! As always, I look forward to seeing you in worship and Bible studies!

Waiting for Jesus to come again, Pastor Tyler Werner

December Happenings

Monday, Dec 5th: Deacon Mtg @ 6:30pm

Tuesday, Dec 6th : Outreach Mtg @ 5:30pm

Monday, Dec 12th: Trustee Mtg @ 5:15pm

Council Mtg @6pm

BOD Mtg @ 7:00pm

Poinsettia Orders Due

Sunday, Dec 17th: Congregational Fund Mtg @10:00am

Christmas Decorating Schedule:

Dec 11th: 10:00am Set up Tree

Dec 12th: 6pm Tree Decorating

Dec 17th: 9:00am Poinsettias delivered & placed in church

R & R Luncheon:

The luncheon will be held on December 21st, 11:30am –1:00pm @ the Sheboygan Yacht Club. Please RSVP to Lorena Tislau. All are invited!

Service and Outreach

- The Outreach committee will once again be making soup for the Community Café on December 5th at 2pm. We will be making white chicken and tomato bisque. Everyone is welcome to help!
- We will be ringing bells for Salvation Army on Dec 9th and 10th at the South Business Piggly Wiggly. There is room for anyone to help—just show up if you are able to! The more the merrier!
- There will be a **Mitten Tree** in the Narthex where we will collect hats, mittens, and scarfs for the Salvation Army to distribute to those in need. If you are able, please add your donation to the tree. Let's fill it with beautiful winter accessories! We will collect until December 22.
- In November, a handful of members made decorative grass to sell as a fundraiser for the Bridgeway House. With the help of the congregational fund, they raised \$650! They will use the money to buy \$50 gift cards for all the moms and children who live in the house! Another group of members helped decorate the inside of the same house. Thank you to those members who took time out of their days to both decorate and hold a fundraiser for the house. What a great way to give back to our community!

Stewardship

Wrapped Gifts

A number of years ago, the mall out on Taylor Drive was still complete and had quite a few open stores. Near Christmas, a number of us set up shop in a vacant store, and we wrapped Christmas gifts for the

shoppers. We did this as a fund raiser for our youth group. It was fun. We met a lot of people. Shoppers were generous, and they appreciated not having to wrap all their presents themselves.

Why do we wrap Christmas gifts? Mainly, we don't want the person for whom the gift is intended to know what the gift is. We want the person for whom the gift is intended to be surprised and overjoyed when that person finally removes the wrapping paper. It is a special joy to see the children be so happy and excited about the gifts that they just received.

Martin Luther said that our God is a hidden God. God hides himself so that he must be believed. God hides himself in the waters of baptism, in the bread and wine of holy communion, and in the written words of the Bible. God the Holy Spirit uses these three means of grace to create faith and to strengthen faith in our hidden God.

God also hid himself in the man Jesus on the cross. We remember, excuse the pun, how Mary wrapped the baby Jesus in swaddling clothes. The baby Jesus was also God hiding himself because no one foresaw how this would turn out. The angel Gabriel told Mary that Jesus would be given the throne of his father David and that his kingdom would last forever. Mary must have been disappointed seeing Jesus hanging on the cross. That is not where a ruler should be. Yet Jesus hanging on a cross was God's way of showing the entire world that God loved all people, but only through the eyes of faith.

We Christians are also God's gifts to the world to show the world that God loves all people. As Jesus said in his Sermon on the Mount, "Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in Heaven." We Christians are God's hidden gifts to mankind. We are wrapped in our ordinary humanness with all of our faults. People don't expect people to be good to them.

But the Holy Spirit has given each of us gifts of time, talent, and treasure so that we have something to give to people whose lives are hurting or broken in some way. It is to be hoped that people will see the love of God for them in your love for them, unexpected and undeserved as it may be.

At Christmas we share our lives with loved one through the hidden gifts that we give to them. But being a good steward is an all-year job. Be a good steward. Gift yourself to others as God has gifted himself to us in Jesus.

	2021	2022
<i>Average Operating Fund Offerings per week</i>	\$ 3785	\$ 3390
<i>Average in-person Attendance per week at Services</i>	67	75
<i>Weekly Budget</i>	\$ 4540	\$ 4115

Parish Nurse News

Winter is here! According to Dano Mazo, MD, an infectious disease expert in the department of medicine,

Division of Infectious Diseases & Immunology, at NYU Langone Hospital-Brooklyn “There’s is a real concern that our hospitals will be overflowing with both flu and COVID-19 cases.” Why? Australia just had its severest flu season in 5 years and what happens in the Southern hemisphere is usually an indication of what’s to come here. Mazo says the US saw high levels of both the flu and COVID-19 at the end of Spring, which shows they can circulate at the same time. Mazo states “If you are over 65, you’re at highest risk for hospitalization and death for both.” I will share with you how stay healthy throughout the flu/COVID season.

Get the Right Flu Vaccine. Did you know that the influenza vaccine decreased the risk of flu by nearly a third who received it according to June 2022 CDC data? As of this year, the CDC urges that people 65 and older get one of the following **1) Fluzone High-Dose Quadrivalent** which contains 4 times the antigen (flu proteins our immune system recognizes and attacks) of a regular flu vaccine. **2) Flublok Quadrivalent**, with 3 times the antigen of a regular flu shot. **3) Fluvad Quadrivalent** which is made with an adjuvant, a substance that helps create a stronger immune response. All are quadrivalent which means they protect against 4 strains of the flu, instead of just 3. Research indicates that they could be more effective at preventing infection and flu-related hospitalizations than the usual flu vaccine. There isn’t useful evidence comparing the quadrivalent vaccines with each other. John Swartzberg, MD, clinical professor emeritus of infectious diseases and vaccinology at the University of California, Berkeley says “in general, we recommend older adults get whichever one of these 3 vaccines are available at their doctor’s office or local pharmacy.” If you can’t find one of these vaccines, get the regular flu shot.

Get These Shots, Too! Two other vaccines are of noteworthy importance when entering the flu season according to William Schaffner, MD, an infectious disease specialist at Vanderbilt University Medical Center in Nashville, Tennessee. **The updated COVID-19 vaccine.** Only 44 percent of adults older than 65 have received the suggested 2 booster doses of the COVID-19 Moderna or Pfizer vaccine, according to a University of Michigan poll published in August. In addition, you should get the one of the updated COVID-19 Moderna or Pfizer vaccines that have been approved- which target the original strain along with 2 omicron subvariants. Both have been proven to be extremely effective and research shows if you mix and match them, you may even get a more potent immune response per Dr. Swartzberg. **Pneumococcal vaccine.** It aids in preventing pneumonia, a possible complication of the flu and COVID-19 according to Swartzberg. The CDC advises that all adults over 65 and older get the one-time Pneumovax 23 shot. Depending on your health, your doctor may also have you get the Prevenar 13 shot as well. A third shot should also be considered if you are 50 and over: Shingrix. The two-dose vaccine is 97 percent effective in preventing shingles which can be excruciating and lead to long-lasting nerve pain-for people 50-69 and 91% effective for those in their 70’s and older per the CDC. This vaccine is advised even if you’ve had shingles before or received the older shingles vaccine, Zostavax. Another reason to get both Shingrix doses and keep up with your COVID-19 boosters is a study published on line earlier this year by the journal Open Forum Infectious Diseases. It found that people 50 and older who have a COVID diagnosis have a 15% higher risk of developing shingles than others in that age group.

Practice Avoidance Techniques. Most people dropped wearing their face masks during the summer,

but Mazo Advises that older adults put the masks back on in crowded indoor public spaces, particularly as the weather is getting cooler and infections of all kinds ramp up. If you can use N95s as mask quality is important. Ask others to take a home COVID-19 test before a social event if you're in an area with a lot of community spread of COVID-19. You may pick and choose which events to attend such as skipping a friend's indoor party so you can stay infection-free to attend a family member's wedding. It is crucial to wash your hands often and well (wet your hands, scrub them soap for at least twenty seconds and rinse). The journal *Epidemiology & Infection* published an online analysis of 6 studies which determined that each act of hand hygiene reduced the daily risk of developing an acute respiratory infection such as a cold or flu by 3 percent! Such a small act can make a big difference in your health. Also it goes without saying: stay away from people who are ill and stay home if you are sick. Check out my December bulletin board for more information to help you stay healthy this winter. I hope you have a healthy winter.

From: *Consumer Reports on Health*, November 2022.

Happy Birthday to You!

Cindy Dortman Dec 2

Carolyn Eiden Dec 2

Mary Daehn Dec 6

Lorraine Holzem Dec 6

Mary Sass Dec 6

Jacob Schaller Dec 7

Tom Sohr Dec 10

Claudia Krespsky Dec 11

Cora Erickson Dec 15

Nicole Herrmann Dec 15

Jessica Louisier Dec 15

Natasha McGranie Dec 20

James Rank Dec 22

John Sundee Dec 24

Lorena Tislau Dec 27

Michael Holzem Dec 28

Richard Martens Dec 29

Gloria Friedel Dec 31

Happy Anniversary!

Hank and Marilyn Kalkopf (25)

Chris Keul and Claudia Krespsky (11)

May God continue to bless you each and every year!



Glory to God in the highest,
and on Earth,
peace and goodwill
towards men.

Luke 2:14