

THE FORWARD of ST. MARK

SHARING THE LOVE OF JESUS

FEBRUARY 2021



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Missouri Synod-English District

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The FORWARD of St. Mark Monthly Newsletter
February 2021, Volume 15 Issue 2

PASTOR'S MESSAGE



A Groundhog and Jesus

Of all the holidays we celebrate as a nation I've always been intrigued with Groundhog Day. Since I was a little kid, when February 2 rolled along, I was glued to the television set as the entire nation turned its attention to a groundhog named Punxsutawney Phil. Now, if you somehow aren't acquainted with this yearly tradition, legend has it that if Phil sees his shadow on February 2, the winter chill will continue. On the other hand, if the weather is cloudy and he doesn't see his shadow, we can expect warmer temperatures and early spring. So, how accurate is Phil in predicting the future? Honestly, I don't know. Still, if Phil doesn't see his shadow that day, my sudden interest in dusting off the golf clubs greatly increases.

So why do I bring up Phil? Well, as strange as this may sound, I see a little similarity between the events that take place every February 2 in Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania and the events that took place a little over 2,000 years ago in Jerusalem.

As I mentioned above, every year people sit in anticipation waiting to see if Phil will see his shadow. If he doesn't great, an early spring. Two thousand years ago a group of women went to a tomb. What they anticipated was to find the tomb still sealed and the dead body of Jesus still inside. What they saw was completely the opposite. The stone was rolled away and the tomb was empty! It was through an angel of the Lord that the women heard the good news, "Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen. Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and on the third day rise" (Lk 24:5b-7).

While the good news of that first Easter morning doesn't guarantee an early spring, it does guarantee this. That through Jesus' death and resurrection the price for all our sins has been paid for. And through faith in Jesus as our Savior, we too will rise from the dead and live for eternity in heaven with all who believe! Now let's see if Phil can top that!

In His service,
Pastor Brett

ST. MARK LUTHERAN CHURCH: CONNECTING-SHARING-EQUIPPING-REFLECTING

Connecting by building bridges with our neighbor
Sharing the Good News of Jesus for a changed community
Equipping each other for opportunities to serve
Reflecting God's love through acts of kindness



When you are hospitalized or in need of Pastoral care,
especially in these trying times of Covid-19 and isolation,
please contact either Pastor Matz or the church office at 920-458-4343.

"His Unconditional Love"

When asked to highlight the most important commandment in all of Scripture, Jesus responded, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment" (Matthew 22:37-38). Every single thing we do, whether it involves work, family, friends, church, school, or just relaxing, is meant to be marked by loving God.

At the end of our days, the way we loved our heavenly Father will matter most. Our love for God matters more than any achievement, success, or anything else. It matters more than any possession, status, or relationship. And when we align our perspective with the first and greatest commandment, everything else comes into focus. When we pursue our loving God above everything, all other things fall into their proper places.

We were not created to offer our affections to anyone or anything but God first and foremost. To do otherwise is simply idolatry, and it will ruin the heavenly peace and simplicity God intends for his children. We create our own golden calves and ask them to satisfy us in ways only God can. We look to the world to offer us love it never had to begin with. But your heavenly Father has a never-ending love and affection for you. The commonly quoted verse John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." You will never be satisfied until you rest in the powerfully simple truth of Scripture that God has loved you and will always love you. And you will never experience the fullness of what Christ died to give you until you respond to his unconditional, unending love for us by crowning him Lord and loving him with every fiber of your being.

May you come to realize the beauty and fulfillment of a life lived in pursuit of God above all else as you spend time in loving him unconditionally just as He has loved us!



DO YOU REMEMBER to consider including St. Mark in your estate planning? Examples of how to give through your will, through a trust, through a gift, through a charitable deduction, and/or bonds, or as a beneficiary, are included in this booklet. After you have read this booklet, consider your legal counsel or tax professional to learn if a charitable deduction is best for you.

Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give. He should not reluctantly or under compulsion, for GOD loves a cheerful giver. 2 Corinthians 9:7



Membership Statistics

As of January 13, 2021

Confirmed:	220
Unconfirmed:	14
Baptized:	234



Good Stewardship Helps Make Jesus Known

We are in the Church Season of Epiphany. Epiphany means to shine a light on something or to enlighten someone about something. The lessons in church during this season have the goal of our showing others that God wants us Christians to enlighten people about Jesus. Witnessing to Jesus is the main work that God has called us Christians to do. God wants us Christians to glorify God by showing others how through Jesus God loves people.

On the first Sunday after Epiphany (January 6th), the Sunday lessons speak about the baptism of Jesus. This is the first time that Jesus presented himself publically to the people.

But Jesus did not go immediately from his being baptized to his being crucified. Instead, he wandered around the countryside from the far northern areas of Judea to Jerusalem itself. Jesus did this over a period of three years so that he could have contact with the people so that he could give people a chance to see who he was and to come to faith in him. He hoped that they would see that he was the Messiah that God had long promised to send to them.

On the one hand, Martin Luther said that our God is a hidden God. God hides himself in the Word of God and the sacraments, and we as Christians believe that there is more to the three means of grace than just earthly things. God also hid himself in a man named Jesus, who died on a cross as an ordinary thief. But through the eyes of faith, we Christians see that Jesus dying on the cross is God himself loving us and saving us. To this day, God remains hidden to many people.

On the other hand, when Jesus traveled around the countryside, he had with him a group of disciples. The disciples showed the people that there were people who believed in Jesus. The opinion of the disciples differed from the opinion of most of the people. The disciples saw that Jesus was the Christ, the son of the Living God.

We are like the disciples since it is our job to elicit an opinion about Jesus from the people whom we come into contact so that we can let them know that we believe that Jesus is our Savior. Our talking about Jesus as our Savior gives the Holy Spirit an opportunity to create faith in the person to whom we confess our faith in Jesus.

God gives us Christian stewards time, talent, and treasure so that we can use these gifts from the Holy Spirit to do God's work here in this world as long as we live. The stewardship gift most connected to witnessing is time. Are you willing to take the time to talk to a person and find out what he or she thinks about Jesus? "I believe that Jesus is my Savior from sin. How do you feel about Jesus?"

God has richly blessed us his stewards so that we can help others to have an epiphany and come to saving faith in Jesus Christ.

The Stewardship Committee



ST MARK/AUDREY BALLSCHMIDER SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Parents and students applying for registration to Lutheran High School for the school year of 2021/2022 and wish to apply for the scholarship. Please fill out the TADS application form which determines the NEED dollar level you qualify for. The forms are available at Lutheran High at a cost of \$25.00. This should be done by April.

If you have questions, please contact Tim Becker, Carol Carriveau, or Gary Leonhardt through the church office.

GIVING and WORSHIP ATTENDANCE COMPARISON
2020 through December 2020 Compared to 2019

5

	2019	2020
Average Operating Fund Offerings per week (see Note 1)	\$3,815	\$3,950
Average In-person Attendance per week at Services (see Note 2)	\$ 111	\$ 50
Weekly Budget (see Note 3)	\$4,510	\$4,540

Note 1: 2020 Giving includes offerings during Worship and payments received in Church Office through the end of December. Values do not include special fund donations to ministries such as We Care, the Food Pantry, the Vineyard Fund, the Youth Group, and building projects. These donations were approximately \$425 per week through December 2020. Other sources of funds, such as outside contributions, Memorials, refunds, rebates, and transfers from the Congregational Fund, are also not included in the amounts.

Note 2: 2020 attendance per week includes only in-person attendance. Comparable online attendance figures are not available for livestreamed services. Online attendance since live streaming began on March 29 ranged from approximately 14 to 53. 'Views' of recorded services ranged from 88 to 627.

Note 3: Budget figures are included as a comparison because the budget was the estimated amount voted on by the Congregation Membership to meet the Congregation's financial requirements during the year. Actual expenditures are available in the monthly accounting report distributed by the Treasurer.

Note 4: These amounts are presented for comparison purposes only. Our individual giving amount should be based on being faithful to the Lord so that we return a generous amount of the gifts He gave us.



February 17	Ash Wednesday	4:00 pm
February 24	Mid-Week	4:00 pm
March 3	Mid-Week	4:00 pm
March 10	Mid-Week	4:00 pm
March 17	Mid-Week	4:00 pm
March 24	Mid-Week	4:00 pm



March 28	Palm Sunday	9:00 am
April 1	Maundy Thursday	4:00 pm
April 2	Good Friday	4:00 pm Only
April 4	Easter Sunday	9:00 am Only



February 2021

St. Mark Lutheran Church Monthly Calendar of services, meetings and events.
Please see the weekly Messenger, available at each worship service, for important changes and updates.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	
7 9:00am Worship (w/HC) Streamed online @ Facebook.com /stmarksheboygan 10:00am Bible Study	8 6:00pm BOD Meeting	9	10 9:00am-12:30pm Parish Nurse in Office 4:00pm Confirmation Class through Zoom 5:00pm Bells Rehearsal	11 No Church Service	12 No Church Service	13
14 Valentine's Day 9:00am Worship Service Streamed online @ Facebook.com /stmarksheboygan 10:00am Bible Study	15 President's Day	16	17 Ash Wednesday 9:00am-12:30pm Parish Nurse in Office 4:00pm Worship (w/HC) 5:00pm Bells Rehearsal	18 No Church Service	19 9:30am Food Pantry Drive-Thru	20
21 9:00am Worship (w/HC) Streamed online @ Facebook.com /stmarksheboygan 10:00am Bible Study 10:15am Congregational Fund Meeting	22	23	24 9:00am-12:30pm Parish Nurse in Office 4:00pm Worship Service 5:00pm Bells Rehearsal	25 No Church Service	26	27
28 9:00am Worship Service Streamed online @ Facebook.com /stmarksheboygan 10:00am Bible Study Food Pantry Sunday						

SUBJECT TO CHANGE



VOLUNTEERS SERVING IN THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY



Note: If you are unable to attend on your assigned day, please switch with someone else and notify the church office of the change, so bulletins can be corrected.

FEBRUARY 2021 VOLUNTEER SCHEDULE

Day	Date	Time	Sound	Projection	Facebook Page	Ushers	Altar Guild	Deacon
February 4	Thurs	6:30pm	—	—	—	—	—	—
February 7	Sun	9:00am	Jeff Evans	Dave Hilpertshauser	Rob Sass	—	Ginny Altendahl	Jim Leonhardt
February 11	Thurs	6:30pm	—	—	—	—	—	—
February 14	Sun	9:00am	Dave Hilpertshauser	Drew Thimmig	Rob Sass	—	—	Todd Goebel
February 17	Wed	4:00pm	—	—	—	—	Kathy Matz	Jim Leonhardt
February 21	Sun	9:00am	Tim Matz	Rob Sass	Dave Hilpertshauser	—	Cherie Leonhardt	Needed
February 24	Wed	4:00pm	—	Kathy Matz	—	—	—	Needed
February 28	Sun	9:00am	Rob Sass	Drew Thimmig	Dave Hilpertshauser	—	—	Jeff Leffin

SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Did you know that more than 37 million people in the United States may have chronic kidney disease (CKD)? Also, almost 1 in 3 people with diabetes have CKD! This month and next month I will be discussing CKD, how the kidneys work, who is at risk for CKD, what are the symptoms of CKD, does CKD cause other health problems and what happens if my kidneys fail.

Your kidneys are 2 bean shaped organs just under your rib cage on each side of your spine. The kidneys' principal job is to filter extra water and wastes out of your blood stream to make urine. Your kidneys filter 30-50 gallons of blood each day! To keep your body working correctly, the kidneys stabilize the salts and minerals – such as calcium, phosphorus, sodium and potassium that circulate in the blood. The kidneys also produce hormones that assist in controlling blood pressure, make red blood cells and keep your bones strong.

CKD refers to decreased kidney function that extends over 3 months or more. It has many different stages. In the early to middle stages of the disease, an assessment by a kidney doctor could reveal an underlying cause of the CKD that may be correctable, restoring kidney function or steps can be taken to protect the remaining kidney function, so you can maintain a fairly normal life and life span. Your kidneys are amid the most industrious organs of the body with an abundant amount of work capacity so they can function effectively during the earlier stages of mounting damage. Subsequently, CKD frequently goes unnoticed, leaving you with significant kidney damage when finally diagnosed. You can protect your kidneys from further damage and prevent the disease worsening to the point of kidney failure by taking appropriate steps early.

First, I would like to discuss who is more likely to develop CKD. You are at risk for CKD if you have **1) Diabetes**. This is the leading cause of CKD. High blood glucose or blood sugar from diabetes can damage blood vessels in your kidneys. **2) High Blood Pressure (BP)**. High BP is the second leading cause of CKD. Like high blood sugar, high BP can damage blood vessels in your kidneys as well. Almost 1 in 5 of adults with high BP has CKD. **3) Heart disease**. Research demonstrates a link between kidney disease and heart disease. People with heart disease are at higher risk for kidney disease and vice versa. Researchers are working to improve the understanding of the relationships between kidney and heart disease. **4) Family history of kidney failure**. If your mother, father, sister or brother has kidney failure you are at risk for CKD. It does tend to run in families. If you have kidney disease urge your family members to get tested. Your chances of having kidney disease increase with the age. Also, the longer you have had diabetes, high BP, or heart disease, the likelihood of having kidney disease increases. African Americans, Hispanics and American Indians tend to have a higher risk of CKD mostly due to higher rates of diabetes and high BP among these groups. Scientists are studying other possible reasons for this increased risk.

What are the early symptoms of CKD? Early CKD may not have any symptoms. You might wonder how you could have CKD and feel fine. For instance, you can donate one kidney and remain healthy. You can also have kidney damage without any symptoms, since despite the damage to your kidneys, they continue to do enough work to keep you feeling fine. For most people, the only way to know if you have CKD is to get your kidney function checked with blood and urine tests.

As kidney disease progresses, a person may have swelling or edema which occurs when the kidneys can't get rid of the extra fluid and salt. Edema can show up in the legs, feet, or ankles, and sometimes in the hands or face. Symptoms of advance CKD include chest pain, dry skin, itching or numbness, feeling tired, headaches, increased or decreased urination, loss of appetite, muscle cramps, nausea, shortness of breath, sleep problems, difficulty concentrating, vomiting and weight loss.

Stay tuned for next month's continued discussion on CKD and kidney failure. We will look at diagnosis and treatment of CKD/renal failure. I will also discuss ways you can keep your kidneys healthy.

From: *Mayo Clinic Health Letter*, January 2021 and www.niddk.gov

Carolyn Eiden, RN
Parish Nurse



I will be in my Parish Nurse office every Wednesday in February from 9 a.m.—12:30 p.m.

THANK YOU!



LCMS
MINISTERIO HISPANO
CONDADO DE SHEBOYGAN

January 7, 2021

Happy New Year

Greetings Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The year 2020 was a difficult year, full of challenges and difficulties both for our Hispanic Ministry and for our sister churches. It was definitely a very difficult year for all of us, but within all that, the hand of God was in our midst, supporting us and providing for our ministry. God has been good; we are grateful that He has allowed us to reach a new year 2021.

We are blessed that God has touched lives around us to provide for our ministry in 2020 and the previous years. We are thankful that people like you have said, "here I am Lord" when He has extended the call to provide support to our Ministry. Thanks for your commitment to helping us with this ministry. It is sincerely appreciated.

We are really very grateful, because thanks to these donations we have been able to continue to preach the Gospel of Our Lord. Thanks to that we continue to carry his message of reconciliation, love, peace, forgiveness of sins, salvation, and eternal life. Thanks to God and your contributions we can continue baptizing new lives adding them to God's family; we can continue to confirm youth and adults. Thanks to this we can continue the work of Our Lord reaching part of the Hispanic community of Sheboygan County. With the generous support of people like you, we will be able to continue to reach many souls through this Ministry. Through our mission efforts, we have been able to heal, save and deliver many souls.

We pray to the Lord that the work of this Ministry continues in our midst. We pray that He continues to touch lives, bringing the lives that need to be saved. We pray that God will continue to expand his ministry here and around Sheboygan County.

We pray to God and give thanks for the lives of all of you. We pray to God, to give you health and peace in this New Year. We pray to God for your continued support for our Ministry.

Please continue to pray for this on-going ministry partnership. We look forward to seeing what the Lord will do through this to His glory in Sheboygan County in 2021 and the following years.

In Christ, His humble servant and yours.

Pastor David Blas

Sheboygan County Hispanic Outreach



We're always looking for new and detailed information to publish upcoming events. The deadline is the 15th of the month. When emailing to jleff@att.net, please use the words FORWARD (month) in the subject line (Word format—not PDF, please.) You can also call my phone number (920.458.0886) and either leave a detailed message or your return number. There is a drop box at church, but since I am worshipping online at the present time, I am not faithful with checking it. If you prefer a "real voice", please call after 2 PM. Thank you. Julie Leffin/FORWARD Editor

Birthday blessings to you!



Tim Matz	February 2
Judy Koball	February 3
Stacey Falkenberg	February 5
Paul Herrmann	February 5
Dawn Marver	February 10
Don Koball	February 14
Ralph Schwerin	February 14
Azure Tinkle	February 17
Todd Goebel	February 18
Mary Weaver	February 19
Benjamin Falkenberg	February 20
Karen Koelpin	February 20
Jim Davis	February 22
Willard Jost	February 26
Lyle Schultz	February 26
Drew Hoblitzell	February 27
Sherry Bath	February 28

God bless your years together!

Tim and Kathy Becker	February 3	53 years
Gloria and Tim Friedel	February 8	57 years
Randy and Jeni Rydz	February 11	43 years
Mike and Maxine Keppler	February 20	61 years



A word of gratitude . . .

St. Mark has been blessed through the generosity of many businesses who pay to advertise in The FORWARD. Please be kind and consider patronizing these monthly advertisers, as their ad donations keep the cost of The FORWARD to a monthly minimum, if any.

And when you do, feel free to mention your appreciation on behalf of St. Mark Lutheran Church.

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FEBRUARY 2021
FORWARD
MONTHLY
NEWSLETTER

