

THE FORWARD of ST. MARK

SHARING
THE LOVE
OF JESUS

JANUARY 2021



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St. Mark Lutheran Church

Missouri Synod-English District
Pastor Brett Matz
1019 North 7th Street
Sheboygan, Wisconsin 53081
(920) 458-4343

Web site:
www.stmarksheboygan.com
E-mail addresses:
office@stmarksheboygan.com
pastor@stmarksheboygan.com
treasurer@stmarksheboygan.com

The FORWARD of St. Mark Monthly Newsletter
January 2021, Volume 15 Issue 1

PASTOR'S MESSAGE

Just Another Year? I Hope Not!

Welcome to the New Year! And for many of us how glad we were to see 2020 come to an end. It certainly was a year we will never forget for a variety of reasons, however, that's all in the past. It's time to look forward and that's what the beginning of a new year does. A new year brings with it new hopes and new dreams and new aspirations. You know, those same things we said at the beginning of 2020...and look how that turned out.

It's so easy for us to just turn the calendar to a new month or a new year and think everything will just get better. That everything bad going on around us will magically disappear. But it doesn't work that way, does it? The pain. The problems. All of it follows us from day to day, week to week, month to month and even year to year. If there was just some way we could leave it all behind us? If there was some way we could give our problems to someone else and have that person deal with them? Guess what? We can!

Read what the psalmist had to write:

I raise my eyes toward the mountains. From whence shall come my help?

My help comes from the LORD, the maker of heaven and earth (Psalm 121:1-2).

How much of each day do you spend worrying about things going on in your life? One hour? Two hours? Three hours? Maybe even more? Now take that time and multiply it by 365. It's amazing how much time we waste in one year worrying. Instead, why not do what Jesus said to do: "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls" (Matthew 11:28-29).

Rest. Peace. Comfort. That's what our God wants to give you. "Fear not," He says, "for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand" (Is 41:10).

The same God, who sent His One and only Son to save you, will take care of you in body, mind and soul. Make this year a year you will truly remember. Don't worry...be happy! God will take care of you. Let Him.

God's blessings to you and your family this New Year.

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.

In January, the Church begins the Epiphany season. Epiphany comes from a Greek word that means “to show” or “to make an appearance.” During the Epiphany season, in the gospels we see how Jesus traveled around the countryside and made himself known to the people through his preaching and his miracles. The emphasis of the modern Epiphany season is to show us Christians how we too are to make Jesus known to other people.

Epiphany begins on January 6th. That is the date on which the Church celebrates the Wise Men from the East finding the baby Jesus in Bethlehem.

On December 25th, we celebrate the Jewish shepherds finding Jesus in Bethlehem. On January 6th, we celebrate the Gentile Wise Men finding Jesus in Bethlehem.

Because the January 6th visitors were Gentiles, the Eastern Orthodox Christian Churches celebrate January 6th as their Christmas Day.

We remember from the story of the Wise Men that they brought with them three gifts – gold, frankincense, and myrrh. These gifts were most welcome for the Holy Family when they had to flee Bethlehem and live in Egypt for a couple of years.

When Joseph went to Bethlehem for the registration, most than likely he did not take with him enough money to live there for more than a week. These gifts from God through the Wise Men enabled the Holy Family to stay alive in Egypt until they felt safe to move back to Nazareth.


In the same way, God gives us stewards gifts of time, talent, and treasure because he wants us to use them to help others stay alive long enough for them to come to faith in Jesus Christ. By being friends with people and by taking care of people with those gifts, we earn the right to talk to them about Jesus. Their perception that we are concerned about their physical welfare gives them the trust that our concern about their spiritual need is also genuine.

Being good stewards helps us to be good stewards. God does not want us to simply stay at home and enjoy the gifts and blessings that he has given to us.

God wants us to be out in the world with people. Jesus' last words to his disciples before he ascended back into Heaven were, “You shall be my witnesses” throughout the entire world.

Be a good steward. Be a good witness. Help all people to know that God loves them through Jesus Christ.

The Stewardship Committee



Estate Planning

Consider a gift to St. Mark

Your donation to the Congregational Fund can enable your church to do great things through this method of giving.

- ★ Mission
- ★ Education
- ★ Building Repairs
- ★ Outreach
- ★ Church Related Program
- ★ Special Needs



Membership Statistics

As of December 14, 2020

Confirmed:	220
Unconfirmed:	14
Baptized:	234

2020 YEAR END COMMITTEE REPORT



Events

1. I sent notes to the shut-ins in spring and fall during the lockdown at facilities due to COVID-19 since I can't visit them.
2. AED: has a new battery and defib pads obtained from Blaine Werner a retired Fireman from the City of Sheboygan in August. He gave them to us for free! He would also like to give a
3. free CPR course to the church based on the American Heart Association guidelines as he
4. is starting a new business. I will look into this after COVID is under control.
5. I continue placing health information in the bathrooms and my bulletin board, but cannot put out extras for people to take with them due to the COVID restrictions in place.
6. Once the lockdown for the Covid-19 was lifted and church services started, I started my office hours on Wednesdays and resumed GriefShare.
7. A. I attended the North/South WI Parish Nurse Convocation on Oct 6th at Peace Lutheran, Beaver Dam

GriefShare

1. I resumed the class started in the Spring with one of the 3 participants returning. This participant quit the program early as she was having family issues but is considering coming back in the fall when I restart it.
2. I am the only facilitator at this time as Sherry Brusse is in ill health.
3. The next session was Scheduled to start September 16th. Because of COVID-19 no one responded and GriefShare is on hold until Spring.
4. I continue to send out the grief books from the Stephen ministry to members in the congregation who have lost loved ones.

Stephen Ministry

1. We had been invited to join Trinity Lutheran downtown for the Stephen ministry training
2. I have been advertising this in the Forward and Messenger and even had Pastor announce it, with nobody being interested. We no longer have any Stephen Ministers in the congregation.

Food Pantry ministry

1. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic and changes to the food pantry to drive in service, My ministry is on hold at least until the end of the year. I hope the food pantry will get back to some normalcy eventually so I can continue this very important ministry.

We Care Fund.

1. A few months ago a member was helped with medical bills.
2. Donations continue to trickle in. If you know someone from the congregation who needs help let me know. Everything is confidential.
3. We recently helped a member of St. John's in Plymouth with medical bills.
4. Current balance as of October 31st is \$3,709.40.

Respectfully submitted,
Carolyn Eiden
Parish Nurse

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

5

	2019	2020
Average Operating Fund Offerings per week (see Note 1)	\$3,660	\$3,815
Average In-person Attendance per week at Services (see Note 2)	\$ 105	\$ 47
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 November. 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 \$420 per week through November 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.



**St. Mark Lutheran Church
Board of Directors Roster**



Gary Leonhardt, Chairperson
Cherie Leonhardt, Vice Chairperson
Peg Bulkow, Secretary
Todd Goebel, Member at Large
Open Position, Member at Large

January 2021

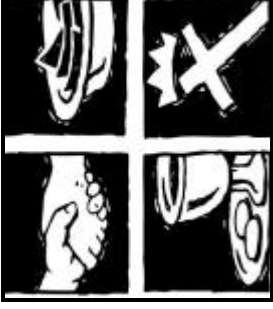
St. Mark Lutheran Church Monthly Calendar of services, meetings and events.
Please see the weekly Messenger, available at each worship service, for important changes and updates.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
3 9:00am Worship (w/HC) Streamed online @ Facebook.com /stmarksheboogan 10:00am Bible Study 10:00am Take down decorations	4	5	6 <i>Epiphany</i> 9:00am-12:30pm Parish Nurse in Office 4:00pm Confirmation Class through Zoom	7 No Church Service	8 9:30am Food Pantry Drive-Thru	9
10 9:00am Worship Service Streamed online @ Facebook.com /stmarksheboogan 10:00am Bible Study	11 6:00pm Council Mtg 7:00pm BOD Meeting	12	13 9:00am-12:30pm Parish Nurse in Office	14 No Church Service	15	16
17 9:00am Worship (w/HC) Streamed online @ Facebook.com /stmarksheboogan 10:00am Bible Study 10:15am Congregational Fund Meeting	18 <i>Martin Luther King, Jr. Day</i>	19	20 9:00am-12:30pm Parish Nurse in Office	21 No Church Service	22 9:30am Food Pantry Drive-Thru	23
24 9:00am Worship Service Streamed online @ Facebook.com /stmarksheboogan 10:00am Bible Study <i>Food Pantry Sunday</i>	25	26	27 9:00am-12:30pm Parish Nurse in Office	28 No Church Service	29	30
31 9:00am Worship Service Streamed online @ Facebook.com /stmarksheboogan 10:00am Bible Study						

SUBJECT TO CHANGE



VOLUNTEERS SERVING IN THE MONTH OF JANUARY



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.

JANUARY 2021 VOLUNTEER SCHEDULE

Day	Date	Time	Sound	Projection	Facebook Page	Ushers	Altar Guild	Deacon
January 3	Sun	9:00am	Tim Matz	Rob Sass	Dave Hilpertshauser	—	Needed	Jim Leonhardt
January 7	Thurs	6:30pm	—	—	—	—	—	—
January 10	Sun	9:00am	Dave Hilpertshauser	Drew Thimmig	Rob Sass	—	—	Jim Leonhardt
January 14	Thurs	6:30pm	—	—	—	—	—	—
January 17	Sun	9:00am	Jeff Evans	Dave Hilpertshauser	Rob Sass	—	Needed	Needed
January 21	Thurs	6:30pm	—	—	—	—	—	—
January 24	Sun	9:00am	Rob Sass	Drew Thimmig	Dave Hilpertshauser	—	—	Todd Goebel
January 28	Thurs	4:00pm	—	—	—	—	—	—
January 31	Sun	9:00am	Tim Matz	Rob Sass	Dave Hilpertshauser	—	—	Jeff Leffin

SUBJECT TO CHANGE

After the holidays we see an increase in depression and anxiety in people. This year it will be worse with the COVID Pandemic. COVID-19 has been associated with mental health challenges related to the fears of getting the disease and dying from it as well as dealing with the social distancing and isolation we are dealing with. For example, symptoms of anxiety disorder and depressive disorder escalated substantially from April to June of this compared to the same time in 2019. Fear and anxiety regarding a new disease and what could happen can be overpowering and trigger strong emotions in adults and children. Public health actions like social distancing could make people feel isolated and lonely which can increase feelings of stress and anxiety. I'd like to share things you can do for your mental health during these difficult times.

Take care of your body. **1) Get enough sleep.** Go to bed and get up at the same time each day. **2) Participate in regular physical activity.** Consistent physical activity and exercise can aid in decreasing anxiety and enhance your mood. Find an activity that includes movement such as dancing or exercise apps. In warmer weather, get outside even to your backyard which makes it easy to maintain your distance from others. **3) Eat healthy.** Choose a well-balanced diet. Keep away from loading up on junk foods and refined sugar. Curb your caffeine intake as it may magnify stress and anxiety. **4) Avoid tobacco, alcohol, and drugs.** You are at higher risk of lung disease if you smoke or vape. Because COVID -19 affects the lungs your risk increases even more. Using alcohol to manage your depression or anxiety can make matters worse and decrease your coping skills. Stay away from drugs to help you cope unless your doctor prescribes them for you. **5) Limit screen time.** Turn off electronic devices for a certain amount of time each day, especially for at least 30 minutes before you go to bed. Make a deliberate effort to devote less time in front of a screen-TV, tablet, computer, and phone each day. **6) Relax and recharge.** Set aside time for yourself. Just a few minutes of quiet time can be invigorating and can aid in helping to quiet your mind a decrease anxiety. Countless people benefit from practices like deep breathing, tai chi, yoga, or meditation. You can also soak in a bubble bath, listen to music, or read or listen to a book- whatever works for you. Select a technique that works for you and practice it regularly.

Take care of your mind. Reduce stress triggers by **1) Keeping your regular routine.** As well as keeping a regular bedtime routine it is also important to stick to a regular time for meals, bathing and getting dressed, work or study schedules and exercise. Likewise set aside time for activities you enjoy. This predictability can make you feel more in control. **2) Limit exposure to news media.** Constant news about COVID-19 from all types of media can increase fears regarding the disease. Also, limit reading, hearing, or watching other news, but keep updated on national and local recommendations. Examine reliable sources such as the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) or the World Health Organization (WHO). **3) Stay busy.** A diversion can get you away from the cycle of negative thoughts that feed anxiety and depression. Take pleasure in hobbies you can do at home. Find a new project to complete or one that has been on the back burner. Accomplishing something positive to manage anxiety is a healthy coping mechanism. **4) Focus on positive thoughts.** Opt to concentrate on the positive things in your life rather than how bad you feel. Think about starting each day by listing things you are thankful for. Keep a sense of hope, work to acknowledge changes as they occur and attempt to keep problems in perspective. **5) Remember God is always there for you.** "Be strong and of good courage; don't be afraid, neither be dismayed: for the Lord, your God is with you wherever you go" Joshua 1:9. **6) Set Priorities.** Don't become overcome by large list of things to tackle while at home. Set small goals each day and give yourself credit for each step in the right direction.

Connect with others. Build, support and strengthen relationships. **1) Make connections** virtually by email, texts, phone or FaceTime or similar apps. **2) Do something for others.** Find purpose in helping others around you. Again, you can email, text, or call to check on your friends, family, and neighbors, especially those who are elderly. You could also send a note to brighten their day.

If you find yourself feeling sad, helpless, angry, irritable, anxious, or afraid, have difficulty concentrating, change in appetite, body aches/pains or difficulty sleeping which lasts for several days or more you may need help. You can ask your health care provider for a referral, check with Mental Health America in Sheboygan at 458-3951 or contact me.

From: mayoclinic.com

Carolyn Eiden, RN
Parish Nurse

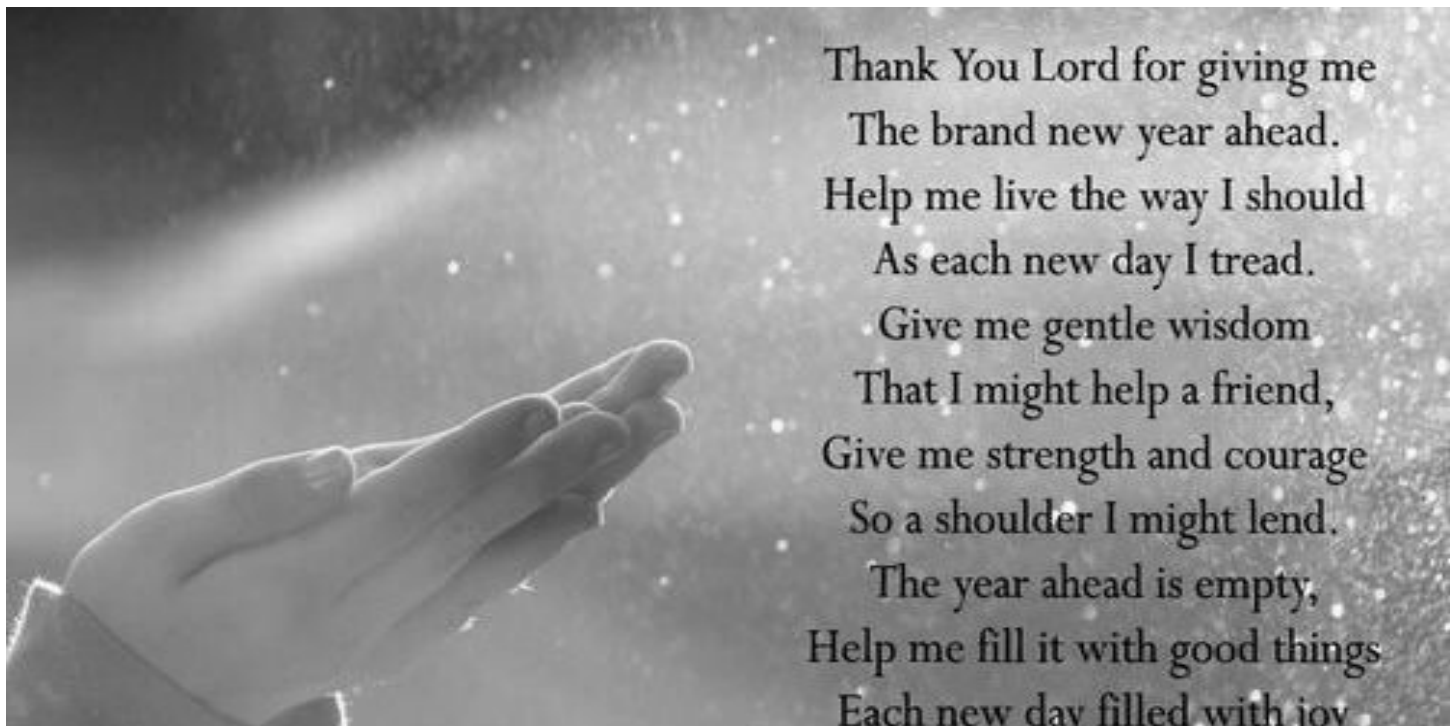


GriefShare is on hold until Spring, due to Covid-19.



New Year is a time for reflection and brings with it the hope for better things in the coming year. These religious Christian New Year quotes remind us how the presence of God in our lives can give us strength and courage throughout the New Year and times of change.

- May He give you the desire of your heart and make all your plans succeed.
~ *Psalm 20:4*
- In his heart a man plans his course, but the Lord determines his steps.
~ *Proverbs 16:9*
- You crown the year with Your goodness, And Your paths drip with abundance.
~ *Psalm 65:11 (New King James Version)*



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!



Linda Williams	January 2
Melissa Eiden	January 3
Kathleen Leonhardt	January 9
Gary Leonhardt	January 10
Libby Ogea	January 10
Kathy Sundee	January 12
Phyllis Dergantz	January 13
Carol Falk	January 13
Pat Davis	January 17
Kim Diener	January 17
Barb Mueller	January 19
Kelly Dominguez	January 20
Winter Tinkle	January 20
Danny Carriveau	January 22
Jeff Leffin	January 22
Megan Friedel	January 23
Scott Schramm	January 23
Joshua Fritz	January 24
Christopher Keul	January 24

God bless your years together!

Tom and Roxie Sohr	January 11	29 years
Boots and LaVerne Brandt	January 29	55 years



Our Christian sympathies to the families of

Ruth Pape

9.26.31—11.15.2020

Muriel Gill

5.5.24—11.16.2020

Clare Bulkow

3.4.44—11.25.2020

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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JANUARY 2021
FORWARD
MONTHLY
NEWSLETTER

