



Life

A Publication of St. Mark Evangelical Lutheran Church

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December 2024

“Be still, and know that I am God!” (Ps. 46:10)

Advent is here and the time of waiting, watching and preparing for the birth of our Savior has arrived. This Advent season waiting, watching, and preparing for the birth of Jesus may not be what we are thinking about. Our minds may still be swirling from the election and all that has come from that, or we may be concerned for our sisters and brothers living in places of war and conflict. We may wonder how people in the Quad Cities who are unhoused will get through the winter. I dare say that many of us are feeling overwhelmed and stressed as the result of all that is taking place in the world, our country and our local community. So, what can we do to bring the stress down especially during this season of waiting, watching and preparing for the birth of our Savior, “Emmanuel-God with us.” Maybe this is the year we do something different and radical. What if we would simply **“Be Still”** and truly know and experience God with us.



Here’s a crazy idea. What if the Sundays during Advent as we are waiting, watching and preparing for the birth of Jesus we took a few minutes out of our day to center ourselves. We could start by finding a quiet place to sit maybe light a candle, read scripture, pray and listen to God. What if this year we hear and act on the words from Psalm 46:10 and decide to be still and, in the stillness, let ourselves truly know and experience God as God.

I believe that with all the chaos and tension happening around us to take some deep breaths and live in the quiet and stillness of our loving caring God the waiting, watching and preparing for Emmanuel could take on new meaning. This Advent season what if we allow God to touch our hearts in new ways and maybe even in old ways. In the stillness you might hear God calling you and me to help at the food pantry, or to turn in those pledge cards so the finance team can complete the budget, or calling you to be an assisting minister, or nudging you to invite a friend to join you at worship. In the stillness and quiet of waiting, watching and preparing for the birth of “Emmanuel-God with us” one never knows what we might hear God call us to. Hopefully we, along with our sisters and brothers (our siblings) in Christ, will allow this season of waiting, watching and preparing for the birth of the Savior of the world to also be a time to **Be Still**, listen and know God’s voice.

Today, I encourage all of us to use this Advent season, this time of waiting, watching and preparing for the birth of our Savior to *“Be still and know that I am God!”* And in the stillness may we experience the power of knowing that God is the God that is with us and among us in times of struggle and chaos as well as times of joy and calm.

God’s Peace and Blessings to all of you during this Advent and Christmas season.

Pr. Janine

Christmas & Epiphany Calendar Notes:

As a church family, along with our guests, we will celebrate Christ’s birth with two worship services on Christmas Eve. **The services on December 24th will be at 5:00pm and 9:00pm.** The choir will be singing at the 9:00pm service. If you are interested in reading, assisting, ushering, or singing please contact the office to have a team leader contact you. There will be no services on Christmas Day. On Dec. 29th, the Sunday between Christmas and New Year’s, a service of Lessons and Carols will be held. If you enjoy singing Christmas music that is a good service to attend. Epiphany (January 6th), will be celebrated on the weekend of January 4th and 5th. The journey of the star guiding the wisemen to the Christ child and the Christmas season will be completed. (There is even better news coming in Holy Week when the prophecy of the Christ child is fulfilled.)





2024 December Calendar Items:

- 12/01 Sun** 9:30am Worship First Sunday of Advent
2 to 4pm Lounge Reserved
3:00pm Emmaus Worship—Chapel
6:00pm A. Kyle Basketball
- 12/02 Mon** 9 to 11am Foot Clinic
(Office by Appointment Only)
6:00pm Jalen Basketball (Gym)
- 12/03 Tues** 9:30am to 2:30pm Office Open
10am to 2:00pm Food Pantry Open
4:30 to 5:45pm Special Olympics (Gym)
6:00pm A. Kyle Basketball (Gym)
- 12/04 Wed** December LIFE Assembly (rescheduled)
9:30am to 2:30pm Office Open
10am to 2:00pm Food Pantry Open
6:00pm Jalen Basketball (Gym)
6:00pm Choir
- 12/05 Thru** Office Open 9:30am to 1:00pm
4:30 to 5:45pm Special Olympics
- 12/06 Fri** (Office Closed)
- 12/07 Sat** Sanctuary, Chapel, & Lounge Reserved
For Private Piano Event Federated Music
Teachers Assoc.
5:00pm—Worship - 2nd Week of Advent
Followed by opportunity to speak w/ Call Committee (Lounge)
- 12/08 Sun** 9:30am Worship - 2nd Week of Advent
Followed by opportunity to Speak w/ Call Committee (Luther Hall)
3:00pm Emmaus Worship—Chapel
6:00pm A. Kyle Basketball
- 12/09 Mon** (Office by Appointment Only)
6:00pm Jalen Basketball (Gym)
6:00pm Finance
- 12/10 Tues** 9:30am to 2:30pm Office Open
10am to 2:00pm Food Pantry Open
4:30 to 5:45pm Special Olympics (Gym)
6:00pm A. Kyle Basketball (Gym)
6:30pm Advent Study w/Beth “Christmas Everlasting”
- 12/11 Wed** 9:30am to 2:30pm Office Open
10am to 2:00pm Food Pantry Open
6:00pm Jalen Basketball (Gym)
6:00pm Choir
- 12/12 Thru** Office Open 9:30am to 1:00pm
4:30 to 5:45pm Special Olympics
- 12/13 Fri** (Office Closed)
- 12/14 Sat** 5:00pm—Worship - 3rd Week of Advent
- 12/15 Sun** 9:30am Worship - 3rd Week of Advent
3:00pm Emmaus Worship—Chapel
6:00pm A. Kyle Basketball
- 12/16 Mon** (Office by Appointment Only)
1:00pm Circle
- 12/17 Tues** 9:30am to 2:30pm Office Open
10am to 2:00pm Food Pantry Open
4:30 to 5:45pm Special Olympics (Gym)
6:00pm A. Kyle Basketball (Gym)
- 12/18 Wed** 9:30am to 2:30pm Office Open
10am to 2:00pm Food Pantry Open
6:00pm Choir
6:00pm Jalen Basketball (Gym)
- 12/19 Thru** Office Open 9:30am to 1:00pm
4:30 to 5:45pm Special Olympics
6:30pm Church Council Mtg.
5:00 to 8:00pm Preschool Christmas Program (Luther Hall)
- 12/20 Fri** (Office Closed)
- 12/21 Sat** 5:00pm—Worship - 4th Week of Advent
- 12/22 Sun** 9:30am Worship 4th Week of Advent
3:00pm Emmaus Worship—Chapel
6:00pm A. Kyle Basketball (Gym)
- 12/23 Mon** (Office by Appointment Only)
6:00pm Jalen Basketball (Gym)
- 12/24 Tues Christmas Eve - 10am-1:00pm Holiday Hours for
Office and Food Pantry Open
5:00pm Christmas Eve Worship
9:00pm Christmas Eve Worship w/ Choir**
- 12/25 Wed** Christmas Day Holiday- Office & Food Pantry Closed
- 12/26 Thru** Office Open 9:30am to 1:00pm
4:30 to 5:45pm Special Olympics
- 12/27 Fri** (Office Closed)
- 12/28 Sat** (5:00pm—Worship To Be Determined)
- 12/29 Sun** 9:30am Worship: Service of Lessons and Carols
3:00pm Emmaus Worship—Chapel
6:00pm A. Kyle Basketball
- 12/30 Mon** (Office by Appointment Only)
6:00pm Jalen Basketball (Gym)
- 12/31 Tues New Year’s Eve 10am-1:00pm Holiday Hours for
Office and Food Pantry Open
4:30 to 5:45pm Special Olympics (Gym)
6:00pm A. Kyle Basketball (Gym)**
- ✦ Preschool Christmas Break: No School December 23rd thru January 3rd
(classes Resume on Monday, January 6th)
- ✦ First Weekend in January the arrival of the Wise Men to the nativity -
Epiphany (Jan. 6th) will be celebrated.



Notes from the Organ Bench by Ross Jallo

Every year around Christmas I make a point to read Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Carol* -- or, failing that, I watch a movie adaptation of it. (There are dozens of adaptations, many of them quite good. Personal favorites are the 1951 version with Alastair Sim, the 1984 version with George C. Scott, and, perhaps for sentimental reasons, the 1992 *Muppet Christmas Carol*.) Even if you've never read the book, you probably know the plot: the miserly Ebenezer Scrooge is visited by ghosts on Christmas Eve, and mends his ways to become as good a man as the good old city ever knew. Ultimately *A Christmas Carol* is a story about grace and redemption, about the opportunity to change our lives for the better.



In the most grim part of the book (and certainly the scariest, when I watched various movie adaptations as a child), Scrooge meets the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come, who shows him visions of the future: he dies hated and alone, his funeral sparsely attended, his possessions stolen by his servants to pawn. After seeing his own tombstone, Scrooge breaks down in tears, pleading with the ghost that the future may change:

"Men's courses will foreshadow certain ends, to which, if persevered in, they must lead," said Scrooge. "But if the courses be departed from, the ends will change. ... Assure me that I yet may change these shadows you have shown me, by an altered life!"

As members of St Mark Lutheran, we have a similar opportunity to change our ways. It gives me no pleasure to observe that, if the current trajectory continues, our church will close within a generation, if not sooner. Attendance is currently too low to justify all the church services we offer, and giving is too low to support the mission of the church as it exists. We have a choice before us: to continue on our current course and witness the end of St Mark Lutheran, or to alter course. Our church will only survive if we make it a priority: attending as often as we can, bringing our friends and family (*particularly* young people) to worship God with us, and giving our time, talents, and treasures to maintain our ministries to the community and to each other. Remember the words of Jesus in Matthew 6:21 -- "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." If you believe that St Mark Lutheran makes the world a better place, it is up to you to attend, and to give. Then, and only then, can we ensure that our church will be here for many years to come.

Finance Update

General Fund Summary

October Offerings	\$ 26,326
October Expenses	\$ 48,851

Regular Offerings 2024 Through October

Received	\$ 266,769
Budgeted Amount	\$ 334,129

The St. Mark Church Council:

Nancy Baderstadt, President
Beth Claey's, Vice-President
Barb Jakubowski, Treasurer
Rob Sherrod, Secretary
Diane Fellman

Tom Leibold Candy Nagel
Linda Ray Doug Rowley



Mike Crews
Julie Ginn

Please continue to pray for these members as they serve in these very important leadership positions.

There are now options online to give through Vanco and our Website www.stmarkcares.org for Advent, Christmas, Lent, and Easter designations. For those households who are using Vanco or another form of automatic giving through your financial institution and would like to opt-out for envelopes being mailed to you, please call the church office 563-322-5318. Any questions or if you want to sign up for Vanco please contact Jodee Williams or Barb Jakubowski through the church office.



Social Ministry Outreach

We will be collecting small canned hams for our food pantry to distribute the month of December. Baskets will be in the narthex entry and lounge. Let's give our customers something extra during the month of December!

Questions: Linda Ray or Candy Nagel



Annual Homeless Memorial Service On December 19th at 5:30pm

All are invited to a service to honor those in our community that we have lost while they experienced homelessness and those who have been advocates for the unhoused. This service will be held at Zion Lutheran Church, 1216 W. 8th St. Davenport, IA. If you would like more information, please talk with Pr. Janine



Food Pantry October Update:

Thank you to friends, churches and groups for their generous donations during the month of October 2024:

- *Faith United Methodist
- *Rescue Bread from HyVee
- *Anonymous
- *Food Rescue
- *Midwest Food Bank

The needs are great this holiday season. God's Work. Our Hands. - Celebrating this year round ministry to address food insecurity.

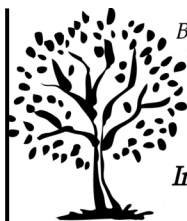


Dedications in Honor or Memory

There has been a change in the appearance of the altar. Instead of floral bouquets that have to be replaced every week, there will be live greenery arrangements that will last for an extended time. Memorial, In Honor, or In Appreciation dedications are still encouraged and will be noted in the weekly bulletin. Please sign up as always using an envelope and the notebook in the lounge. The \$25 dedication will go to the food pantry. This change will benefit the food pantry and save the church budget the increasing expense of weekly flowers.

The Call Committee will be holding listening sessions after worship on Sat Dec 7 in the lounge, and Sun Dec 8 after worship in Luther Hall. We want to give the congregation another chance to help us in discerning what is important to you in the future of St Mark. Please stop & spend a few

Listen Hear Understand Grow minutes talking with a member of the call committee. Your input is important as we move forward in the process of calling a new pastor. Please take time to communicate your perspectives with the call committee.



Because He lives we too shall live.

In Memory

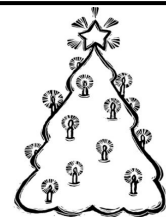
Please continue to keep the family and friends of Jack Serrine in prayer.

His funeral was at St. Mark on Nov. 29th.

Christmas Eve Assistance needed:

Four ushers needed for Christmas Eve 9pm service. Please contact Candy Nagel or church office if you can help.

Worship assistants and lectors desired for the Dec 24th Christmas Eve services (5pm or 9pm). Contact Nancy Baderstadt or church office. There is a need for assisting ministers for additional services in December and January also.



Christmas Eve WORSHIP

Advent Giving: Advent is here and it's that time of year when we start focusing on giving gifts to the many people in our lives. I wonder is St. Mark part of that gift giving list. If not then today, I encourage each of us to put St. Mark on that gift giving list. Over the next four weeks **Advent Offering envelopes** will be available in the pew racks. I ask that you use these envelopes to provide your Advent gift to the continued work and ministry of St. Mark Lutheran Church. Blessings on your Advent and Christmas season.

Habitat For Humanity Lunch: Ways To Be Involved

Two volunteers are needed each month to coordinate the Habitat lunch for volunteers in 2025. Involves designating the menu and items needed to be donated, and working with other volunteers to ensure lunches are assembled as well as delivered on the fourth Saturday of the month except December.

No Habitat volunteer lunch in December. Watch for sign-up/information sheet in the lounge forthcoming for January. Questions or offers to volunteer be directed to Maureen Currier (or the office may be contacted). Celebrating ongoing year round efforts of GOD'S WORK OUR HANDS !



“ Our preschool session is in full swing and preparing for the holidays and upcoming break. It's not too late to join the fun in 2025. Still have a few openings.

Email rdankertstmarkpreschool@gmail.com.”

Would you like to join the St. Mark Circle? They meet once a month on the 3rd Monday of the Month in the church lounge at 1 PM. If you would like more information, please call the church or email and we will connect you to one of the current members.



Camino de Emaus continues to worship at 3:00pm on Sundays in the chapel. We are thankful for their partnership in ministry in providing Spanish speaking worship opportunities in the Quad Cities through this mission outreach program.

Christmas at Augustana will be Saturday, December 7th at 2:00pm and Sunday, 8th at 2:00pm in Centennial Hall. Tickets available at augustana.edu/tickets or by calling 309-794-7306. Augustana College in Rock Island, IL is our local ELCA affiliated college which offers many opportunities and resources to our community.



Pastor Janine is available and willing to visit. St Mark members are encouraged to visit either just to get acquainted or regarding questions or concerns - personal or church related. She would welcome the opportunity to talk with you either briefly or to arrange a time to meet together. Please call or stop in during office hours on Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursdays if you are around the church or call to make an appointment to ensure you do not miss her. She is available to meet Mondays or other times by appointment also.

Parents please introduce yourself and your children to Pastor Janine if you haven't yet had an opportunity to do so. She is still trying to identify the children / youth of the congregation and what the needs and opportunities for ministry may be.

Our parish visitor team members will continue reaching out and visiting folks on a regular basis who are unable to attend in person church services or activities. Pastor Janine is continuing to try to meet those homebound members who desire a pastoral visit as well. She has also been making hospital calls as the office is notified of hospitalized members who desire a visit. Please remember the hospital no longer informs us of members hospitalized or placed in nursing center - family must do so or the church does not know. If an individual would like to be included in the corporate prayers of the church or has personal prayer concerns please contact Pr. Janine, Parish Nurse Beth Claeys, or the church office. If any member moves occur please notify the church office of new addresses.



The next foot clinic is scheduled for Monday, February 3rd, 2025 from 9am to 11am.

Appointment is required. Cost is \$35. Suggest bringing a towel. Sign-up sheet will be in the lounge in January. Appointments fill up quickly. time. Contact person is Nancy Baderstadt.



Bunco

**Friday,
Dec 20th
at 6:30pm**

We will meet in the lounge for our monthly Bunco fellowship gathering. Everyone is welcome! Feel free to invite a friend or two even if they are not St Mark members. Will have sign-up sheet in case of weather.

Questions: Contact Beth Claeys

Please bring a snack.



Prayer Shawl Ministry

Prayer Shawl Group

We will not be meeting in December. Watch for announcements as to when will resume in 2025.

Peace and greetings from Beth Claeys, Parish Nurse!



The holidays are a time for family and cheer, but making sure the house is clean, the food is ready, and the presents are wrapped can be overwhelming. These factors can bring unwanted stress and depression in a time meant for happiness.

Some important, practical tips can help minimize the stress that accompanies the holidays. These tips may help you enjoy the holidays more than you expected.

Plan ahead. Between co-workers, family and friends, there can be many commitments. Make sure to plan on what you can attend, and if you are hosting for the holidays, create a menu to help you stay organized and make grocery shopping easier.

Say no. With holiday commitments, it is OK to say no to a few of them. This will also help relieve the stress of trying to do it all. Try sharing your to-do list with other family members.

Plan spending. The holidays mean spending money. Make a budget and stick to it. Spending money on your loved ones is important, but it's also important to pay your bills.

Create relaxing surroundings. Turn on some music, light some candles, or open the windows on a sunny day. Research has found that listening to music and the scent of citrus can boost feelings of well-being, and vitamin D is always a happiness booster.

Maintain healthy habits. Healthy habits can get ignored in the busy holiday season. A short workout each morning will help your decision-making throughout the day. Eat healthy snacks like fresh fruit or vegetables throughout the season.

Share feelings. Spending a holiday after a loss in the family can be difficult. Accept your feelings and open up about them to others. It may make you feel better to share. Try to switch up old traditions to ease the loss.

Respect differences. Family members will have different viewpoints than your own. Try your best to forgive and forget this holiday season. Focus on your similarities and replace tension with something productive.

Be realistic. You are only one person and you can only do so much. Be realistic with how much you can handle this season. Forget about perfection and relax and enjoy the company surrounding you.

Take a break. Don't forget about your own needs. Take a nap, go for a short walk, read a book, or watch a funny movie. Laughing relaxes the whole body, and can relieve physical tension and stress.

The holidays are meant to be a fun, enjoyable time with family and friends. Slow down, enjoy time with family and friends, and spend some time focusing on the meaning of the season.

Source: Mayo Clinic website

Thank You For Your Commitment!

In this time of transition for St. Mark, you may have pause about declaring a pledge, but your finance committee would encourage you that now is the perfect time to stand up and claim your priorities. Now is the time to say, this is my community of faith, and it is an ultimate priority. It is where I receive my spiritual nourishment. So please pledge generously for 2025 and promise yourself to participate in all and any ways possible in the daily life of St. Mark.

Please return your pledge to the church during November. Your help is greatly appreciated.

Giving Pledge to St. Mark for 2025



Name(s) (print please: _____)

Telephone _____ (cell or landline ?)

Email _____

Address _____

My/Our estimate of giving to St. Mark for 2025 is:

\$ _____ Weekly Monthly As follows: _____

Envelopes will be sent to you throughout the year unless office is otherwise notified.

I am/We are unable to make an estimate of giving for 2025...for the following reason (optional) _____

Here is the information for the book Pr. Janine used the first weekend of Advent. I hope this will be helpful.

The Pause: A Christmas Gift by Keith Gaddy Davis; copyright 1994. Clayton Paige Publishing Company, P.O. Box 581032, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55458-1032.



Thank You!



Dear St Mark Congregation Members,

Thank you, from the bottom of my heart for helping my 13 year old daughter and I stay afloat during the aftermath of Hurricane Helene. While this storm has taken all of us by surprise, I am even more humbled by your kindness and generosity. Please know your gift is greatly appreciated and impacts us profoundly.

In so much gratitude, Marta and Magnolia Currier

Did you know....Luther Properties provides affordable, independent housing for seniors? This ELCA organization consists of 5 complexes, 2 in Davenport and 3 in Bettendorf. These apartments provide safe homes for those seniors who struggle financially. Rent is based on income, with electricity and water costs included. If you know of someone who could benefit from such assistance, please contact Nancy Bearerstadt (563-528-0208) for information.

ST. MARK LIFE
St. Mark Evangelical Lutheran Church
2363 West 3rd Street
Davenport, Iowa 52802

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Sponsor Christmas Decorations

If you would like to honor or remember a loved one by sponsoring Christmas floral decorations, you may use this form and include it and your \$15.00 in an envelope and bring or mail it to the church office. **Information and payment (\$15.00) are due in the Church Office no later than weekend of December 14/15th.**

We will include a list of those you choose to remember or honor in our January Newsletter and also the emails that will include our Christmas Eve



Given by (your name) _____

Offering Env. # _____

In memory of _____

Or

In honor of _____

Forms & money (\$15.00) due no later than weekend of December 14th.

Worship Opportunities:

Saturday: 5:00pm

Sunday: 9:30am

and

*Camino de Emaus
3:00pm*

Office Hours

Tuesday and Wednesday:

9:30pm-2:30pm

**Thursday: 9:30pm—
1:00pm** (or by appointment on
Mondays)

Office: 563-322-5318

Visit Us! St. Mark Evangelical Lutheran Church • 2363 West Third Street, Davenport IA 52802

E-mail: stmark@stmarkcares.org Phone: 563-322-5318

Annual subscription of \$1.00 per year is included in payment of weekly pledge of members. Email: stmark@stmarkcares.org