

March 2025

“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and it is not of your own doing; it is the gift of God—not the result of works, so that no one may boast.” (Ephesians 2:1-10)

Last year at this time I reflected on these verses and this year I reflect on them again. These verses from Ephesians always make me think about how the grace I receive doesn't come from anything I do or boast about. It comes through the faith and trust I have in God, which many times is expressed very quietly. It's the faith and trust I have in God's care and compassion for me and all God's beloved children. Grace comes to us as a gift from God, a free gift. For years when I worked with people who were unhoused, people would say to me, “What good work you are doing. You are surely paving your way to heaven.” Or I would hear “with all that you do for the homeless and at the food pantry you have added another jewel to your heavenly crown.” This always made me uncomfortable and it still does when I hear it. But I laugh it off and go on with my business. However, the uncomfortable feeling never goes away. Over time I have come to realize that what bothers me about those phrases is they imply that I do something, “good works”, to experience God's saving grace. No true!

Guess what? I finally realized that **I** had or have nothing to do with receiving God's grace. Grace has nothing to do with what **I** did or didn't do. What **we** do or don't do. **Grace was and is all about what God has done and continues to do for and with me and for and with you.** It's about God sending Jesus Christ to live among us, to be crucified and to then raise to save us from our sins and to bring us eternal life. It's a “no strings attached” gift from God.

Lent tends to be a time when I do a lot of reflection on how I show God's love and care to the world around me. And it's a time when I'm reminded that my care for God's beloved people and creation comes from the care and compassion God has shown me first. The grace I experience daily. Even on those days when I'm grumpy, angry, or upset and not very loveable God's grace and love is still present to me with “no strings attached.” All I have to do is have faith and trust in this loving caring God and that is all any of us have to do.

“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and it is not of your own doing; it is the gift of God....” Yes, as followers of Christ we do things like feed the hungry, or find ways to provide shelter to people, or be the voice for the oppressed by speaking truth to power, but we don't do it to pave our way to heaven or add jewels to heavenly crowns. We show care and love and compassion to our sisters and brothers as our response to God's love for us; the God whose grace and forgiveness we experience daily with “no strings attached.” Thanks be to God!

God's peace to you during this season of Lent. **Pastor Janine**

Council Corner - At a brief council meeting, following the February 9th Annual meeting, the following was discussed:

1. Election of Council officers: Nancy Beaderstadt, President; Beth Claeys, Vice-President; Rob Sherrod, Secretary.

(During the preceding Annual Meeting, Barb Erickson was elected to fill the vacant council position. Beth Claeys and Linda Ray were re-elected for another term.)

2. Saturday evening services will resume on March 15th at 5pm. Services will be held on the 1st and 3rd Saturdays of each month. The hope is to make Saturday a special opportunity to invite those in our community who may not be able to join us on Sunday, and to become a “Come as you are” service, inviting folks who are just getting off work, or who may feel more comfortable in a casual worship setting. More details will be coming about this special outreach opportunity.

Our next Council meeting is Thursday, March 20th at 6:30 p.m. The April Council meeting will be held a week earlier on the second Thursday, April 10th due to Maundy Thursday.

FINANCE:

General Fund Summary for January:

January weekly offerings \$17,268

January expenses \$29,937

Regular Offerings for 2025:

Weekly Offerings Received \$17,268

Budget Expectation Amount \$20,833

82.89% of budget expectations for 2025

St. Mark Preschool:

Learning is in full swing at the preschool as we slide into our second half of the school year. The kids have been working very hard on numerous art projects to display at our 2nd Annual Art Show being held on March 7th. It's not too late for your kiddo to join us. We have a few openings available.

The preschool is currently seeking a full time director. Any interested parties can email rdankertstmarkpreschool@gmail.com for more information.

Notes From the Organ Bench by Ross Jallo, Director of Music Ministry

In last month's article, we explored the musical parts of the Lutheran worship service. I pointed out that the liturgy has remained essentially unchanged for centuries (if not millennia). A fair question that might follow is: *why?* Why should we continue to use the same shape of the liturgy for generations upon generations? My answer, cliché though it may be, is: *if it ain't broke, don't fix it.* More seriously, I will say that "new" and "exciting" innovations in liturgy serve only to distract us from worship. C.S. Lewis, in his *Letters to Malcolm*, sums it up admirably:

Novelty, simply as such, can have only an entertainment value. And [churchgoers] don't go to church to be entertained. They go to *use* the service, or, if you prefer, to *enact* it. Every service is a structure of acts and words through which we receive a sacrament, or repent, or supplicate, or adore. And it enables us to do these things best -- if you like, it "works" best -- when, through long familiarity, we don't have to think about it. As long as you notice, and have to count, the steps, you are not yet dancing but only learning to dance. A good shoe is a shoe you don't notice. Good reading becomes possible when you need not consciously think about eyes, or light, or print, or spelling. The perfect church service would be one we were almost unaware of; our attention would have been on God.

The reason the liturgy has changed so little over the centuries, then, is quite practical. When we know what to expect, we can stop worrying about the dance steps, and focus on the dance. When our worship service has the same basic shape every Sunday, we can stop worrying about what comes next in the liturgy, and get to the actual business of worship.

Thoughts from the Stewardship Committee

On your birthday, give a gift TO St. Mark

- Celebrate your birthday by giving double of what you usually offer. The thought of having another year of life and sharing those blessings with the church makes the birthday that much more special.

Other ways to give on your birthday (or anniversary):

- **Dedicated donation:**

Specify that your donation should go towards a specific project like building repairs, general fund, youth ministry, etc.

- **Volunteer time:**

Offer to volunteer at the church for a few hours on or around your birthday, helping with tasks like cleaning, organizing, mailings or assisting with other activities.

- **Talent contribution:**

If you have a skill like music, art, or cooking, offer to perform or provide a special treat for our church service on your birthday.

- **Organize a fundraiser:**

Host a small fundraiser on your birthday, like the fellowship after church, and donate the proceeds to our church.

- Happy Birthday from your Stewardship Committee

From the Parish Nurse – Beth Claeys

The work volunteers provide is essential to every day activities, giving volunteers a sense of purpose, especially when giving their time and talent in the areas they find meaningful. Older volunteers experience greater increases in life satisfaction and self esteem.

At Mayo Clinic, volunteers serve as greeters and waiting room attendants, provide patient room information and directions, and help transport patients and patient items. Many volunteers use their craft skills to make prayer shawls, blankets, sweaters and hats that are given to newborn babies or patients with cancer. Other volunteer services include working in the hospital gift shop, performing clerical duties or offering patient therapy.

At St. Mark, volunteer opportunities include the food pantry, Habitat for Humanity luncheons, prayer shawl ministry, helping put together Life, etc.

3. Nurture new and existing relationships.

Volunteering increases social interaction and helps build a support system based on common interests. One of the best ways to make new friends and strengthen existing relationships is to participate in a shared activity.

People volunteer for different reasons such as sharpening skills, staying active during retirement, meeting new people, and serving communities. All volunteers share a common desire to improve the health and welfare of people in their community.

There is a wide variety of volunteer opportunities in each community whether you're interested in youth, environment, health, religious, or community causes. Check with a local nonprofit organization, school, faith community, or hospital for options.

Source : Mayo Clinic Health System website

(Also, note dates/times of upcoming events under the calendar notes or listed elsewhere.)

Foot Clinic will next be held, Monday April 7th 9 to 11:00am (Appointment required). Cost is \$35. To sign up please use sign-up sheet or contact Nancy Beaderstadt. Limited appointments are available.

Update the Church Please: The church is not notified of hospitalizations. Many obituaries are no longer listed in the newspaper. Also, we do not receive address changes or forwarding information from the postal service. Please let the church office, parish nurse/visitor, or pastor know if you experience any of these or other changes. Also, please let Pastor Janine or Parish Nurse Beth know of any persons unable to attend services in person who may like home communion and/or parish visitor to contact them.

LENT and HOLY WEEK 2025 Schedule

Ash Wednesday Service is March 5th at 7:00pm

Weekly Lenten Services on March 12th, 19th, 26th, and April 2nd, 9th at 7:00pm

Palm Sunday is April 13th at 9:30am

Maundy Thursday is April 17th at 7:00pm

Good Friday is April 18th at 7:00pm

Saturday Service is April 19th at 5:00pm

Easter Sunday Festival Service is April 20th at 9:30am

Social Ministry:

Super Bowl of Caring - Thanks to all for contributing to Super Bowl of Caring. Our food pantry is busier than ever! We collected \$175 and 127 food items. For those wanting to know, the Chiefs came out a little ahead of the Eagles in our collection.

Underwear Because We Care – Thank you so much to all who contributed to our February social ministry project! A total of 741 items were collected, surpassing last year by over 90 items! Excellent participation to help the less fortunate in our community with basic personal underwear and sock items.

Habitat for Humanity Happenings – Saturday, March 22nd will find us serving a group of volunteers in the warehouse at the Habitat headquarters on Mississippi Avenue. They will be building ramp modules that will be assembled later, on site, for QC families in need of accessibility ramps. Since it will be close to St. Patty's Day, we'll serve something suitable for the season (minus the green beer!): Reuben Casserole (recipes provided with sign-up sheet in the lounge); Bagged salad; and cookies. Any questions please contact Maureen Currier.

Easter Egg Hunt – will be April 19th, 2025. Meet in the gym. It will start at 10:00am. Candy donations will be accepted and greatly appreciated from March 2nd till April 13th. Any questions ask Kim Sherrod-Hensler or Amber Sherrod.

Humane Society - The social ministry committee has chosen to support the Humane Society of Scott County for March. The list of suggested donations from the Humane Society is on the following page. Lisa Crews is the contact person for this community outreach project if folks have any questions.

HUMANE SOCIETY OF SCOTT COUNTY WISH LIST

- Dog food - dry or wet*
- Cat food - dry or wet*
- Wet kitten food*
- Kitten Formula*
- Blankets, sheets, comforters,
and/or towels (no pillows)
- Dog beds - can be used
- Lick-able/squeeze cat treats
- Dog treats*
- Dog chews (like dentasticks or
busy bones, but no rawhide
please)
- Rubbing Alcohol*
- Hydrogen Peroxide
- Petroleum Jelly
- Disinfecting wipes
- Dawn dishsoap
- Low sodium chicken broth
- Low sodium canned chicken*
- Oral Thermometer
- Benadryl
- Slip Leads for Dogs*
- Kong dog Toys
- Peanut Butter - no xylitol

*items with an asterisk are our highest priority needs



March Calendar Notes:

One Time Specific Dates for March:

~Monday, March 3rd No Preschool

~Wednesday, March 5th Noon & 7:00pm– **Ash Wednesday Worship Services**
(With the imposition of ashes at both services.)

~Thursday, March 6th (set-up) and Friday March 7th – Luther Hall **Reserved
for Preschool Art Show**

~ Saturday March 8 at 10:00 - **Prayer Shawl Group**

~Monday, March 10th **Finance Committee Meeting**

~Wednesday, March 12th 7:00pm – **Lenten Service**

~Saturday, March 15th 5:00pm **Resume Evening Worship** (on 1st & 3rd Saturdays of the
month)

~Monday, March 17th – 1:00pm – **Women’s Circle Group**. Contact person: Milly Heskett
-No Preschool all of this week (March 17th thru 21st)

~Tuesday, March 18th – **Deadline for March LIFE** Newsletter (by end of the day).
--6:00pm **Theology on Tap** at the Filling Station. Book : “The Hiding
Place” by Corrie Ten Boom. Please sign up.

~Wednesday, March 19th 7:00pm – **Lenten Service**

~Thursday, March 20th – 6:30pm – **Church Council Meeting** (reports for packet due
Monday, 3/17)

~ Friday, March 21 at 6:30 **Bunco** - Please sign up in case of weather changes.

~ Saturday, March 22nd **Habitat for Humanity Lunch** – Watch for sign-up sheet.

~Wednesday, March 26th – 9:00am – **Assembly of LIFE** by Volunteers

~Wednesday, March 26th 7:00pm – **Lenten Service**

Routinely Scheduled Calendar Items Each Week:

Sundays: 9:30am Sunday Worship followed by Fellowship (sign up for hosting)

3:00pm Emmaus Worship (Spanish Option) in Bride's Room

4:00-6:00pm A. Kyle Basketball (Gym)

6:15-7:30pm Pickleball (Gym)

Mondays: Office available by appointment only.

6:00-8:00pm Jalen Basketball (Gym)

Tuesdays: 9:30am-2:30pm Church Office Open

10:00am-2:00pm Food Pantry Open

4:30-5:45pm Special Olympics

Wednesdays: 9:30am-2:30pm Church Office Open

10:00am-2:00pm Food Pantry Open

6:00pm – Choir (if changes Ross will notify Choir members)

6:00-8:00pm Jalen Basketball (Gym)

Thursdays: 9:30am-1:30pm Church Office Open

4:30-5:45pm Special Olympics (Gym)

6:00-8:00pm A. Kyle Basketball (Gym)

Saturdays: 1:00-3:30pm Special Olympics (Gym)

1st and 3rd Saturdays Only – 5:00pm Saturday Evening Worship Service

Regarding the calendar:

~ A detailed weekly calendar is printed in the bulletin insert on Sundays and included in the weekly online Link e-mail. If you do not get this e-mail or others and would like to, please contact Sue Geise in the office or Rick Nagel. Also, your patience is appreciated while we are experimenting with various calendar formats to determine which is the most effective – both for time and function to meet the needs.

~ If you would like meetings or events listed in LIFE and/or the weekly bulletin, please contact Sue Geise in the office or write the information on the wall calendar. Do not assume the office and/or custodial staff know about it or any changes that may be needed (seasonal, holidays, rentals, etc.) just because it has always been that way. Remember most of us are still fairly “new” and often do not know what has been done (or known) as previous staff and/or volunteers may have. Set schedules for the year may be submitted to the office if this is easier for you. Appreciate everyone who puts in a lot of effort to communicate with our St Mark community!

Daylight Savings Tim begins Sunday, March 9th – SPRING AHEAD!

From the Office Regarding LIFE Newsletter....

Thank you to those who have provided feedback (and e-mail addresses) in response to my recent question and request for input about how you would feel about the possibility of the monthly LIFE newsletter going to an electronic format (in addition to it being accessible on the St. Mark website). Thus far nearly all responses have indicated they were agreeable to receiving LIFE via e-mail rather than the expense of mailing a hard copy. *If you have not already contacted me about this and have an opinion, please let me know prior to noon on Wednesday, March 12th.* At that time, we will be discussing as a staff the recommendation regarding the newsletter to make to the Church Council for the agenda of their March 20th meeting. Distributing via e-mail rather than printing and mailing out approximately 260 copies each month would be a expense cost saving measure in terms of staff time, postage, copier print charges and purchased supplies (two types of paper, labels, and closure disks). There would be additional savings of hours of volunteer time preparing the printed mailing and meeting postal bulk mailing requirements. It is possible if there are some members who have no access to e-mail we could mail a limited number of printed copies if needed and/or make some available in the lounge that could be picked up when at church. The annual report was distributed this way the end of January and I received quite a few positive comments about that. To contact me: Church phone: 563-322-5318 please leave a voicemail if no one is available to take your call; I would be glad to return a call. You can also drop me a note in the collection plate or at the office. Sue's work e-mail: sgeise@stmarkcares.org.

Thank you, Sue Geise, Administrative Assistant

Sponsorship opportunities of Easter Lillies and flowers to adorn the sanctuary on Easter morning and into the Easter season will be available and forthcoming. Information will be placed on the table in the lounge as soon as it is available.

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)

There a quite a number of resources on the ELCA website that are worth exploring. Articles regarding our national church's views on current happenings, social issues, and questions of faith. There are directories, study resources, statements of beliefs, synod connections, and so much more. Check out the website at: [www:elca.org](http://www.elca.org) The Bishop and ELCA also have Facebook pages and other ways to receive information and/or submit comments as well.

What We Believe...The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's story is both ancient and timely. It is a story of a powerful and patient God who has boundless love for all people of the world. It is a story that brings deep meaning, comfort, and strength to a growing community of people who live in modern, often unsettling times. (There is more about the ELCA faith statement on the website.)

St Mark LIFE

St. Mark Evangelical Lutheran Church

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Theology On Tap: “The Hiding Place”

Join us at for a book discussion of “The Hiding Place” by author Corrie Ten Boom on March 18thth at The Filling Station (305 E. 35th Street, Davenport). The group will gather there at 6:00pm. An opportunity for both fellowship and growth all wrapped into one (plus a meal and beverage as you choose!) Please sign up in the church lounge or contact Beth Claeys in order that appropriate plans can be arranged (or rescheduled if inclement weather).

Office Hours: Tuesday & Wednesday 9:30am to 2:30pm and Thursday 9:30am to 1:30pm.
(Monday by appointment only. Closed Fridays.)

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Annual subscription of \$1.00 per year is included in payment of weekly pledge of members.