
Alleluia! Christ is risen! Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!!

Easter Sunday is coming and what does that mean for us? For us who follow the risen Jesus. Do we leave the church on Easter Sunday morning saying that was nice and then go about our business like nothing happened or changed? End of story?

Well, it's not the end of the story! Something big happened with the death of Jesus on that cross and then his resurrection! Everything changed! Our lives are changed in the resurrection of Jesus! Through Christ's resurrection we are given new life. A life that calls us to go and tell the story of a Savior who came into the world, lived among us, and taught about a God who loves every one of us no matter what. This resurrection story is only the beginning of a story about an ever present living gracious God. A God who wants a relationship with us in the good times, the bad times and the indifferent times. And the good news is **we didn't** have to do anything to receive this gift of grace and relationship, because God through Jesus Christ did it all. All we do is accept the gifts of forgiveness and eternal life given through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

The resurrection story doesn't end with Easter Sunday worship services and brunch and Easter egg hunts. No, it lives on through each one of us as we go out into the world sharing and living out the love of Christ in service to our sisters and brothers throughout the world. The story of Easter lives beyond Easter Sunday. It dwells in each of us as we proclaim the good news of Jesus risen from the dead. Risen to bring life eternal to all the beloved children of God. So, we shout for all to hear.

Alleluia. Christ is risen.

Easter Sunday is coming, and the resurrection story doesn't end on Sunday morning. It lives on through and in us every day of the week. Know that God lives among us right here, right now and in this place. Let us share the good news of the risen Christ shouting...**Alleluia! Christ is risen! Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!**

God's peace and grace. Pr. Janine

LENT and HOLY WEEK Schedule

Lenten Meditation-Holden Evening Prayer on March 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

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

There are a few dedicated gardeners in the congregation at St Mark Lutheran, and I think it's fair to say that I am one of them. (It's always fascinating to compare gardens, especially considering that mine is sixty miles west of Davenport. Whose daffodils emerged first? Who's had enough rain to keep the tomatoes happy?) Growing things -- whether it's horticulture or agriculture -- gives insight into a lot of Scripture, particularly the parables of Jesus: it's clear that he spoke in terms of fruit trees, vineyards, and seeds because his audience understood these things from daily experience.

There's a passage from the Gospel of John that is traditionally read on the Tuesday of Holy Week, in which Jesus, foreseeing his crucifixion, compares himself to a grain of wheat:

Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life."

One of my favorite Easter hymns is ELW #379, "Now the green blade rises", which is directly based on this passage from John:

Now the green blade rises from the buried grain,
Wheat that in dark earth many days has lain;
Love lives again, that with the dead has been;
Love is come again like wheat arising green.

In his death on the cross and his resurrection -- the events we observe on Good Friday and Easter Sunday -- Jesus bore the fruit of redemption for all people. We are called to do the same, in a way: as Christians, we must daily die to self, so that we may produce much fruit. As a gardener, I am continually amazed that the backyard that was dead and brown in early March can burst into new green life by April. It's a reminder of the miracle of renewed life, where once was death. Nature gives us an example to follow: we are to practice resurrection.

Sponsorship opportunities of Easter Lillies and flowers to adorn the sanctuary on Easter morning and into the Easter season are available. Information and envelopes are on the table. Envelopes with a payment of \$15.00 must be received in the office by April 9th. You may indicate if you would like the sponsorship in memory, in honor, or in appreciation of someone. A listing will be included in the Easter bulletin and in the May issue of LIFE. (P.S. If you are unable to pick up a special envelope, you may also mail your payment and information directly to the church office, but it still must be received by April 9th in order to be included in the listing and for the order to be submitted. So please plan ahead.)

FINANCE:

GENERAL FUND SUMMARY FOR FEBRUARY

February Weekly Offerings \$14,885

February Expenses \$27,763

REGULAR OFFERINGS FOR 2025

Weekly Offerings Received \$32,153

Amount Expected to Maintain Budget \$41,666

Giving through February is 77% of what was expected to maintain current budget.

Save the Date!! M.A.D. Camp (Music, Art, & Drama)

June 16th – 20th 9:00am – 3:00pm. Performance is on Saturday the 21st at the 5:00pm service. Cost is \$25 for the week. Questions call Katie Carstens or leave a message with the church office. More detailed information to come.

St. Mark Preschool:

" It is crazy to think that we are drawing near another end of school year. This year has flown by. With the closing of one school year comes the beginning of a new one. We are now accepting registrations for both our Kids Crossing Summer Program serving ages 3-10 years old, and our Fall Preschool Program serving ages 3-5 years old. Our summer program runs Monday-Friday 9:00-1:30, with the option of before care at an additional cost. The Summer Program runs June 9th-August 15th. Our Fall Preschool Program has the option of 3 day or 5 day for both our 3 year classes and our PreK classes. The core day is 9:00-1:30 with the option of before and after care for an additional cost. For more information you can email rdankertstmarkpreschool@gmail.com or call us at (563) 326-5060. Interested in joining our amazing Preschool staff? Opportunities may be available soon as our program grows."

Thank You Notes

-Gary Bates, devoted volunteer of many years in the St. Mark Food Pantry, would like to thank all those from St. Mark for the cards, prayers and concern. He is looking forward to returning to volunteering (hopefully in May).

- I would like to thank the congregation for all of the kind words, cards and prayers for the loss of my dear father, John Olds. ~ Diane Fellman

Sympathy

The families and friends of two St Mark members have been in our prayers. John Olds and Ray Pagel both passed away in March. We mourn the end of their earthly lives and rejoice in their heavenly home coming.

Call Committee:

On Thursday March 20, the Council approved the Ministry Site Profile as presented by the Call Committee. The MSP (Profile) has been submitted to the Southeast Iowa Synod to begin the next steps to search for our new pastor. The Call Committee would like to thank everyone who completed a survey as to what qualities and gifts we desire in a new pastor. We will continue to update the congregation as to the progress.

Your Call Committee,

Beth Claeys, Robert Sherrod, Desiree Gillespie, Cody Williams, Pam Carstens and Lisa Crews

Social Ministry:

Easter Egg Hunt – will be April 19th, 2025. Meet in the gym. It will start at 10:00am. Candy donations are being accepted in the lounge thru April 13th. Donations are greatly appreciated! Please be aware that donations are picked up regularly from the baskets, that is where to leave them. The filling of the eggs is an ongoing process. Any questions ask Kim Sherrod-Hensler or Amber Sherrod.

Habitat for Humanity Happenings – Saturday, April 26th will be the next lunch provided for Habitat for Humanity volunteers. Watch for sign-up and menu information to be posted in the lounge. Habitat News: A celebration for the dedications of Homes #137 and #139 were held in March. Applications for the 2025 ramp season are being accepted. Home mentors are being recruited. The first two ground breakings of the year will be held on Saturday, April 5th for homes #143 and #144! Consider following “Habitat for Humanity Quad Cities” on Facebook for all the latest local news and information.

Volunteer Appreciation – March 30th Fellowship Hour

April is Volunteer Recognition Month. On March 30 we will celebrate our many volunteers during the fellowship time following church service. The staff will be hosting fellowship in appreciation of all the St. Mark volunteers. Grateful to the many dedicated volunteers who contribute in so many different ways with in the St Mark church family and building as well as reaching out into the community.

From the Parish Nurse – Beth Claeys:

April is Volunteer Appreciation Month! We are blessed with many wonderful volunteers that are vital to carrying out the mission and ministry of St. Mark. In the March issue of LIFE an article on volunteering was included. One of the many ways of contributing as a volunteer is outreach with our members who are unable to regularly attend in person services or activities. This can be phone calls, personal visits, mailing cards/notes, prayer, taking home communion, or whatever combinations work for you. Some of our folks even have e-mail. If you would like to explore volunteer options to help stay connected with our members, contact Beth Claeys, Parish Nurse, Pastor Janine, or the church office.

Please Update the Church: 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.

Bunco – Will not meet in April due to Holy Week (hope to see you at services). See you again in May for Bunco.

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.

Prayer Shawl Group will meet on Saturday, April 12th at 10:00am.

Newsletter Volunteers: A special thank you to all of the newsletter volunteers who have continued to show-up to prepare the newsletter for mailing each month and through this final mailed issue. I have appreciated you all this past year. It is quite a process which has changed several times with postal regulations. A few of you have been doing this for decades and are ready (as well as deserve) to retire!!! ~ Sue

Regarding The Calendar Items: *The detailed calendar for the week is listed in the worship bulletin insert. This is available both at in-person worship as well as e-mailed out with the weekly worship link (typically on Thursdays). It is also usually posted on the St. Mark Facebook page.*

If you do not get this e-mail or others and would like to, please contact Sue Geise in the office or Rick Nagel. The e-mail list will be updated over the next month as we move to more efficient and less expensive methods of communication. 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. This month only the basic events are listed rather than an entirely additional time-consuming calendar section. The monthly calendar published often had changes by the end of the month anyway.

~ 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!

TRANSITION: THIS (APRIL) IS THE FINAL PRINTED/MAILED ISSUE of LIFE Newsletter. All those on the St. Mark e-mail list should also receive this by e-mail as a transition test step. If you do not receive the e-mail version of April LIFE (or a test note in the mail), and wish to continue receiving the May issue please be sure to contact Sue Geise or Rick Nagel with updated information.

Thank you to those who have provided feedback (and e-mail addresses) in response to requests over the past months 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). Many positive comments were received and only three people notified us they do not have e-mail and would like it mailed or will pick up a printed copy. 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

St Mark LIFE

St. Mark Evangelical Lutheran Church

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Theology On Tap: “Have a Little Faith”

Join us at for a book discussion of “Have a Little Faith” by author Mitch Albom on Tuesday, April 22nd at The Machine Shed Restaurant, 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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