



Saint Mark's
Evangelical Lutheran Church

Weekly Update
April 15, 2021

Dear Friends,

It has been a very difficult week. The death of Daunte Wright has compounded the pain and trauma of so many in our Cities, especially as we are still reeling from the death of George Floyd and struggling in the quest for justice. Once again we are brought face to face with issues of racism, fear, misunderstanding, and violence. I pray that God will give us eyes to see a path forward that will lead toward a better society for all, though I confess I myself can't see that path clearly right now. I am trying to trust that we will be able to work together to find a solution to the chronic and complex issues that divide us and disadvantage so many. May God help us and bring us to a place of understanding, repentance, real change and healing.

God's peace,
Pastor Mary

Our Sympathy

We extend our sympathy to the friends and family of Mark Moreno, son of Marlene Moreno, who died after a long illness on April 6. May all who mourn be held in the loving and comforting arms of God.

An Update on the Internship Program and an Introduction

We are excited to announce that Eric Gustafson has been assigned to St. Mark's for his Internship year! Eric will be joining us in August and we are excited to have him on board! Here is a letter of introduction from him:

Hello! My name is Eric Gustafson and I will be the next student intern at St Mark's. I am very excited to begin meeting and working with you all, but that won't happen for a few months :-/.

A bit about me: I live in North Branch, where I operate a tree nursery/garden center. I have been juggling this along with class work over the past two and a half years. Exceptional employees and grace have accompanied me thus far, and I trust the same will happen during my time at St. Mark's.

I am father to two twenty-something daughters, Emma and Tess, and I have been widowed almost nine years. For just over a year, my wonderful partner, Katy, has provided me with steadfast support, love, and wisdom. I am super-grateful for the people in my life.

I have been a recovering alcoholic since my mid-twenties. The 12 Steps remain a vital part of my spiritual understanding; coming to seminary and learning more about the broad world that surrounds Jesus has been a logical and fascinating extension of my spiritual life. As I move into church leadership, I am a person with possibly more questions than answers. I am especially interested in those who ask, "Why?" in their spiritual search. My experience has been that picking at scabs that the world discourages us from picking can produce the kind of healing that Jesus desires for us. The pain of the questioning WILL BE matched by exquisite love. When we have the audacity to trust that Jesus meant what he said about loving God and neighbor, (Matthew 22:37-39) we WILL move toward the happiness and peace that Jesus desires for us. This is most certainly true!

Whew! Feel like I just delivered my first sermon.

On a lighter note, my interests in life are many and include hockey, Scrabble, art, sauna, and sustainable living.

I am truly excited to be joining you at St. Mark's this Fall!

Peace,
Eric

An Update from Adam Reinke, Chair of the Call Committee

The call committee has been interviewing candidates for the position of Associate Minister at St. Mark's. This person will participate in all facets of Pastoral ministry with special responsibility for Children, Youth, and Family ministry. The committee has finished the first round interviews and is moving forward to a second round of interviews with multiple candidates. We thank you all for keeping the call committee in your prayers and look forward to presenting a candidate for congregational consideration soon!

Congregational Zoom Check-in: Coffee & Conversation – Fridays at 10:00 am

Check in with Pastor Mary and your other friends from St. Mark's via Zoom each Friday morning at 10:00, for conversation and a quick peek at the upcoming Sunday's sermon texts. All are welcome! Readings for this week are:

Acts 3:12-19 and Luke 24:36b-48.

<https://tinyurl.com/rb3fykuw>
Meeting ID: 876 0860 5754
Passcode: 544807

All-Congregation Grounds Clean-up Saturday, May 1

Everyone is invited to join your fellow congregation members to help with the clean-up beginning at 9:00 a.m. on May 1 to help with spring clean-up around the church grounds. Suggested items to bring are gloves, rakes, shovels and if possible, a broom. Also, some trees may be trimmed so if you have pruners, etc. they would be useful. To avoid confusion, please mark your tools, etc. for easy identification when we are done. We will welcome pickups or trailers for hauling to the compost site in St. Paul. Hope to see you on May 1!

Forming Garden Team

St. Mark's is forming a gardening team to help with the church gardens. The team responsibilities include spring and fall clean-up, plantings, weeding, watering and any other gardening related projects. No garden experience is needed! Gardening takes place between April and October and usually takes one to two hours per week. Sign up starts May 1. Call Sherry Berry at 651-777-6704 or Wanda Hurtgen at 651-770-1905.

REACH Home and Orphanage

The following letter was sent out to supporters and sponsors of the REACH Home and Orphanage in Bapatla, India this week. It is with deep sadness that we share it with all of you who have participated in this ministry over the past 38 years.

Dear Sponsors,

For the past 38 years, working through St. Mark's ELCA in North St. Paul, Minnesota, REACH Home and Orphanage in Bapatla, India has been supported by faithful sponsors and donors. Hundreds and hundreds of children have been nurtured in mind, body, and spirit to lead them into a successful adulthood. Thank you for your generous support.

Now, after nearly four decades, the leadership has been transferred. As you know, Kusuma passed away in December of 2020. Her family had hoped to carry on her work but for legal reasons the Indian Government did not allow it. A local (Bapatla) church-based organization that already operates a Christian mission program has assumed physical and financial responsibility for REACH Home. At this time, no changes are planned for either the staff or for the care and education of the children.

The REACH FCRA (Foreign Currency Registration Act) Number has been terminated. This means St. Mark's ability to send support to REACH Home has ended.

It is with a very heavy heart that we are sharing this news with you. Again, thank you on behalf of all the children who have benefited from this loving program! Please keep them in your prayers.

We will be reviewing 2021 contributions. Options for disposition to follow soon.

God's peace,

*Peter Mogren
pmogren@roccleaning.com*

*Penny Wright (Sponsor Coordinator)
Lpwright70@gmail.com*

*Betty Beane
bjbeane1@gmail.com*

*Angel Mogren
akmogren@gmail.com*

Gift Cards

Spring is here and it is gardening time again! Reminder the Garden Team has Bachman's (\$25 & \$10) and Gertens (\$25) gift cards for your gardening purchases. Bachman's cards are good for anything they sell and the Gertens cards are good for green and growing items. The Garden Team earns 15% from the cards sold and it is used for maintaining and improving the gardens at St. Mark's. Please call Sherry at 651-777-6704 and to arrange a time to get the cards. Thank you for supporting the Garden Team.

5K-As-You-Can for Shobi's Table—May 22

Help support Shobi's Table – a Lutheran ministry working to feed St. Paul through its pay-as-you-can food truck. Gather your friends and family to participate in a "5K-As-You-Can" the week of May 16-22. Participants can do their 5K anywhere, anytime, at their own pace. Whether you walk, run, ride, or roll, your donation (of any amount) will help us continue to serve meals each week and continue to add serving sites. On Saturday, May 22, Shobi's Table will host a community lunch (location TBA) from 11am-2pm, and provide nearby routes to do a 5K that day. Registration fee is pay-as-you-can (any registration fee \$25 or higher comes with a Shobi's Table t-shirt!). Register or learn more at:

shobistable.org/5k-as-you-can/