



New! Budget Review Meeting – Sunday, January 23 at 9:30 am

Prior to the Annual Meeting, you will have the opportunity to attend a budget review on Sunday, January 23, between services at 9:30 am in Rees Hall room 203/204 (the “Zoom room”) or virtually, via Zoom. **A digital copy of the budget will be emailed next week on Tuesday, along with a link for those joining via Zoom.** Bring any questions you may have to this review meeting. *If you haven't used Zoom lately, this might be a good practice run.*

New! Update regarding Worship Service and Annual Meeting of the Congregation Sunday, January 30

On the recommendation of the Restoration Team, St. Mark's has shifted the annual meeting to a **completely virtual format**. The schedule for day will be as follows:

- 9:30 am: ONE combined **in-person** worship service
- 12:00 pm: Annual Meeting held **virtually via Zoom**

Everyone is encouraged to attend. Even online, we need a quorum of 100 people to vote on the budget, so it is especially important for members to attend. **Prior to the meeting, St. Mark's will email the Zoom link, technical support number, and a digital copy of the annual report.**

Update on Afghan Family

We finally met our family this past Friday evening! With the help of our excellent translator, Khoshal, we were able to meet and learn a bit about their history and their needs. We sat, most of us on the floor, as is their tradition, and were served sweet tea and a selection of interesting and tasty Afghan cookies and candies. The father, Hamidullah, worked in Afghanistan as a driver for an NGO and as an auto mechanic. They do not have any family here, but the father said that there is one other person he knows living in MN. It sounds like they were sent here (like being sent to Siberia!). We apologized for the lack of weather hospitality, but the family seems to be getting off on a good foot. They have received EBT cards that allow them to purchase groceries and have found stores within walking distance. They have also been using the train, which runs along University Ave and is just 1 block away.

The family seems to be loving and affectionate, with good emotional dynamics, as far as I could tell. We were able to meet the mother and two older sons, who are around 20 years old. One of them has some computer experience and certification. Whether that is helpful or useful in the US remains to be seen. The two daughters are of school age but have not yet enrolled. The family needs some help in this area, as their English skills are minimal. The children have some basic language skills, more than the parents, so we may be relying on them for translating help as we work with them arranging appointments. The other area of urgent need is healthcare. Both of the parents said that they have dental issues that need addressing, which we have begun working on.

Hamidullah said that he is very grateful for the work that we have done in setting up their household. He added that it was better than he could have done himself, and more than they had hoped for.

Thank you to everybody at St. Mark's for all your generosity in helping out this family. Please remember to keep our Mentor Team and this family in your prayers as we begin our work together. Please also pray for our translator, Khoshal, who has many family members left behind in Afghanistan and who may not be safe due to their work for the government that preceded the Taliban's return to power.

Peace.

Eric Gustafson, Intern Pastor

Council Corner - January 13 meeting

Happy new year once again! Council hopes this message finds you and your family healthy and safe as we continue to navigate the ever-changing landscape due to the pandemic. Council met to finalize the 2022 annual budget proposal for the upcoming congregational meeting later this month.

- Pete and Angel Mogren updated Council on St. Mark's continual relationship with our India outreach program. Please reach out to them to hear their story and wonderful commitment to this ministry.
- Committees gave brief monthly reports, including Finance reporting a General Fund balance of \$172,000.
- Council would also like to thank Helene Doran for her presence at the past few meetings and her diligent work on preparing this year's proposed budget.
- **With the recommendation from the Restoration Team, Council has shifted the annual meeting to a virtual format. The meeting will be conducted over Zoom, January 30 at 12pm.** St. Mark's will send out the Zoom link, technical support number, and budget proposal soon. We hope to see everyone there.

The complete meeting minutes are available in the church office after they are approved at the following meeting. The next Council meeting is scheduled for February 17, 2021 at 6:30 pm.

Staff Contact Information

Staff members will be working from home as much as possible for the next few weeks. If you need to reach any of the St. Mark's staff, contact information is below:

Pastor Mary: primaryf@stmarks-nsp.org

Cell phone: 608.295.5401

Pastor David: prdavidb@stmarks-nsp.org

Ph: 651-777-7451, ext. 232

Intern Pastor Eric: ericg@stmarks-nsp.org

Main Church Office Phone: 651.777.7451

Heidi McKenzie (ext. 231) heidimc@stmarks-nsp.org

Cell phone: 651.231.5500

Helene Doran (ext. 238) helened@stmarks-nsp.org

Ann Mott (ext. 235) annm@stmarks-nsp.org

Dorothea Jirsa (ext. 227) dorotheaj@stmarks-nsp.org

Trevor Wolter (ext. 225) trevorw@stmarks-nsp.org

Custodial Update

After many years of dedicated service, Heather Winner is no longer a part of our custodial team. Hunter Winner has also indicated that he would like to step back over the next few months. We are grateful for the good work they have provided and wish them well in their new endeavors. Because of these changes, St. Mark's has contracted with Victory Building Services to provide janitorial services. A team from Victory will be in the building on Monday and Thursday mornings to do a thorough cleaning of our space. Hunter is staying on awhile to ensure a good transition.

Wanted: volunteers to help on Sunday Mornings

St. Mark's is in need of a group of volunteers to rotate Sundays, helping with opening and closing the church, turning on lights, coffee service, checking for any issues to be passed onto the office. It could also be done as a team. Training is provided! Experience is not needed. This is not every Sunday. We are hoping to get plenty of members signed up to help. We all love our church home. Please consider helping out. Interested? Contact Pastor Mary (651-777-7451 or primaryf@stmarks-nsp.org) or Julie Urban (urbanja@comcast.net or 651-777-0346).

In Sympathy...

Our prayers are with the family and friends of **Matthew Schwantes**, son of Sharon Sporcic, husband, and father of two, who died after an unexpected illness.

May all who mourn the loss of loved ones find comfort in the presence of God and the promise of the resurrection.



Coffee this Sunday...

is sponsored by Jon, Paul, and Sarah Larson in honor of their mother Lois Larson on her 92nd birthday (January 17).

If you would like to sponsor Sunday coffee, add your name and message to the sign up sheet on the Rees Hall bulletin board.

Our congregation is part of a much larger church body...

both in the St. Paul area (our Synod) and nationally (the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America). St. Mark's encourages you all to connect with the Synod and the ELCA to stay informed about the good work we are a part of beyond our immediate community. You will be surprised and encouraged! Check out the Annual Report of the St. Paul Area Synod (SPAS) at spas-elca.org.



You can also sign up for weekly updates from the SPAS about educational, worship and ministry opportunities. Maybe there is something you would like to participate in beyond our congregation. The weekly newsletter can be found at spas-elca.org/our-synod/news-events/ To subscribe and receive this email in your inbox, click the link in the opening paragraph of that page and select the "General Interest" option.

Next Week's Calendar	
Sunday, January 16 8:30 am Worship Service, SC 10:30 am Worship Service, SC	Thursday, January 20 8:30 am Denny's Study, offsite 1:00 pm Elizabeth Study, ZOOM 6:30 pm Anne Study, ZOOM
Monday, January 17 1:00 pm Phoebe Study, <i>suspended</i> 6:30 pm Mon. Bible Study, ZOOM	Friday, Jan. 21 – Office Closed
Tuesday, January 18 10:00 am Tues. Bible Study, ZOOM 11:00 am Naomi Bible Study 6:30 pm Intern Committee, ZOOM	Saturday, Jan.22 – Office Closed
Wednesday, January 19 <i>All Wednesday night activities (dinner,youth education, Sanctuary service) suspended through January.</i>	Sunday, January 23 8:30 am Worship Service, SC 9:30 am Budget Review, ZOOM & in-person #203/4 10:30 am Worship Service, SC

Interested in ushering?

If you are interested in ushering, please contact Dan Colberg at drcolberg@comcast.net or call 612-716-5969.

Upcoming Usher Schedules

Sunday, January 16

8:30 am – Usher Team 3
(Capt. Larry Dent)

10:30 am – Usher Team 3
(Capt. Bob Engwer)

Sunday, January 23

8:30 am – Usher Team 4
(Capt. Brent Diamond)

10:30 am – Usher Team 4
(Capt. Bonnie Meyers)