



Saint Mark's
Evangelical Lutheran Church

Weekly Update

July 16, 2020

Dear St. Mark's Family,

As most of you know, last Friday my Mom, Carol Stumme, died peacefully at home after suffering a stroke a few days before. Today, my family was able to gather outside in our memorial garden by the columbarium to have a service honoring her life and entrusting her to God. It was a beautiful setting in which to say good bye and celebrate God's promise of new life.

I am grateful for the great staff and members of St. Mark's who have provided me with the space and time to be a daughter this past week. Thanks to Jenn Luong and Susie Modrow for covering the preaching this last week, and to Trevor Ternez, Dorothea Jirsa, Bonnie and John Pottratz and Kathryn Kunze for making worship happen. Thanks to Rachel Ericson and Ann Mott and Heidi McKenzie and other volunteers for keeping the ball rolling with VBS. Thanks to the COVID Team for continuing to make progress on our re-entry plan even when I couldn't be there. Thanks to all who picked up the pieces I needed to drop. It is good to be surrounded with such willing and capable people.

I will be back in the saddle again starting this evening with the Church Council Meeting. All regular Zoom meetings and Bible Studies will resume again starting tomorrow morning with the congregational check-in at 10:00. I look forward to seeing you there!

God's Peace,
Pastor Mary

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

We will be meeting tomorrow, July 17. 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. *This coming Sunday's texts are **Romans 8:12-25 and Matthew 13:24-30 [36-43]** in case you want to look ahead and bring your thoughts and ideas.*

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81850034128>

Meeting ID: 818 5003 4128

Pop Up Food Shelf/Farmers Market—Monday, July 27

Once again, St. Mark's is partnering with the North Saint Paul Food Shelf and Second Harvest to host a Pop Up Food Shelf /Farmers Market at St. Mark's. The dates and times are 4-6pm on the 4th Monday of the month - July 27, August 24 and September 28. No registration or income requirements. A few volunteers (who are not in a vulnerable COVID population) are needed to help pack bags. The market will be outside in the St. Mark's parking lot. Contact Pastor Mary (pmaryf@stmarks-nsp.org) to volunteer.

Online Worship: Sunday & Wednesday & Facebook Live Sunday Preludes

Worship services will continue to be posted on Wednesdays and Sundays for the foreseeable future. Please join us as often as you are able. Trevor Wolter Ternez goes Live on Facebook on Sunday mornings at 9:30 am to provide prelude music and his following continues to grow. Greet one another in the comments section...it's a fun way to connect with your church friends.

VACATION
BIBLE SCHOOL
AT HOME



JULY 20-24, 2020

It's not too late to sign up for a FREE at-home VBS experience for kids (age 5-11)! While we won't be gathering together at church, there will be lots of fun activities, songs, online interaction, stories... and even snacks!

The program is provided **at no cost**, with materials prepared and donated by Green Lake Lutheran Ministries. **Sign up today** (it takes about 2 minutes) at www.stmarks-nsf.org (on the homepage)

Each day during the week of VBS, a schedule of activities will be distributed on the church website and Facebook page. VBS can be completed at any time during the day and the schedule will instruct you in how to do each activity. Questions can be directed to Rachel at rachelericson1@gmail.com.

What will families need to have on hand to participate?

If you don't have access to the materials listed last week, or just don't have the time to gather them, please sign up and let us know you'll be picking up a bag from St. Mark's at the Rees Hall doors.

Fri. July 17 (5-7 pm)

Sat. July 18 (9 am to noon)

St. Mark's Restoration Team - Planning for Reopening the Church

"I will restore you to health and heal your wounds, declares the Lord." (Jeremiah 30:17)

The promise of restoration is a repeated theme throughout the Bible, offering hope when all else seems to contradict it. Throughout our history Christians have looked to the physical Church as a gathering place for us to come together, worship together, mourn together, praise together and pray together. In the current circumstances where Covid-19 has physically kept us apart - we are still St. Mark's NSF in Spirit and in Community. Staying connected via the weekly on-line services has been a welcome alternative and we are very thankful for the efforts of our pastors, staff and parishioners who have worked hard in bringing the message of Christ into our homes.

The big question on everyone's minds is "When will the Church reopen and we can once again worship together?" Seems like a simple inquiry but there is not an easy response. There are many things to consider in ensuring that we can reopen safely and that all precautions are in place to protect any and all who enter our building. Jesus came to save, to bless, to redeem and to protect. As disciples of Christ we are called to protect one another both spiritually and physically.

Towards that goal, the St. Mark's Restoration Team has been formed to look closely into the various guidelines, process steps, timelines and action steps that will be required in order to bring about a phased reopening of our Church - for Worship, for Gatherings, for use by Partner Organizations and most importantly for the Fellowship that our physical space offers. The team has now met twice via Zoom meetings and is in the process of gathering information to help make sound decisions.

This process will take some time as we build the action plan for St. Mark's to reopen it's doors. We will follow the directives of the St. Paul Area Synod of the ELCA, the guidance of State and Local governments, the initiatives of the CDC and the best from our neighbors in Christ who are also facing the difficult task of reopening their own Churches. So when will St. Mark's reopen? Right now we do not have that specific date in place. We are hopeful to have our plan to the Church Council close to September 1 and look to have a date in that proposal. Until then we will continue with our on-line worship and communications through the Weekly Update.

There is no doubt that conducting Church will be different - there will be masks, there will be social distancing, there will be extra cleaning and sanitation, there will be restrictions for building access and flow. We all will play a part in ensuring the safety and protection of one another - know that these things will be conducted in a phased approach and we will adjust on an ongoing basis through 2020.

Thank you, St. Mark's community for the patience and support of the Restoration Team's efforts.

PEACE

Kurt Biedermann - Chair St. Mark's Restoration Team