



Saint Mark's  
Evangelical Lutheran Church

# Weekly Update

May 12, 2022

Dear friends,

On June 2, 1985, I was ordained a Lutheran pastor. Now as I approach my retirement from this wild and blessed gig, I look back over the last 37 years with such a mix of emotions. I have had incredible opportunities. I have had the privilege to walk with folks through joy and tragedy. The sacred moments spent with the people of God in my care are more than I can count. I am especially thankful for John, my partner in life and ministry, who has understood what it means to be Pastor and has shared these experiences and opportunities with me. It has been good.

I am sad for the relationships that are coming to an end and I will miss our companionship in this good gospel work. At the same time, I am excited to see what this next stage of my life's journey will hold. Most of all, I am filled with a sense of gratitude. Thank you, dear people of St. Mark's, for being the perfect congregation to wrap up my ministry years with. When John and I decided it was time to return to the Cities and I started looking for a call, I couldn't have imagined a better place for us to land than St. Mark's. For four years we have walked together through unanticipated and unprecedented challenges and have emerged strong, confident and focused on God's vision for us in this community and beyond. Over the last four years we have opened our building (one of our greatest assets) to Genesis East Congregation, Headstart, and other agencies who provide services to our community which align with our mission to love God, and love others. We are now in a position to make needed repairs and enhancements. We are looking to the future with a sense of hope and anticipation, trusting that God is leading us and provides the strength, resources, and ability to follow. I am grateful for the trust you have placed in me and for your faithfulness in vision and ministry. Most of all, I am grateful to have known and loved you all. Thank you for showing up on Sunday mornings, Wednesday evenings, and throughout the week, in person and on-line, ready to worship, to learn, to pitch in wherever needed, to laugh, to cry, to sing and pray. This is God's gift of community at its best.

Last but certainly not least, thank you to a wonderful staff. It has been an honor to work alongside of you. Your competence, care for this congregation and each other, is an inspiration. Each of you goes above and beyond the basic duties of your job to ensure that things run smoothly and people feel cared for and appreciated. Each of you understands that what you do is a ministry – work done to the glory of God. Thank you.

This coming Sunday will be a bittersweet day for me. I look forward to it and I dread it! Together we will mark an ending and give thanks for the time we have been blessed to share together. And then we will each begin something new, trusting that God is making a way and blessing our paths.

I hope to see you all on Sunday.

God bless you and keep you, and give you peace.

*Pastor Mary*

## **Pastor Mary's Retirement Celebration – Sunday, May 15**

Join the congregation for worship this Sunday at 9:30 am for Pastor Mary's last Sunday with us at St. Mark's and her retirement from active ministry. After worship, everyone is invited to celebrate with Pastor Mary, John and their family for a light brunch in Rees Hall. A basket for cards and notes of appreciation will be available. *Pastor Mary invites those who would like to make a gift in honor of her retirement to consider designating those gifts to the Grace Space renovation project*. Checks may be made out to St. Mark's Church. Please include "Grace Space" in the memo line. Contribute online at [www.stmarks-nsp.org](http://www.stmarks-nsp.org)—click on the special giving opportunities link, then select Grace Space from the drop down menu.

## **Masks encouraged**

With Covid rates on the rise in this area, masks are once again **strongly encouraged** for larger gatherings at church (such as worship).

## **Thank you to the Saturday volunteer clean up crew!**

Huge thanks to all those who worked so hard last Saturday (May 7) cleaning the church grounds. You were amazing! Your gift of time and talent is greatly appreciated.

## Parking Lot Replacement Coming in June

It's no secret that our parking lots have seen better days. While a lot of hours have been put into patching holes and keeping the lot usable, the time has come to start fresh.

Replacing the lot is a big and costly undertaking but there's never been a better time to get it done. Having made its way through the Property and Finance Committees, a plan to replace the parking lot was approved by the Church Council at its April meeting. The cost of this project, which includes both upper and lower parking lots, and some curb and sidewalk work, is \$145,000. The Council voted to take out a 15 year loan with the Mission Investment Fund (MIF), a ministry of the ELCA, to finance this project.

While the financing of this project will be done through the MIF loan, the repayment costs will largely be covered by revenue generated from our parking lot use agreement with North High School. It is the confident hope of the Church Council that with your financial support, in addition to the parking lot use revenue, we will be able to pay this loan off ahead of schedule. A designated fund has been created for Parking Lot Repair and Maintenance. Please consider setting up a recurring monthly donation in support of this fund in any amount by visiting our online giving portal ([www.stmarks-nsp.org](http://www.stmarks-nsp.org)). You may also place a check in the offering plate on Sunday mornings or mail your contribution to the church office.

Our parking lot is an important asset and it is vital that we care for it. The parking lot is one of the first things people see when they come to St. Mark's and it is the path they take to our front door. Having a brand new lot will be like rolling out the red carpet for guests and members alike. It says, "Welcome. We are glad you are here and you are important to us!"

## East Metro Symphony Orchestra (EMSO)

### Concert at St. Mark's – May 22 at 3:00 pm

EMSO will perform **Beethoven (Belated) Birthday Bash**, a concert honoring the music of Ludwig van Beethoven on Sunday, May 22 at 3:00 pm at St. Mark's. Admission is free.

## MN Twins baseball game – Sunday, June 12

### Deadline to sign up is May 18

Join us for a trip to Target Field for the Twins vs. Tampa Bay Rays on Sunday, June 12. First pitch is at 1:10 pm. Bus leaves St. Mark's at 11:30 am. **\$20**

**includes your ticket and transportation on the bus!** Go to [www.stmarks-nsp.org](http://www.stmarks-nsp.org) or scan this QR code to register and pay online. Don't miss out on this great opportunity!



## Prayer Shawl Meeting – May 18

The Prayer Shawl Ministry will meet Wednesday, May 18 at 6:30 P.M. in the Fireside Room. The meeting is for current participants, those who would like to learn more or be part of this ministry. Shawls are knitted or crocheted with prayers for those who are in need. You work at your own pace. More hands and fingers making the shawls are always welcomed. We look forward to seeing everyone  
~Wanda Hurtgen and Sue Fletcher

## Stewardship Conversation Sunday – May 22

St. Mark's is our faith home and we care deeply about the place and the people. What are our hopes and dreams for St. Mark's? What do we think God is calling us to do in this place, at this time? Join the Stewardship for All Seasons (SAS) team for coffee, and conversation after service on Sunday, May 22. Learn about the team and share with them your vision and ideas for St. Mark in the coming years.

## Vacation Bible School – August 9-11

### (9 am to 12 pm)

St. Mark's is hosting *River of Life*, ELCA World Hunger's VBS program for pre-K to 5th graders. Together we'll journey down the river to learn about God's gracious gift of water. From the waters of baptism to the waters that sustain farms and gardens, water is life. Kids will learn about the importance of water and explore important "ports" during the week to hear Bible stories about water. They will also hear about communities working to restore watersheds, to protect rights to water and to ensure safe water for everyone. And they'll have a lot of fun with games, crafts and more!  
Free of charge.

Sign up by Aug. 8 at [www.stmarks-nsp.org](http://www.stmarks-nsp.org) or scan the QR code here:



## VBS Volunteers Needed

VBS is right around the corner and we want to ready to offer a great experience for the kids. If we're going to offer a great experience then we need great volunteers to make it happen! Youth Volunteers, between 6th and 12th grades, are needed to help run games, assist with crafts and music, and act in skits. Adult Volunteers are needed to help organize the run the different activities such as crafts, games, story and small group times, and to shepherd the kids to their rotations. We also need adults to help out with food prep and service. Please sign up to volunteer by using the VBS registration link at [www.stmarks-nsp.org](http://www.stmarks-nsp.org) or scan the QR code (shown above.) VBS is August 9th-11th from 9am-12pm. If you have any questions please contact Pastor David ([prdavidb@stmarks-nsp.org](mailto:prdavidb@stmarks-nsp.org)).

## Update on Rain Gardens

The Property Committee has been actively working on plans for the rain gardens around the west parking lots. We have involved North High Biology and Environmental Science teacher Courtney Johnson, along with a team of students from the Environmental Club to help with ongoing care and upkeep for the gardens. On Tuesday morning, May 17th, students from North will be working to clean out debris and extra soil from the gardens. Work will begin about 10 am for those who would like to help out.

## An Opportunity to Help a Child in Kihesa

Greetings from Kihesa Lutheran Church, our sister congregation in Iringa, Tanzania. Brayan Mwilonga, age 15, needs our help. Brayan is the fourth of eight children. His family is a member of Kihesa and he was confirmed there. He has been sick for many years, but doctors have finally been able to diagnose his problems as failed kidneys. His parents sold many things in the house and property to provide medical help and dialysis. In a poor country, like Tanzania, they have now become one of the very poor. Unfortunately, Brayan's father has abandoned the family, leaving his mother to deal with everything. Relatives and neighbors have helped, but it is not enough. Brayan will need a kidney transplant; his mother is a candidate. Brayan has missed much schooling due to his illness. Currently he is in standard 7 (seventh grade) with his younger sister.

Please look into your heart and help Brayan. St. Mark's has set up a fund to help Brayan. Checks may be made to St. Mark's with the memo line: Brayan's medical expenses. Donations may also be made online through St. Mark's website ([www.stmarks-nsp.org](http://www.stmarks-nsp.org)) - select Special Giving Opportunities. Then use the drop down menu to select *Tanzania Missions*.

We give thanks to our God for the love we receive and the love we give to others.

If you have any questions about Brayan, please contact Jim or Betty Wolf.

## Garden Gift Cards

The Garden Team will be selling garden cards in Rees Hall on Sundays, **May 15 – June 5**. Bachman's cards are available in \$10 and \$25 and are good for any items purchased at the store. Gertens cards are available for \$25 and can be used to purchase any green and growing items. And remember – they make great gifts too! The Garden Team earns 15% with funds used for improving and maintaining the church gardens. If you need cards at other times, please call Sherry at 651-777-6704 and we can get them to you. Thank you for your support!

## Afghan Family Update

Our friends from Afghanistan, the Safi family, are continuing to do well in no small part due to the generous work, prayer, and financial support of the St. Mark's community. Hamid, the father, is the only one working at the present time as Mom has her hands full caring for a family of seven and the five children are hard at work with school. His work as a "cart-pusher" at Walmart will end soon as he has found a spot at Pearson Candy in St. Paul which is much closer to home.

In the past 10 days Hamid got his driver's permit AND passed the road test, so he is a licensed MN driver! I rode with him to the test site, and even though his English isn't the best (he struggled with instructions for left vs. right as we practiced ahead of time) he is a very good and careful driver, which is not surprising as his last job in Afghanistan involved transporting high-level political figures. He spent an hour and a half behind the wheel of a 5 speed and didn't kill the engine once. Pretty good considering he hadn't driven in 9 months! This is great news for the family who will now be **on the hunt for a car. Hamid has worked as a mechanic most of his life, so please keep your eyes open for a fixer-upper!**

Please continue to keep the Safi family in your prayers as they continue moving forward in their adventure as new Americans.

## Settled Homelessness Initiative Tour Opportunity

During Lent I invited my friend Gabrielle Clowdus to come and speak about her work with the tiny home/homelessness initiative called *Settled*. For those who would like to learn more about the work of *Settled*, and to visit the homes that are ready for imminent placement at Minnesota's first "Sacred Settlement," I have scheduled a tour at Woodland Hills Community Church (White Bear & Larpenteur) for the evening of May 24th at 6:30 pm. Please visit Settled website <https://settled.org/> for more information.

If you know you would like to go, please register at this link so they will have an idea of how many will be coming. [settled.org/event/come-and-see-tour-our-model-community/](https://settled.org/event/come-and-see-tour-our-model-community/)

~Intern Pastor Eric

## Update on Pastor Mona

Pastor Mona Anderson, former beloved Pastor at St. Mark's, died peacefully at home early Tuesday morning this past week. *Arrangements for her memorial service are pending.*

# Youth Education Volunteers Needed for 2022-23



As we enter into the finals weeks of Youth Education for 2021-22 we are already preparing for 2022-23 and are asking for the congregation's continue support to sustain and grow our Youth and Family ministry. *The preliminary calendar for 2022-23 is shown below.*

For 2022-23 we are looking for 8 adults to serve as teachers on Wednesday nights for PreK-6th Classes, and 4 Confirmation Adult Leaders. Specifically we would like a pair of co-teachers for each of the following grade levels: PreK & Kindergarten, 1st & 2nd grade, 3rd & 4th grade, and 5th & 6th grade. As well as a pair of co-leaders for 7th and 8th confirmation classes.

While the bulk of our Youth Education will be on Wednesday nights we would also like to offer Sunday School for families who are interested. In order to do so, we are looking for a pair of volunteers to serve as Sunday School co-teachers. Initially there would be a single PreK-3rd Grade classroom for Sunday School on Sunday mornings.

We would also like to find someone to serve as a volunteer Youth Ed Coordinator for PreK-6th grade. This person would be responsible for preparing classroom materials, tracking attendance, assisting classroom teachers, and working with Pastor David to ensure our teachers are supported and our students are engaged. This volunteer position would be about 3 hours per week.

Being able to share the faith with our young people is a great gift and a sacred task. If you've taught in the past and want to teach again we'd love to have you. If you've never taught before but have a heart for kids we'd love to have you.

Please contact Pastor David ([prdavidb@stmarks-nsp.org](mailto:prdavidb@stmarks-nsp.org) or 651-777-7451) with any questions or to express your commitment for 2022-2023.

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## Coordinator Needed For Annual Red Cross Blood Drive in October

St. Mark's is in the rotation of the Red Cross blood drives that some of the NSP churches host each year. St. Mark's hosts the October blood drive, typically the first Monday in October. The drive is 1:00 to 7:00 pm in Rees Hall. We are in need of someone (or a couple) to host and coordinate the drive. If you're interested, please contact the church office at 651-777-7451 and we can put you in contact with the current coordinator.

## Fare for All – May 16 (3:30-5:30 pm) at Redeeming Love Church in Maplewood

Fare For All is a cooperative purchasing program that offers affordable groceries and packages of produce and meat for up to 40% off retail prices. They buy fresh produce and frozen meat in bulk from wholesalers and manufactures to find the best deals. Pre-assembled “packs” are available for sale from \$10 to \$30. All are welcome to shop! Redeeming Love Church is located at 2425 White Bear Ave N.

Upcoming sale dates include: May 16, Jun 13, Jul 18, Aug 15, Sept 12, Oct 17, Nov 14, Dec 5 from 3:30 to 5:30 pm.

To find out more about the types of packs available, monthly featured packs, and other locations, visit [fareforall.thefoodgroupmn.org](http://fareforall.thefoodgroupmn.org). Open to everyone...pass it on to someone you know!

## Interested in ushering once a month?

If you are interested in ushering, please contact Dan Colberg at [drcolberg@comcast.net](mailto:drcolberg@comcast.net) or call 612-716-5969.

## Upcoming Schedule

### Sunday, May 15

9:30 am – Usher Team 2  
(8:30 Capt. Carl Hurtgen)

### Sunday, May 22

9:30 am – Usher Team 2  
(10:30 Capt. Terri Borowick)



Follow us on  
**Instagram**

If you like to use Instagram, please give us a follow @stmarksnsp. We've been adding more content lately.

Anything you would like to see more of? Contact [annm@stmarks-nsp.org](mailto:annm@stmarks-nsp.org).

## One Combined Sunday Worship Service at 9:30 am

We have now switched to our “summer” worship schedule and offer a single service every Sunday morning at 9:30 am.

## Guide Book & Directory

We are in the process of updating our Guide Book & Directory (this is not the photo directory). This book will contain all things pertinent to our church. It is published and sent to members at no cost to you or the church. It is subsidized by local businesses that advertise in the director. If you own or manage a business and would like to find out about advertising in the Guide book, contact [terrib@stmarks-nsp.org](mailto:terrib@stmarks-nsp.org) by May 26.

### Next Week's Daily Lectionary Readings

Monday, May 16	Wednesday, May 18	Friday, May 20
Psalm 133	Psalm 133	Psalm 67
1 Samuel 20:1-23, 35-42; Acts 11:19-26	Leviticus 19:9-18 Luke 10:25-28	Proverbs 2:6-8 Acts 16:1-8
Tuesday, May 17	Thursday, May 19	
Psalm 133	Psalm 67	
2 Samuel 1:4-27 Acts 11:27-30	Proverbs 2:1-5 Acts 15:36-41	

### Next Week's Calendar

#### Sunday, May 15

#### *Pastor Mary's Retirement Celebration*

9:30 am Combined Worship Service, SC  
10:30 am Brunch, RH

#### Monday, May 16

1:00 pm Phoebe Bible Study, FS  
6:30 pm Executive Team, offsite

#### Tuesday, May 17

10:00 am Tuesday Bible Study, 203/4  
11:00 am Naomi Bible Study, FS  
5:00 pm EMSO rehearsal, SC  
6:60 pm Intern Committee, FS

#### Wednesday, May 18

No ministry activities

#### Thursday, May 19

8:30 am Denny's Breakfast & Bible, offsite  
1:00 pm Elizabeth Bible Study, FS  
6:30 pm Anne Bible Study, FS  
6:30 pm Church Council, offsite  
7:00 pm Choir of St. Mark's, SC

#### Friday, May 20 – Office Closed

#### Saturday, May 14 – Office Closed

9:00 am EMSO rehearsal, SC

#### Sunday, May 22

9:30 am Combined Worship Service, SC  
10:30 am Stewardship for All Seasons  
Conversations, RH