



Friends in Christ,

One of our readings for this coming Sunday is from the book of Revelation. I must admit Revelation is the most troublesome book of the Bible for me. It is perhaps the most complex, the most symbolic, and the most misunderstood book of the Bible. It is very difficult to interpret. When folks think of Revelation it seems the things that come to mind are images of death, destruction, and the vengeance of an angry God being unleashed on a ugly and sinful world. There is a whole segment of the larger church that believes they will be among the few who are spared and who take delight in the rest of us being left behind. Such thinking comes from a corrupted interpretation of Revelation.

Revelation is not intended to a book of doom and gloom but one of hopeful promise for a church that looks toward the day when God will restore the whole of the earth and all of creation. The author of Revelation uses symbolism, often confusing symbolism, to draw people away from sin and the things that defy God and towards God and the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ.

Our reading for this Sunday comes from chapters 21 and 22 of Revelation in which the author John invites readers to imagine a bright and glorious future. We the people of St. Mark's are being invited to do the same. The Church Council will be gathering Saturday morning for a time of discernment and conversation about the path before us.

On Sunday morning our Stewardship for All Seasons team will lead a conversation around imagining and building the future we want to see for ourselves. Our congregation has also been invited to participating in St. Olaf's Nourishing Vocation Project which seeks to help individuals and congregations discover and grow their understanding of how their lives can reflect God's purposes for themselves and the world. See the article below to learn more about the Nourishing Vocation Project.

In her final sermon Pastor Mary raised up these words from the prophet Isaiah: Do not remember the former things, or consider the things of the past. I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?

I look forward to seeing what new things spring forth here at St. Mark's and what God has in store for us!

*Pastor David*

## **Opportunity to participate in *The Nourishing Vocation Project***

Vocation comes from the Latin word *vocare* which means "to call." Hence, vocation literally means "calling." To embrace vocation is to recognize that what one does in life is not merely by one's personal choice or for one's personal fulfillment or gain. Instead, God daily calls people to be a part of God's purposes in this world for the sake of the common good. Leaning into the call of God is to live attentive to vocation.

St. Mark's has been invited to participate in *The Nourishing Vocation Project* (NVP) through St. Olaf College. The NVP invites individual participants and whole congregations to deepen their understanding of God's call upon their life and work so that they might live life on purpose and engage in ministry on purpose for the common good. Attentive to this unique time and their particular place, the Nourishing Vocation Project equips participants to more fully be who they are called and created to be and do what they are called and created to do.

Pastor David is looking for 5-6 individuals to participate as Congregational Vocation Ministers (CVM). This team of CVMs will work first to nourish vocation in their lives and later be invited to lead the congregation in the same *work*. As part of this project, **St. Olaf has offered to pay for 3 of our CVMs to attend the Conference on Worship, Theology and Arts at St. Olaf, July 25th-28th.**

This opportunity could not come as a better time in the life of St. Mark's. As we enter a new chapter in the life of our congregation now is a great time to explore and nourish our individual and shared sense of vocation. To learn more about this life-giving and life-changing process please contact Pastor David (prdavidb@stmarks-nsp.org or 651-777-7451, ext. 232).

## Let's Talk

about stewardship

### Stewardship Conversations 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 in Rees Hall for coffee and conversation after worship this Sunday, May 22. Learn about the team and share with them your vision and ideas for St. Mark's in the coming years.

### 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. Free admission.

### 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 be 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 and 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)).

### Settled Homelessness Initiative Tour Opportunity – May 24 at 6:30 pm

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 24 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

### Global Barnyard Update

During Lent our Youth Group set out to raise money for the ELCA World Hunger's Global Barnyard. Through Global Barnyard, congregations can purchase farm animals for families across the globe to help them provide for their daily needs and sell goods at market.

Thanks to the generous support of our congregation and the St. Mark's Foundation, the Youth Group raised \$1,705.55! These funds will be used to purchase: 5 chicks, 5 goats, 5 piglets, 1 cow, 1 fish farm, 10 bee colonies, and 1 herd of goats (in addition to the 5 goats).

As part of this effort Iren Hastings and Violet Hirman painted this amazing mural. The mural will be installed in Rees Hall at a later date.





## Thanks to all who attended the Women's Luncheon

The Women's Spring Luncheon was held on Saturday, May 14. The 49 attendees enjoyed music by Mary Hall (guitarist and singer), a delicious lunch, and wonderful fellowship. We thanked and wished Happy Retirement to Pastor Mary. She

received a quilt and a prayer shawl as a remembrance of her time with us. What a blessing she was to St. Mark's!

## Snack donations requested for Hospitality for NSP Police & Fire Departments

St. Mark's continues to provide portable snacks and water for the North St. Paul Police Department when they need to take a break during evening and overnight shifts. They are so appreciative of our hospitality! Currently, our stockpile is getting low. **We are asking for donations of individually packaged snacks and bottles of water.**

Donations may be dropped off (labeled NSP PD) in the Fellowship Hall kitchen or in the church office.

## Opportunity to Help a Sick Child in Kihasa

Greetings from Kihasa 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 Kihasa 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*.

Please contact Jim or Betty Wolf with questions ([bettywolf5708@msn.com](mailto:bettywolf5708@msn.com) or 651-459-8148).

## Garden helpers needed

The Garden Team needs more people to help with the gardens at St. Mark's. Currently, the majority of the work is being done by a couple of women in their 70s and one is retiring. It is our prayer that several will come forward to help and rebuild the Garden Team. The gardening takes place weekly on Thursdays at 9:00 am. We meet on the Rees Hall side and spread out. Depending on the amount of work, we are done in 1-2 hours. We also need help with watering – basically connecting a hose to the sprinkler/soaker hoses placed in the gardens. See you **Thursday, May 26** and bring a friend. Contact Sherry Berry at 651-777-6704 or Wanda Hurtgen at 651-770-1905 with questions.

## Free garden plants

The Garden Team has hardy yellow mums that bloom in the fall and pink phlox that bloom in mid to late summer. They are by the curb outside of Rees Hall. Help yourself until gone.

## Garden Gift Cards

The Garden Team will be selling gift cards in Rees Hall on Sundays, **through 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. 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!*

## Altar Care Volunteers Needed

We need about 5 volunteers to set up communion before worship and take it down afterwards. You can sign up for a monthly rotation or as a substitute on an as needed basis. Training provided. Contact Barbara McNeely ([brmcneely4@comcast.net](mailto:brmcneely4@comcast.net) 651-777-5711) if you are interested or if you have questions.



Give Back. Give a Pack.

Polar Packs are available in Rees Hall to take and fill. Each backpack contains a list of items to be purchased. Once the backpack is filled, return it to the Rees Hall kiosk the following week if possible. If there are no empty backpacks, you may still take a list and return food purchases in a bag. The backpacks will be delivered to North High families in need. Contact Julie Urban at [urbanja@comcast.net](mailto:urbanja@comcast.net) with any questions.



### Quilts Delivered to Lutheran World Relief

Last week, St. Mark's volunteers delivered 40 quilts to the LWR warehouse. From there, the quilts are delivered to people in need around the world! They can be used as warm bedding, simple tents or floor coverings. Each one reflects God's loving presence in a world rife with suffering. Quilts also create a tangible, lasting bond between the people who lovingly assemble them, and our neighbors around the world, who receive quilts in their greatest times of need. Thank you to these tireless volunteers for all their work—in an abbreviated season of quilting. They will be back at it next spring, so watch for dates and more information if you are interested in participating.

#### Next Week's Daily Lectionary Readings

Monday, May 23	Wednesday, May 25	Friday, May 27
Psalm 93	Psalm 93	Psalm 97
1 Chronicles 12:16-22	Chronicles 34:20-33	Exodus 33:12-17
Revelation 21:5-14	Luke 2:25-38	Revelation 22:6-9
Tuesday, May 24	Thursday, May 26	
Psalm 93	Acts 1:1-11	
2 Chronicles 15:1-15	Psalm 47	
Revelation 21:15-22	Ephesians 1:15-23	
	Luke 24:44-53	

#### April FINANCIALS

	YTD Actual	YTD Budget
Income	\$209,999	\$202,051
Expense	\$196,948	\$203,628
Net difference	\$13,051	(\$1,577)

Thank you for supporting St. Mark's Ministry!

### Interested in ushering once a month?

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

### Upcoming Schedule

#### Sunday, May 22

9:30 am – Usher Team 2

(10:30 Capt. Terri Borowick)

#### Sunday, May 29

9:30 am – Usher Team 3

(8:30 Capt. Larry Dent)



Follow us on  
**Instagram**

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

Anything you would like to see more of? Contact annm@stmarks-nsp.org.

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

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

#### Next Week's Calendar

##### Sunday, May 22

- 9:30 am Worship Service, SC
- 10:30 am Stewardship for All Seasons Conversations, RH
- 3:00 pm East Metro Symphony Orchestra Concert, SC

##### Monday, May 23

- 10:30 am Caring Ministries, FS
- 1:00 pm Women's Board Mtg, FS

##### Tuesday, May 24

- 10:00 am Tuesday Bible Study, 203/4

##### Wednesday, May 25

No ministry activities

##### Thursday, May 26

- 8:30 am Denny's Breakfast & Bible, offsite

##### Friday, May 27 – Office Closed

##### Saturday, May 28 – Office Closed

- 9:00 am EMSO rehearsal, SC

##### Sunday, May 29

- 9:30 am Worship Service, SC

##### Monday, May 30 – Office Closed

Memorial Day

## Dear Friends at St. Mark's,

Thank you so much for the grand send off you gave us last Sunday. We so appreciated all of your cards, gifts, hugs, tears, laughter, well wishes, retirement advice, and most of all your love, care, and friendship over the last four years. It was a great day and you are a great congregation. Continue being the people God has called you to be.

*With love and appreciation,  
Mary and John Froiland*

