



Weekly Update

October 1, 2020

Restoration Team Update – Continuing our worship plans as we navigate the pandemic safely

“For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.” (Matthew 18:20)

Hello friends of St. Mark's,

As Jesus taught us in this passage from Matthew, gathering together is one of the basic and yet most meaningful ways in which we share our devotion and connection with Christ. Often, we are driven to “look at the numbers” and large gatherings help us feel good about what we are doing as a church. They are wonderful manifestations of our lives together.

Yet it only takes two or three people to be together to know Christ and to have him in our presence. These past months have kept us physically apart in large numbers and outside the walls of our sacred space, our beloved church. However, we continue to be together in spirit and connected using the tools that technology brings. Thankful for those efforts by our pastors, staff and volunteers to bring St. Mark's worship into our homes.

In September we re-opened our walls for small groups (10 or less) to gather in Rees Hall following pre-registration guidelines and while adhering to safety protocols for distancing, hygiene and mask protection. This is a positive step in the right direction and we are also able to move towards having small controlled gatherings for baptisms and remembrances.

We also conducted two outdoor worship services (September 13 and 27) where approximately 100 people gathered together in a controlled manner with respect towards one another. Both services were a wonderful reflection of the St. Mark's spirit where folks could participate in the comfort of their cars tuned in to the radio broadcast or by bringing their own lawn chairs to enjoy being together (yet socially distanced) outside. Praise be to God!

What's next? We will be continuing to offer the on-line worship option weekly for the foreseeable future. Our plans are in place for what would be required to have a safe and controlled in-person worship in the Sanctuary. The decision was made to add a single in-person worship service every first and third Sunday beginning October 18.

The following protocols will be in place in order to conduct these services:

- Limited to 50 people in attendance
- Pre-registration will be required
- Masks must be worn by all – no exceptions
- Controlled entrances and seating
- Social distance spacing as we assemble and leave
- Hand sanitizing stations at each entrance
- Physical interactions should be avoided (no hugging or handshakes)
- No social gathering before or after the service (participants will be directed to leave immediately after the service)

Look for more information on how to register and the guidelines for participating at in-person worship in the next weekly update (October 8). There is much work to be done as we prepare and we ask for your patience and understanding as we work towards bringing worship back into our space.

Kurt Biedermann (Chair – Restoration Team)

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.

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

Meeting ID: 818 5003 4128

Saturday Stewards help needed on October 3

As part of this month's Saturday Stewards one of the projects will be trimming low hanging branches on the trees, especially along the sidewalks and driveway. LOTS of helping hands will be needed. If you can help, please bring gloves, loppers, trimmers and whatever tools you think are needed. We also need trailers and/or pickups to help haul the branches, etc. to the Ramsey County compost sites. Work begins at 9 am on Saturday, October 3. Come when you can and leave when you must.

Holy Communion: This Sunday, October 4

We continue to offer Communion as part of the worship service on the first Sunday of the month. We invite you to be intentional about preparing for the sacrament, claiming sacred space, and using bread and wine (or something similar) that you have on hand at home. In Holy Communion, we recognize the presence of Christ among us and celebrate the connection we have in Christ with one another beyond the barriers of space and time.

Foundation Week starts October 4

The week of October 4 is Foundation Week at St. Mark's. As with everything this year, this event looks and feels different than what has been done in the past. But despite how Foundation Week is presented, the facts remain that during these uncertain times there is so much need in our church, community and world. Do you know where a St. Mark's Foundation grant would be helpful? Do you have an idea that would help the mission of St. Mark's Church with its outreach into the community? The St. Mark's Foundation board of trustees invites you to bring your ideas for discussion. The board of trustees will meet on November 10 but the submission of grant requests can also be made at any time. The grant request form and a list of board members can be found on the Foundation's website at www.stmarksnspfoundation.com. Please feel free to contact a board member or send an email to stmarksnspfoundation@gmail.com. We look forward to hearing from you.

Online Worship every Sunday & Facebook Live Sunday Preludes

Please continue to join us for online worship services every Sunday—available via links on Facebook, the St. Mark's website (www.stmarks-nsp.org) and emailed directly to you. 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.

Synod Assembly Report

This past weekend the congregations of the St. Paul Area Synod gathered for the annual Synod Assembly. Voting members from St. Mark's were Kurt Biedermann, Jenn Luong, Carol Yahr, Steve Yahr, and Pastor Mary. Pastors and members of all the congregations gathered to do the work of the synod.

Here are the highlights:

- We re-elected our Bishop, Patricia Lull, overwhelmingly on the first ballot, to serve as our shepherd and leader for another 6 years.
- We passed a spending plan that includes support for our companion churches in Guatemala and Tanzania, local and global mission funding, and provides for the ongoing care and equipping of the congregations in our synod.
- We celebrated the contributions of women and LGBTQ+ people to the ministry of the ELCA – a ministry that wasn't possible only 50 years ago for women, or 10 years ago for our LGBTQ siblings.

We discussed and passed 3 resolutions

- 1) Love Your Neighbor – a resolution Opposing Gun Violence
- 2) A resolution to stand with Immigrants, Refugees and Asylum Seekers
- 3) A Resolution Encouraging and Facilitating Use of Anti-Racism resources in Congregations

We prayed together, sang together (sort of), and did the work of our church together –all from our individual homes via Zoom. It was a different kind of Assembly, but it was good to be together in this new way to participate in the good work God has called us to from this part of the world.

Help friends keep in touch with St. Mark's news

Do you know someone who struggles with technology or isn't receiving regular email updates from St. Mark's? Consider printing off this weekly newsletter and mailing it to them or dropping it off on their doorstep. It will make their day!

Support Team Game Of Crohns for Crohns & Colitis Foundation of America Walk on October 18

Mariann Anderson has organized this team for the fall walk, which is virtual this year. There will be a "socially distant" walk meeting at the St. Croix Crossing parking lot at 10 am on October 18. Your support will help the Foundation invest in cures for the future, while supporting patients today. Copy & paste this link in your browser: <https://tinyurl.com/yaoanf5> to learn more.

Garden Gift Cards

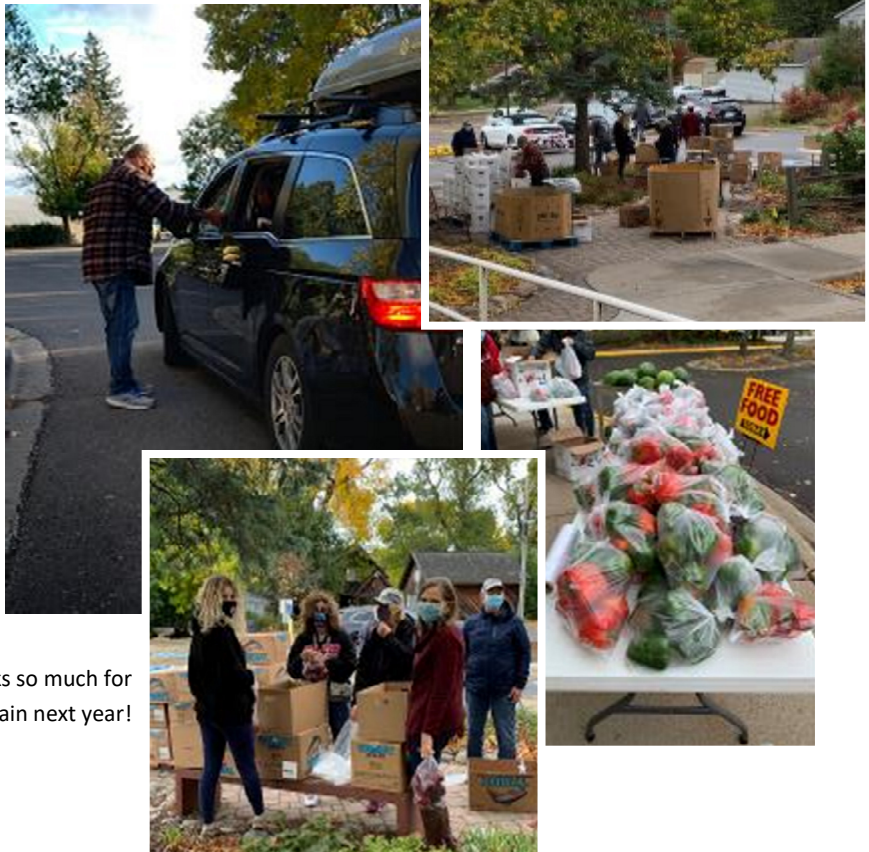
St. Mark's Garden Team has Bachman's and Gertens gift cards available. This is a great time to buy perennials, shrubs, trees and of course the beautiful mums for long lasting fall color. Bachman's cards can be used for anything they sell and the Gertens cards are valid for green and growing items. Call Sherry at 651-777-6704 and we can arrange a time for you to get them. Thank you for supporting the Garden Team.

August FINANCIALS			
	YTD Actual	YTD Budget	
Income	\$431,930 *	\$381,667	
Expense	\$344,441	\$399,752	
Net difference	\$87,489	(\$18,085)	\$105,574
*Income includes \$67,300 disbursed from the PPP Loan.			
Thank you for supporting St. Mark's Ministry!			

Join us to celebrate
Larry & Tonya Franklin's
60th Wedding Anniversary
 Saturday, October 3rd
 Drive by Parade 1 pm – 2 pm
 We will meet in the Maplewood Middle School parking lot at 12:45 (2410 Holloway, Maplewood) and proceed to their house starting at 1 pm.
 2498 Tierney Ave, North St. Paul
 Any questions, please contact:
 Craig 763-923-5452 or
 Brenda 651-402-5348
 Decorations & signs are encouraged.




Head Start playground at St. Mark's!



Last pop-up Farmers Market of the season. Thanks so much for faithful volunteers, we will do it again next year!