

Newsletter January 2026

*Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
praise God, all creatures here below;
praise God above, ye heavenly host;
praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. (ELW 885)*

As we begin a new year we tend to look back and reflect on the old one. As a congregation and individually we have experienced challenges, joys, and blessings. We said good-byes to family and friends; we watched and participated in the physical changes and spiritual growth of the people of this congregation and the congregation. We worked and will continue to work on figuring out new and different ways to worship and praise God together. And in all this God was present and God's blessings flowed to us, through us and will continue to flow. Praise God! "Emmanuel—God IS with us!"

The last few days the words from the hymn quoted above have been going through my head. As I was growing up, I remember singing this hymn. This doxology. This hymn of praise. We would sing it at the end of almost every worship service. Many of you may remember it too. This hymn of praise can also be a hymn of comfort and thanks to the God who provides us with everything we need both in times of joy and in times of challenge. I think that's why I have remembered it all these years. It's a hymn that brings me comfort and a way to praise God in all the events of my life.

During this past year we here at St. Mark have experienced both challenges and joys and I believe the words in this hymn can give us comfort and the opportunity to thank God. In our praise we thank God for the blessings that have been poured down upon us; even in those days when we wondered where **is** Emmauel—God IS with us. I know it may sound strange to praise God even in the struggles, but even in **those** times God brings blessings. In our grieving the loss of friends and family we are blessed by and praise God for the lives of those departed saints as well as for the people who have comforted us and who we have comforted. We can praise God for the courage and willingness of everyone to explore and talk about the future of who we are as St. Mark Lutheran Church. We are blessed by and give praise for the energy and joy we get to experience from the children who share our worship space from time to time. And over the year and years we have been and are blessed by and give praise for each person who is and has been part of this congregation and the gifts they bring and share. I look forward to the new year as we anticipate together what God has in store for us and our ministries.

As we go through this new year may the words, "Praise God, from whom all blessings flow" be in our hearts and minds and on our lips as we thank God for the blessings we have received, for the blessings to come, and for the blessings we share with those around us.

God's Peace and Blessings to all in this New Year. **Pastor Janine**

Early 2026 Worship Schedule

Epiphany – Jan. 4th, 2026 – celebrate arrival of the Magi (Jan. 6) at 9:30am and 4:00pm

Baptism of Our Lord – Jan. 11, 2026 at 9:30am

Financial Report:**General Fund Summary for November**

November Weekly Offerings \$20,349

November Expenses \$28,100

Income January - November 2025

Income Received including Supplementary Resources \$283,241

Amount Expected to Maintain Budget Expectations \$345,746

Currently Serving as Church Council Members:

Nancy Beaderstadt, President

Diane Fellman

Barb Ericksen

Beth Claeys, Vice President

Linda Ray

Tom Liebold

Robert Sherrod, Secretary

Julie Ginn

Mike Crews

Barb Jakubowski, Treasurer

Candy Nagel

Council Corner – The following was discussed at the December 18, 2025 meeting:

1. The 2026 budget was approved by Council to be presented to the congregation at the upcoming annual meeting. All members are encouraged to attend the meeting, which will be held after worship on February 8th (alternate date is February 15th).
2. We will be looking for someone to take over as a second Sunday custodian (alternating months with Steve McCallister), as Mike Crews is “retiring” from that position to take on other responsibilities at the church. If you are interested, please contact Pr. Janine or any council member.
3. The Road to Recovery group will be using the church gym on Christmas Day as a safe place to gather for those they serve, on a day that can be difficult for many of their clients. They are tremendously thankful for their partnership with St. Mark.
4. Pr. Janine will begin her new work schedule in January. Beth Claeys will step in as worship leader whenever possible and continues to pursue her SAM (Synod authorized minister) training.
5. Bids have been received for replacement of the lounge flooring. Nancy will looking to funding options for the work.

6. The Property Committee continues to reevaluate its resources and how the various responsibilities of maintaining the church are shared among committee members.

7. There will be 2 openings available on the Church Council. Elections will be held at the annual meeting. If you are interested in serving, please contact the church office or any council member.

Our next council meeting will be held Thursday, January 15th at 6:30 pm.

Social Ministry – Souper Bowl of Caring: Super bowl time will be rolling around again with the arrival of 2026. We will be collecting non-perishable food items for our busy food pantry on Sunday, February 9th. Monetary donations may also be made. What makes this fun is that we will be receiving your donations in specially marked shopping carts labeled for each team playing in the “Big Game” on February 9th. Thank you for all of your support of our food pantry.

Pastoral Needs When Pr. Janine is off:

Please be aware if any new or urgent pastoral needs (death, serious illness or accident, hospitalization, etc.) occur when pastor is off, Beth Claeys, Volunteer Parish Nurse is to be notified. You may also contact Sue Geise, Administrative Assistant.

Follow-up – Hygiene for Holidays: The hygiene products were greatly appreciated by the food pantry clients! Nearly all of the many personal care items were distributed prior to Christmas. Thank you once again for your generosity with this matching Thrivent project during the holiday season.

Foot Clinic:

The next bi-monthly foot care clinic will be held on the morning of Monday, February 2nd. It is by appointment only. Please contact Nancy Beaderstadt if you are interested in this or future foot clinic dates. There is a \$35 fee and bringing a towel is suggested.

Iglesia Camino de Emaus (Spanish speaking congregation) meets Sunday afternoons at 5:00pm where they share space in the St. Mark building. Pastor Pilar may be reached by e-mail at pastor@caminodeemaus.org for further information.

From the Parish Nurse, Beth Claeys:

January is mental wellness month. Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel and act. It also determines how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices. Mental health is important at every stage of life.

Good mental health can help you cope with stress, be physically healthy, have good relationships, make meaningful contributions to your community, and realize your full potential.

Here are some ways to take care of your mental health -

1. Stay positive. To build a positive outlook, find a balance between positive and negative emotions. Staying positive doesn't mean you never feel negative emotions,, such as sadness or anger. But you don't let those emotions take over. For example, it isn't helpful to dwell on bad memories or worry too much about the future. Also, limiting exposure to negative information can help.
2. Practice gratitude. Be thankful for the good things in your life. Many times we take them for granted.
3. Take care of your physical health since physical and mental health are connected. Some ways to do this are being physically active, getting enough sleep, and eating healthy.
4. Connect with others. Being with others and developing strong, healthy relationships is important for many reasons. Besides connecting with family and friends, you could find ways to get involved at church or the community. At church we have many volunteer opportunities. We also have several social events including bunco, book group, and joy fellowship. Feel free to give them a try if you are interested.
5. Develop a sense of meaning and purpose in life. This could be by volunteering, learning new skills or exploring your spirituality. Having a sense of purpose supports long-term emotional health.
6. Develop coping skills which are methods you use to deal with stressful situations. Meditation is a mind and body practice where you learn to focus your attention and awareness.. There are different types including mindfulness meditation.
7. Relaxation techniques which are practices to produce your body's natural relaxation response. This response slows down your breathing, lowers blood pressure, and relaxes muscle tension and stress.

It's also important to recognize when you need help. Start by talking with your primary care provider on advice where to get care.

Source: Medlineplus.gov

Hospitals are no longer notifying churches when church members are admitted. If someone in your family is ill or in the hospital and you want the church to be aware, please call the church office.

Joy Fellowship - Thursday, January 8th:

All are welcome to join us at 1:00pm on Thursday, January 8th for J.O.Y. Fellowship. The program will be by Dave Hodge, Church Mobilizer with World Relief Quad Cities. Contact person: Beth Claeys.

Bunco - Date Change due to holidays.

We will meet on Friday, January 16th at 6:30. All are welcome! Please bring a snack to share. In case of inclement weather changes, we ask that you provide a phone number you may be contacted at on the sign-up sheet in the lounge (or contact the church office and we can add it for you). You can still come even if you do not sign up or are not an experienced Bunco player.) Contact person: Beth Claeys.

Theology on Tap - Tuesday, January 20th at 6:00. *Book - Mere Christianity by C.S.Lewis All are welcome. Will be meeting in the church lounge as we did last month.* Menu will be Sloppy Joes and side dishes. Free will offering for the meal will cover expenses and with the remainder to the food pantry. *Beth and John Claeys will be our hosst/contact person.* Please use the sign-up sheet if possible so that adequate food can be arranged.

Social Ministry- Habitat for Humanity News:

Because of the holidays, construction will be minimal so volunteers can have 4 day weekends to spend with family. That means that we will be regrouping in January and plan on providing a meal either the 24th or 31st for construction volunteers. Please watch for updated information on the lounge table and/or bulletin inserts. Thanks to all who are involved in this ministry.

Grief Support Opportunity:

MercyOne Genesis has started a grief support group. It meets on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays at 1:00pm in the Genesis East in Conference Room A. The group is led by hospital chaplains and all are welcome.

Stewardship Committee: Have you ever noticed how much time we spend waiting in line? We wait in line at the grocery store, at our favorite fast-food restaurant, in traffic, and even on Sunday mornings at church as we wait patiently to say good morning and shake Pastor's hand after service. But God never makes us wait in line. With Him we are always first – no matter how many others we may feel are in front of us. There is no “back of the line” with God. And it is our responsibility to make sure that God is first in our line by keeping Him close in our hearts, by caring for those who are often neglected, and by serving as His hands and feet in all that we do. Don't make God wait in line; serve Him with joy, compassion, and commitment. In Christ's Service – your Stewardship Committee

Annual Meeting for 2025:

Has been scheduled for Sunday, February 8th, 2026 following the worship service at approximately 10:30am in the sanctuary. We will need a quorum of members. Please mark your calendar and plan to attend. Annual reports will be sent out in advance via email. You may request a printed copy from the church office.

Annual Report Materials: All reports and materials to be included in the 2025 annual report need to be submitted to the office prior to January 12th, 2026. Thank you to those persons who have already submitted their information or informed be it will be coming. All committees, specialized ministries, and/or groups should be submitting a report for 2025.

Preschool Notes: St. Mark Preschool is dedicated to creating a safe, nurturing, and enriching environment for young children within our church building. To keep up with all of the preschool news and activities, follow them on Facebook (St. Mark Preschool). For further information about the St. Mark Preschool class and pre/after school care offerings and/or registration you may call directly to the preschool at 563-326-5060. Staff are not always free to answer the telephone, so please leave a message if you do not reach someone directly.

WELCOME! It was a joy on Sunday, December 21st to celebrate baptisms and welcome new members! Heidi Lopez, daughter of Christina and Ronnie Lopez, received the sacrament of Holy Baptism. Ronnie Lopez also received the sacrament of Holy Baptism. Family members Christina Lopez and Janice Denekas were also welcomed as new members to St. Mark.

Sympathy: To the friends and family of long time St. Mark member, Herbert Willers, who died on Monday, December 22nd, we offer our sympathy and condolences. We also rejoice he is in his eternal home with everlasting life. Herb was the brother of Joanne Edwards.

Food Pantry: A special thank you for all of the strong support for our St. Mark food pantry ministry – especially during these past challenging months. We weathered this storm and continued to find ways to provide food to people in need during especially uncertain times. During the month of November, 275 households comprised of 838 individuals were served. A total of 8,551 pounds of food was donated and purchased through River Bend.

Christmas floral decorations beautifying the sanctuary were sponsored by the following gifts:



- *In memory of John Kroeger, my father, by Linda Ray.*
- *In memory of Ella Mohr by Candy and Rick Nagel.*
- *In memory of Genevieve & Havey Serrine by Candy and Rick Nagel.*
- *In memory of Marilyn & Denny Moore by Candy and Rick Nagel.*
- *In memory of Ralph & Jean Nagel by Candy and Rick Nagel.*
- *In memory of Marcella Scheel and John Kroeger by Sally Mechem.*
- *In memory of Joe & Brandon Mechem, Wm. & Florence Dunsworth, Dort & Harry Seligman, Jan & Wendel Peiffer, Cork & Barb Dunsworth, Ira Dunsworth, Brad Roelandt, Dick Dunsworth, Ellen Griggs, and Bob Dunsworth by Sally Mechem.*
- *In honor of the Cork Dunsworth Family, the Ira Dunsworth Family, and the St. Mark staff by Sally Mechem.*
- *In memory of Elizabeth & Chet Lagoni by Barb Jakubowski and family.*
- *In memory of Mike Jakubowski by Barb Jakubowski and family.*
- *In memory of our parents Frank & Janice Dumerauf and Tom Claeys by John and Beth Claeys.*
- *In memory of my Dad, who loved Christmas by Konnie Goldensoph.*
- *In memory of Dennis Bass by Pam Bass, Jodee & Cody Williams.*
- *In memory of Mel & Dee Misfeldt by Pam Bass, Jodee & Cody Williams.*
- *In memory of Virgil & Genevieve Ball by Pam Bass, Jodee & Cody Williams.*
- *In memory of our parents, Art & Audrey Hines, by Jay, Sue, Steve, Sara, and Joyce.*
- *In memory of my Dad, Dean Geise, by Sue Geise.*
- *In memory of Randy Smith by Ginny Smith, Randy Jr. & Family Smith.*
- *In memory of Harevey, Margaret, Sonny, Tim, Terry Christenson and Harold & Verta Smith by Ginny Smith, Randy Jr. & Family Smith.*
- *In honor of our children and grandchildren by Dolly Dunsworth.*
- *In memory of husband Ira, parents and siblings by Dolly Dunsworth.*
- *In appreciation of my family & friends and all creatures great and small by Mike Flynn.*

- *In honor of Mom, Lyle, Timmy, Granny, Grandma Phyllis Goldensoph and in memory of my dad, Papa, Grandma & Grandpa Tippy, Grandma Phyllis, Louis, Joe & Brandon Mechem, Dick Dunsworth by Mandy Matzen-Schlueter.*
- *In memory of our parents, in appreciation of our St. Mark family, and in honor of our children and granddaughter by Maureen and Jerry Currier.*
- *In memory of Jack Serrine, you are loved and missed dearly by Debra Serrine.*
- *In memory of Lisa Wescom by Doug and Linda Wescom.*
- *In memory of those we hold dear in our hearts by Dave & Nancy Beaderstadt.*
- *In memory of our parents by Dick and Geri Dulaney.*
- *In appreciation of the St. Mark congregation by Pr. Janine Johnson.*
- *In memory of very special family members, Paul Lensmeyer, Juergen & Ingrid Kroening and Mike Kroening by Debbie Lensmeyer.*
- *In memory of Mother, Doris Ricketts by Richard B. Ricketts.*



St. Mark Evangelical Lutheran Church

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Office Hours: Tuesday & Wednesday 9:30am to 2:30pm and Thursday 9:30am to 1:30pm.

(Monday by appointment only. Closed Fridays.)

Food Pantry Hours: Tuesday & Wednesday 10:00am to 1:00pm

(Serving Iowa residents only)

(St. Mark is a member of the Southeastern Iowa Synod - ELCA)