

St. Mark's Lutheran Church

Publisher
Church Mouse

Issue Number
152

Date
January 2024

Upcoming Events

Wed., Jan. 10th – 5:00 p.m. – NET Dinner
at OLV Catholic Church

Sat. Jan. 13th – 9:00 a.m. – Men's Breakfast

Wed., Jan 17th – 5:00 p.m. – NET Dinner
at the Reformed Church

Sun., Jan. 21st – 12:00 p.m. – Church Council
Meeting

Sun., Jan. 21st – Annual Congregational
Meeting immediately following worship
service and potluck lunch

Wed., Jan 24th – 5:00 p.m. – NET Dinner
at St. Mark's Church

Annual Congregational Meeting

Please plan to attend our annual congregational meeting on January 21st. We will be making an important decision regarding the possible sale of a plot of land the church currently owns. Please see page 2 for the map of property we and our neighbors currently own.

Committee leaders – if you have not already done so, please submit your reports to the church office as soon as possible. Thank you!

Prayers and Concerns for December

Family of Theresa Jandrositz
Family of Gene Coons
Family of Tim Schrom
Family of Bonnie Morton
Family of Gary Wilkens
Family of Mary Warner
Family of Beth Connors

Kathryn Kauffmann
Susan Davis
Kim / Christopher Birsén
Rita Zorda
Johnathan
Kelsey Roney
Mary Schaffer
Linda Rumph
Nina Hunt

Thought for the Day:

As you pack up your Christmas decorations, don't put away the Spirit of Christmas!

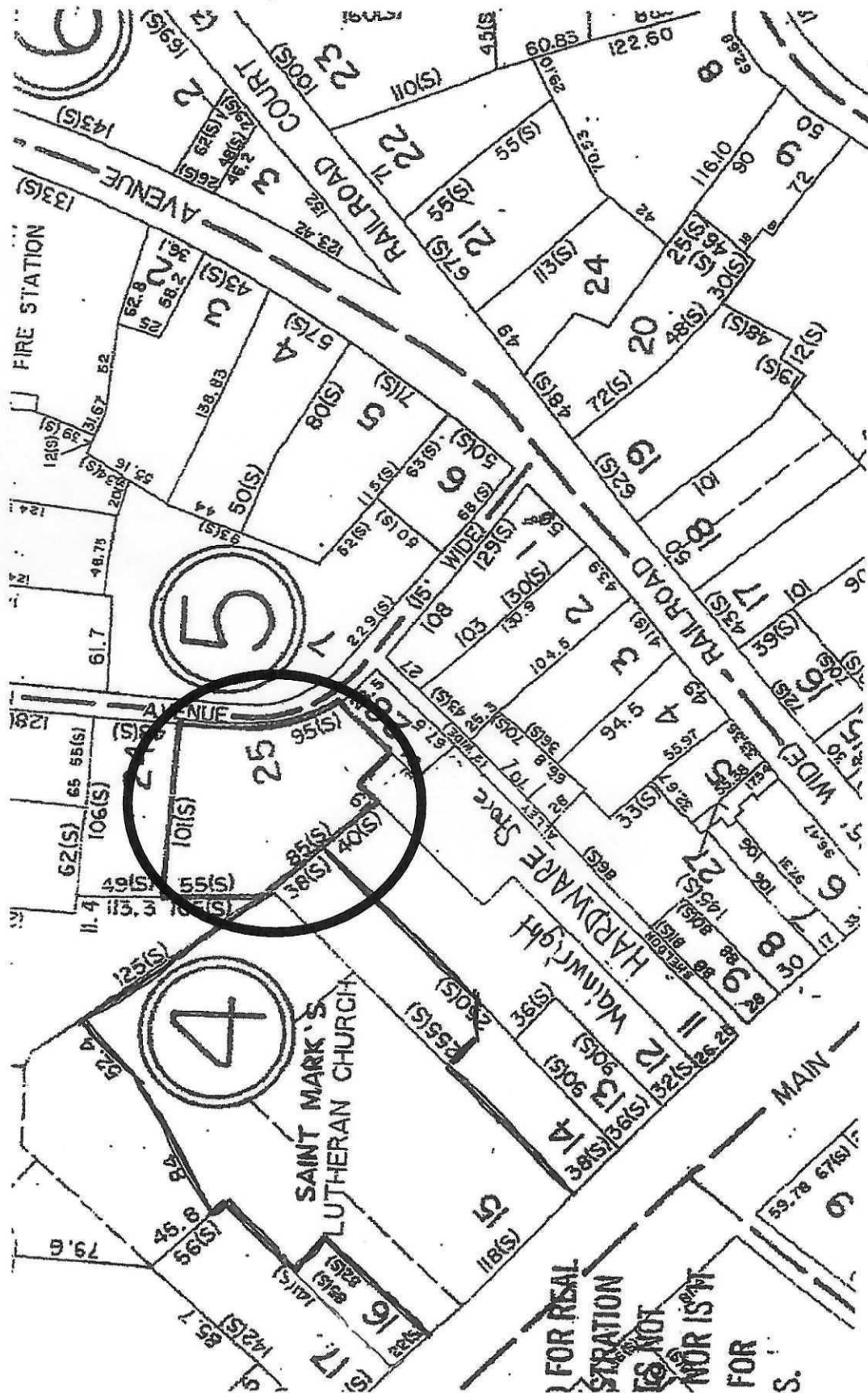


St. Mark's Church Information

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Map of Property Owned by St. Mark's and Our Neighbors

We will be considering the possible sale of Plot #25 at our annual congregational meeting. Please plan to attend as your input is important in making this decision.



St. Mark's Lutheran Church

Servers for January

Jan. 7th:

Reader – Deb P.

Prayer – Cheryl

Ushers – Tom / Dylan

Counter – Sharon

Jan. 14th:

Reader – Lori

Prayer – Ron

Ushers – Allison / Aaron

Counter – Diane

Jan. 21st:

Reader – Marie

Prayer – Carolyn

Ushers – Lisa / Nannette

Counter – Carrie

Jan. 28th:

Reader – Sharon

Prayer – Cheryl

Ushers – Lori / Dean

Counter – Deb P.

Church Offering Envelopes

The boxes of our 2024 church offering envelopes are now available in the back of our sanctuary. If your name is not already on one and you would like a box of envelopes, please contact Sharon Nesbitt.

January Birthdays:

Brenda Varella	Jan. 4
Mike Estro	Jan. 4
Cathy Allen	Jan. 5
Tom Nesbitt	Jan. 5
Ted Langenbahn	Jan. 18
Helen Ruland	Jan. 20
Lisa Bartholomew	Jan. 20
Ann Hartnell	Jan. 21
Dan Kircher	Jan. 31

January Anniversaries:

Dennis / Carrie Foland	Jan. 2
Tom / Sharon Nesbitt	Jan. 17

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St. Mark's Income vs Expenses

Here is the summary of income and expenses for the month of November 2023:

Income	\$7668.20
Expenses	4357.02
Balance	\$3311.18

The Invitation

The Invitation of Christ is about maintaining a close relationship with God. Being close to Jesus is a simple matter. Everyone is invited to be saved by him and to have him in their life. He wants to be close to you for you to receive Jesus and become a child of God (*John 1:12* But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: ¹³ who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.). The Lord calls us to receive Him as our Savior and to have a personal relationship with Him through the indwelling of His Holy Spirit. This invitation includes laying down the burden of trying to work out salvation ourselves (*Matthew 11:28* Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”)

There is a door to our heart and Jesus is knocking on it. He can't open it against our will. He wants to lead us through that door to the Father's house in heaven. It is up to us to open our heart to Him and receive His invitation. For in the Father's house awaits a great banquet, a celebration for all of those who accept the invitation to walk with Jesus. Every person is cordially invited to become a part of the family of God, join in the celebration and enjoy all of the benefits for eternity. It is up to each and every person to decide. The invitation must be shared with everyone on earth to which each person must R.S.V.P. RSVP, the abbreviation of the French phrase "Repondez, s'il vous plaît." translates to "Respond, if you please" or, better still, "Respond please." We are being asked nicely to respond, yet how many people will fail to do so? How many people will respond "not now, maybe later" or say "I didn't know, no one told me".

For everyone who has accepted the invitation, they are to be as the servant Jesus speaks of in the following parables. While on the way to the Father's house, we are to share the invitation with everyone we meet.

Luke 14:16 Then He said to him, "A certain man gave a great supper and invited many, ¹⁷ and sent his servant at supper time to say to those who were invited, 'Come, for all things are now ready.' ¹⁸ But they all with one accord began to make excuses. ²¹ So that servant came and reported these things to his master. Then the master of the house, being angry, said to his servant, 'Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in here the poor and the maimed and the lame and the blind.' ²² And the servant said, 'Master, it is done as you commanded, and still there is room.' ²³ Then the master said to the servant, 'Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.'" There is a similar directive in the parable of the wedding feast found in the Gospel of Matthew. Matthew 22:9 Therefore go into the highways, and as many as you find, invite to the wedding. ¹⁰ So those servants went out into the highways and gathered together all whom they found, both bad and good. And the wedding hall was filled with guests.

It is another new year and another opportunity to make and/or review any resolutions that we may have made, or will make, as we take that first step into this year. With all that we have on our "to do lists", have we considered making a little time to let others we meet along our journeys know that "they are invited, too". For most people it is not an easy topic to bring up, yet I am discovering more and more that God will provide the opportunity to do so if we are willing to accept it. Asking for help in our prayers is a great way to start. Lord, open my eyes to see the opportunities, give me the right words to say that are welcoming and inviting. Show me the way, Lord, so that I may accomplish your will and help deliver your invitation throughout the world...well, at least in the parts of it that I explore. Precious Lord, take my hand, lead me on, help me to stand. Amen

May you have a blessed New Year filled with the joy and peace that your hope has longed for. May you feel the love that God and others have for you in your heart. May that love flow from within your heart to embrace the world around you and those you meet along the way.

In God We Trust / Love and Prayers, Pastor Dave

St. Mark's Lutheran Church

Heaven's Newest Angel... Bonnie Morton



People come and go in our lives, but few leave a mark that lasts a lifetime. Bonnie is one such person, someone who loves life, her family and her friends. Always joyful, full of love and laughter is how we will remember our beautiful Bonnie.

Bonnie has so many God-given talents that she shared with us at St. Mark's. As a member of our Phoebe Circle, she created beautiful handkerchiefs for our encouragement baskets. As a member of our choir and occasionally our accompanist, Bonnie was the first woman we ever had to sing bass. In addition, she took on the role of keeping her "Sweet William", namely Bill, in the correct place on their music. Her contributions to potluck dinners also portrayed her culinary talent for trying something different.

We miss our Bonnie but are comforted in knowing that heaven has gained another angel as she now resides with the Lord.

We love you, Bonnie!

Thank you, Pastor Dave and Melody!

Christmas is a time when we let those, who have touched our lives in a positive way, know they are loved and how grateful we are for them in our lives. With heart-felt gratitude, St. Mark's presented to Pastor Dave and Melody a Christmas gift from our congregation for all they do in service to our Lord. Thank you to all who made a contribution to their gift.



Greatest man in history named **Jesus**,
Had **no servants**, yet they called Him
Master. Had **no degree**, yet they call
Him **Teacher**. Had **no medicines**, yet
they call Him **Healer**. He had **no**
army, yet kings **feared Him**. He won
no military battles, yet He **conquered**
the world. He committed **no crime** yet
they **crucified Him**. He was **buried** in
a tomb, yet **He lives today**.

St. Mark's Lutheran Church

NET Dinner



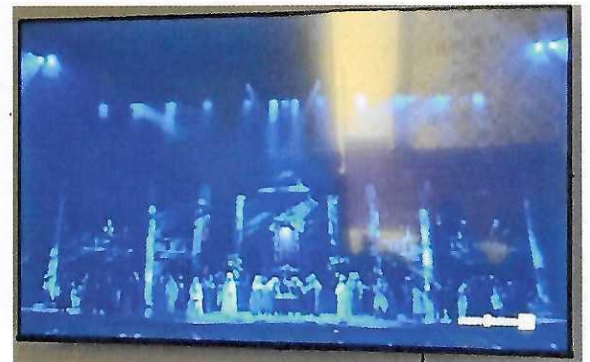
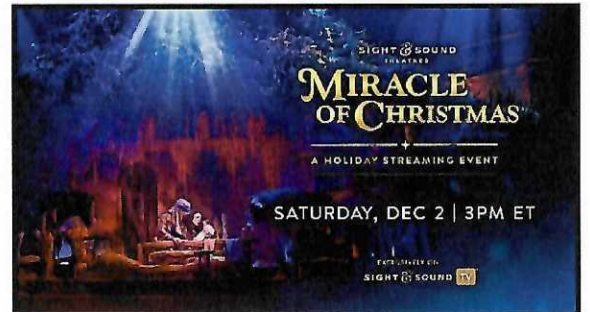
December 27th St. Mark's hosted their monthly NET dinner. Attendees were treated to a delicious dinner of Swedish meatballs served with noodles, mixed vegetables and desserts.

Our January NET dinner will be at 5:00 p.m. on the 24th when we will host a chicken parmesan dinner. See you there!



Movie Night

On December 2nd, we were blessed to watch Sight 'n Sound's presentation of "Miracle of Christmas". Watching scenes that led up to and including the birth of Christ brought the greatest Christmas story to life and we felt like more than spectators...we were part of it.



Thank you, Father God, for giving us the best Christmas gift we will ever receive!

St. Mark's Lutheran Church

Bible Study

Our Bible study, which began in June, was completed on January 3rd. Thank you, Pastor Dave, for faithfully leading our group through the study based on the book, "Believe". We learned through the Old and New Testaments that when we keep our eyes, ears and hearts open, we are shown the ways in which we can imitate and live like Jesus in our thoughts, words and actions.



New Bell Ringers for Handbells???



Christmas Encouragement Baskets
(Thank you, Janet and Kathy, for creating these beautiful gifts.)

Outreach Ministry

Seventeen Phoebe quilts were on the road in December as they traveled to Camp Swamp Methodist Church's Heart of Jesus Ministries in South Carolina to be included in their Christmas encouragement baskets.



Christmas at St. Mark's



Thank you,
volunteers!



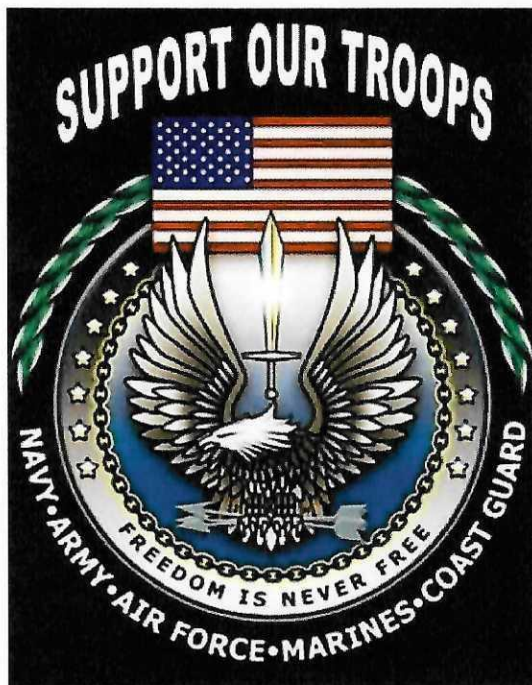
Christmas decorations in sanctuary, fellowship hall and front lawn.

Christmas Eve



St. Mark's Lutheran Church

*Please pray for our
armed forces and our
country.*



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**"When I say my prayers my fingers
like to hug each other."**

HAPPY NEW YEAR

Throughout the New Year, and each step of the way,
May Christ be your portion, your joy and your stay.
With God's precious precepts your daily delight
To lead and encourage in paths that are right.

"The Lord is my Shepherd," how precious the word!
He'll lead in green pastures, His promise is heard.
"Beside the still waters"—what comfort and rest!
What peace there is found upon Jesus' breast.

His "goodness and mercy," each day may you prove,
His comforting presence, His infinite love!
With richest compassions, each morning anew,
May multiplied mercies be showered on you!

"My cup runneth over," His grace so abounds,
That fullest enjoyment in Jesus is found.
"The Lord is my portion," this may your soul say,
And you will be happy each step of the way.

*May God grant
You a Healthy,
Happy
New Year!*