

# St. Mark's Lutheran Church

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## Prayer Ministry

You are invited to participate in a new prayer ministry. We meet on Thursdays at 5:30 p.m. in St. Mark's sanctuary. If you are unable to attend and have a prayer request you would like lifted, please contact the church office or feel free to place your written request in the prayer box located in narthex.

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Council has adopted a new policy for anyone that wishes to use the fellowship hall for an event. All requests are to be sent to Lisa Bartholomew. She can be reached at 231-9494. She will handle all the arrangements, scheduling, paperwork and payments. This will allow for a one point person contact rather than having too many people involved.

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**There will be 2 services held on Sunday December 24. Our regular worship service at 10:30 and our Christmas Eve service at 7:00.**

## Prayers Concerns

Please lift the following people up in prayer:

Prayers for our new pastor  
Carol and Matt  
Lori  
Rose  
Jaci  
Susie  
Carrie  
Tom S.

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## Upcoming Events

**Dec 9 - Men's prayer breakfast**

**Dec 10 - Handbell concert 3:00**

**Dec 11 - Council meeting 7:00**

**Dec 24 - Christmas Eve service 7:00**

**Dec 25 - Blessed Christmas!**

**NET dinners at St. Mark's will resume in January 2018**

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### Council Members:

**President - Marie Whittaker  
Vice President - Chris Cash  
Secretary - Lori Roney  
Treasurer - Debbie Palmatier  
Members - Jim Brigadier,  
Dennis Foland and Lisa  
Bartholomew.**

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## Offense or Defense

One of the online resources I use is called Faithit. This past month one of the stories posted was about a high school football team and their coach. In many competitions there are two sides...Offense and Defense. Defense is defined as the act or action of defending; capability of resisting attack; a means or method of protecting oneself. Offense is defined as something that outrages the moral or physical senses; the act of displeasing or affronting; a breach of a moral or social code; the act of attacking; the means or method of attacking or attempting to score; scoring ability. Throughout our lives, not just in athletics, we are in competition and I wonder if the dual meaning of offense is used more against people rather than for people.

It can all get rather confusing at times. In a land that protects and defends our freedoms, there is an on going competition regarding the practice of freedom of religion. The competition on and off the field regarding the afore mentioned coach and team is stated to have begun with a ban requested by the 'Freedom From Religion Foundation'. The ban came about when it was noted that the coach prayed with the team members, on the field before their games. It was not made clear if the coach was leading or just participating in the prayer time. A news reporter gave the impression the ban did not allow the coach to participate, even in a student led prayer. It was stated that the coach is a 'public' school employee and his actions are seen as him 'furthering personal religious beliefs' and 'equate to a government advancement and endorsement of religion'. The petitioner (FFRF) believes this is a 'violation of the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment' of the Constitution of the United States.

It is written that there is a competition, a war going on over souls. Paul wrote in Philippians 3:14 I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. In competition one is on offense when they are advancing/moving towards the goal. An important objective for all people is not to be 'offensive' for in doing so one can be penalized. I've pondered if the public display of the symbols, words, and actions of our faith are being labeled as offensive in order to penalize and restrict those who practice them. Our national freedoms protect many symbols, words, and actions that are found to be offensive to some. I feel they are a statement about those who use them, a furthering of beliefs that they feel are acceptable and permissible. I wonder if the symbols, words, and actions of the faithful to God are treated differently than those of other beliefs, thus causing the faithful to take the field in defense mode?

Ephesians 6:12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. I have not heard about bans or actions taken against all of the symbols, words, and actions that are present in our society. Disapproval is voiced against many, but it seems that more often than not actions are taken against those that represent faith and belief in God.

Jesus did not appear to be on defense while here on earth. He strove towards the goal. He spoke "the kingdom of heaven is like" and "blessed are those who". He gave people what they needed to make an informed choice. A decision that effects each and every person for eternity. He was on the offense to score souls for the kingdom without being offensive. Yet, we know that what He said and did was offensive to some and it led to His crucifixion. Let us learn from Jesus. Let us remember that in our journey here on earth we may well have to play defense sometimes. Do not be afraid to be on offense, striving towards the goal. Just don't be offensive in doing so. Oh, when the coach was banned from praying with the team, 400 students stood together before their next game and bowed their heads in prayer. It is not illegal for students to do so and they rose up as leaders. Leaders on their field, in their community, and of the faith. Thanks be to God.

In God We Trust / Love and Prayers, Pastor Dave



# St. Mark's Lutheran Church

## Servers for Dec

### **December 3:**

Acolyte - Dylan  
Ushers - Sharon/Harry  
Reader - Sharon N.  
Greeter - Maurice  
Prayer - Deb B.  
Counter - Carrie

### **December 10:**

Acolyte - Lisa  
Ushers - Bill/Bonnie  
Reader - Ginny  
Greeter - Harry  
Prayer - Beth  
Counter - Debbie

### **December 17:**

Acolyte - Dylan  
Ushers - Maurice/Ginny  
Reader - Nannette  
Greeter - Pat  
Prayer - Carolyn  
Counter - Diane

### **December 24 Morning Service:**

Acolyte - Dylan  
Ushers - TBD  
Reader - TBD  
Greeter - TBD  
Prayer - TBD  
Counter - TBD

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### **December 24 Christmas Eve:**

Acolyte - Lisa  
Ushers - Diane/Dennis  
Reader - Deb B.  
Greeter - Janet  
Prayer - Georgia  
Counter - Carrie

### **December 31:**

Acolyte - Dylan  
Ushers - Denise/Kaleb  
Reader - Georgia  
Greeter - Deb P.  
Prayer - Chris  
Counter - Debbie

# St. Mark's Lutheran Church

## Happy Days !!!!!

### **Birthdays: December**

Dec 1 - Terry Minton  
Dec 5 - Edna Lower  
Dec 11 - Deb Palmatier  
Dec 12- Erin Becker  
Dec 13 - Niles McCoy  
Dec 15 - Gene Wyckoff  
Dec 16 - Freya Karsch  
Dec 18 - Ellen Langenbahn  
Dec 20 - Cody Whittaker  
Dec 21 - Melissa Cater  
Dec 25 - Marilyn Hanley  
Dec 31 - Todd Bartholomew

### **Anniversaries: December**

Dec 1 - Mary and Jerry Bowman  
Dec 17 - Pat and Ralph Becker  
Dec 19 - Kathy and Augie Kauffman  
Dec 28 - Bonnie and Bill Morton  
Dec 31 - Sharon and Harry  
Amendola



**Did you know St. Mark's offers the following opportunities for you and your family to participate?**

Phoebes - every Monday from 9-2 PM

Youth Sunday School - Held during the worship service message

Adult Sunday School - Sundays from 9:15 - 10 AM

Prayer Ministry - every Thursday night beginning at 5:30 PM

After School Program - every day from 3 - 5:30 PM following school schedule

Men's Prayer breakfast - second Saturday of each month

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**Our mitten tree is in the sanctuary. We are asking for donations of mittens and socks this year.**



# St. Mark's Lutheran Church

## Two Traveling Angels:

Two traveling angels stopped to spend the night in the home of a wealthy family. The family was rude and refused to let the angels stay in the mansion's guest room.

Instead the angels were given a small space in the cold basement.

As they made their bed on the hard floor, the older angel saw a hole in the wall and repaired it.

When the younger angel asked why, the older angel replied, Things aren't always what they seem.

The next night the pair came to rest at the house of a very poor, but very hospitable farmer and his wife.

After sharing what little food they had the couple let the angels sleep in their bed where they could have a good night's rest.

When the sun came up the next morning the angels found the farmer and his wife in tears.

Their only cow, whose milk had been their sole income lay dead in the field.

The younger angel was infuriated and asked the older angel how could you let this happen?

The first man had everything, yet you helped him, she accused.

The second family had little but was willing to share everything, and you let the cow die...

Things aren't always what they seem, the older angel replied.

When we stayed in the basement of the mansion, I noticed there was gold stored in that hole in the wall.

Since the owner was so obsessed with greed and unwilling to share his good fortune, I sealed the wall so he wouldn't find it.

Then last night as we slept in the farmers bed, the angel of death came for his wife and I gave him the cow instead.

Things aren't always what they seem.

Sometimes that is exactly what happens when things don't turn out the way they should. If you have faith, you just need to trust that every outcome is always to your advantage. You just might not know it until sometime later.

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# Thank you!!!

Generosity comes from the heart and once again when an appeal went out to our congregation, you responded with a heart full of love.



Twenty-eight children were blessed through the boxes you filled for Operation Christmas Child.



You provided food to help fill the Joshua Project's Thanksgiving baskets that were given to families in need.



Christmas gifts for the Native American children will be purchased by Wings As Eagles Ministries through the Walmart gift cards that were donated by you.

Jesus said, "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me." (Matthew 23:40)

To all of our brothers and sisters in Christ, may God richly bless you and grant you a wonderful Christmas!



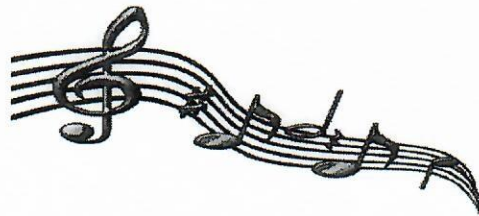


Our Middleburgh Ecumenical Bell Choir is ringing in the holiday season by playing with the Schoharie Presbyterian Church Bell Choir at the Schoharie Valley Concert Band Christmas concert. The song we are playing is *The Christmas Rose*. This piece was composed by a member of the band and is a piece written for two bell choirs and the band.

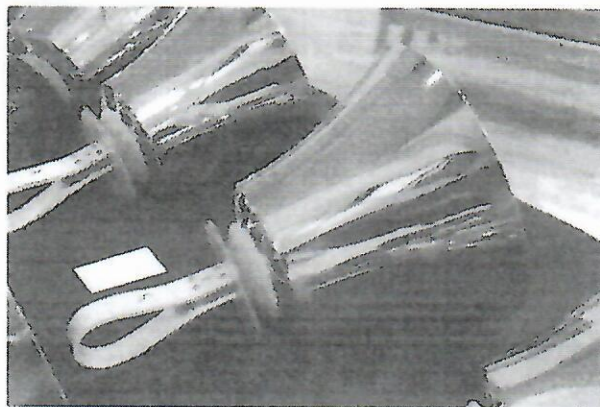
The concerts will be held on Friday, December 8<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 p.m. in the Schoharie High School Auditorium and on Saturday, December 9<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 p.m. in the Cobleskill-Richmondville High School Auditorium.

Coming to this concert is an excellent way to start your Christmas celebration. We look forward to seeing you there!

**THE MIDDLEBURGH**  
**ECUMENICAL BELL CHOIR**  
*Christmas Concert*



Sunday — December 10 — 3 PM



St. Mark's Lutheran Church Fellowship Hall  
326 Main Street, Middleburgh



**PLEASE RESPOND BY JANUARY 1, 2018**

### **St. Mark's Lutheran Church Survey**

Your pastoral Call Committee is asking for your suggestions and recommendations in regards to the selection of a pastor. This will help us to proceed with the work you have asked us to do. Please fill out this two-page survey and mail it to St. Mark's at P.O. Box 629, Middleburgh, NY 12122 or drop it in the survey box located in the church foyer.

1. How much pastoral experience should our new pastor have?  
☐ Under 5 years      ☐ 10-20 years      ☐ Does not matter  
☐ 5-10 years      ☐ Over 20 years
2. What educational qualification should our new past have?  
☐ High School      ☐ Seminary  
☐ College Degree      ☐ Post Graduate Work  
☐ Some Seminary Training      ☐ Other
3. A pastor has many important responsibilities. While he/she should be interested in each of the following, which do you feel should receive most of his/her time? (Check five)  
☐ Sermon Preparation      ☐ Attending Committee Meetings  
☐ Visiting Prospective Members      ☐ Visiting Church Members  
☐ Administration and Office Work      ☐ Personal Soul Winning  
☐ Personal Bible Study and Prayer      ☐ Leading Bible Study and Prayer Time  
☐ Attending Denominational Meetings      ☐ Promoting Church Programs  
☐ Caring for needs of his/her family      ☐ Counseling and Advising  
☐ Civic Affairs
4. On which of these should he/she spend the least amount of time? \_\_\_\_\_
5. What do you feel is the most important quality a pastor should possess? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Feel free to express your feelings about other characteristics you would like to have in a pastor. (Use back of page if additional space is required.) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. I would like to present the following person(s) for the committee's prayerful consideration. (Please provide a resume with each name submitted.)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Ministry Leadership

Below are listed twenty items representing various aspects of ministry and ministerial leadership. All of them are important, but we want to know which of them you think are the most important in screening potential ministry candidates. Please circle the six items you think are most important for the Call Committee to consider.

1. **Corporate Worship** – planning and leading worship; developing congregational worship life
2. **Proclamation of the Word** – effective preaching
3. **Minister's Personal Creativity and Resourcefulness** – planning and leading programs
4. **Spiritual Development of Members** – help members develop spiritual life and relate faith to life
5. **Congregational Home Visitation** – making pastoral calls on people in their homes
6. **Hospital and Emergency Visitation** – calls in hospitals, nursing homes; calls and care in crises
7. **Congregational Fellowship** – building community; inclusiveness; reaching out to inactive members
8. **Counseling** – being compassionate, sensitive and helpful; maintaining confidentiality
9. **Evangelism** – bringing in new members; developing lay commitment to evangelism
10. **Planning Congregational Life** – long-range planning; goal setting; problem solving; teamwork
11. **Involvement in Missions Beyond the Local Community** – State, National, World Missions
12. **Educational Program** – assessing needs; setting goals; developing program; involvement
13. **Teaching** – commitment to a teaching ministry to people of all ages
14. **Missions in the Local Community** – being informed and involved; involving members; organizing
15. **Ecumenical and Interfaith Activities** – ecumenical involvement and leadership
16. **Congregational Communication** – sharing information; facilitating communication
17. **Administrative Leadership** – provide leadership; develop and encourage lay leaders
18. **Stewardship and Commitment Program** – develop programs; encourage growth in giving
19. **Evaluation of Program and Staff** – establish procedures for staff evaluation
20. **Responsibilities and Relationships with the Denomination**