

St. Mark's Lutheran Church

Publisher
Church mouse

Issue Number
58

Date
March 2016

New website

Our webpage is up and running.
Check it out. The address is

[www.stmarkslutheran
middleburgh.com](http://www.stmarkslutheranmiddleburgh.com)

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.

Council has adopted a new policy for anyone that wishes to use the fellowship hall for an event. Going forward 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.

Prayers Concerns

Please lift the following people up in prayer:

Prayers for our new pastor
Andrew and Alesha Robin
Augie and Kathy Janet
Jim Ruth Bailey
Landauer family
Westermann family
Brooks family
Thorington family

Upcoming Events

Mar 8 - Council meeting 6:00

**Mar 12 - Men's prayer breakfast
9:00**

Speakers for our upcoming
February services:

Mar 6 - Ron Lower
Mar 13 - Pastor Don Klob
Mar 20 - Tom Hotaling
Mar 27 - Mike Saccocio

If you are going to be working with any of the youth this is the website to do the mandated reporter training:

www.nysmandatedreporter.org

St. Mark's Lutheran Church

Happy Days !!!!!

Birthdays: March

March 1 - Carrie Foland
March 3 - Teena Przychodny
March 13 - Jill Hanley
March 14 - Jim Brigadier and Dylan
 Hillicoss and Mary
 Chichester
March 19 - Cheryl Cater
March 22 - Dean Roney and William
 Cronin
March 27 - Virginia Tinney

Anniversaries: March

March 15 - John and Heather
Palmatier

For those of you that were unable to stay for the annual meeting (you missed some delicious food!) copies of the committee reports will be in the next few newsletters for your information.

Zumba Classes will be **Thursdays at 9:30** in the fellowship hall. Check the calendar in the hallway for more details.

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

Youth Group - every third Saturday of the month at 6:30 PM

Creative Women's Ministry - Fourth
Friday of the month at 7 PM

HOLY WEEK WORSHIP SERVICES

March 20th – 10:30 a.m. - Palm Sunday Service –
St. Mark's Lutheran Church

March 24th – 7:00 p.m. - Ecumenical Maundy Thursday Service –
Huntersland Methodist Church

March 25th – 8:00 p.m. - Ecumenical Good Friday Service –
Reformed Church

March 26th – 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. - Saturday Vigil –
St. Mark's Lutheran Church
(Church will be open for anyone who feels led to spend time in prayer)

March 27th – 6:30 a.m. - Ecumenical Sunrise Service – Huntersland
Breakfast to follow at St. Mark's Lutheran Church

March 27th – 10:30 a.m. - Easter Sunday Worship Service –
St. Mark's Lutheran Church



St. Mark's Lutheran Church

Servers for March

March 6:

Acolyte - TBD
Ushers - Gene/Chris
Reader - Marie
Greeter - Ginny
Prayer - Georgia
Counter - Debbie

March 13:

Acolyte - TBD
Ushers - Pat/Dennis
Reader - Michelle N.
Greeter - Maurice
Prayer - Gene
Counter - Diane

March 20:

Acolyte - TBD
Ushers - Sharon/Tom
Reader - Ginny
Greeter - Pat
Prayer - Chris
Counter - Carrie

March 27:

Acolyte - TBD
Ushers - Lori/Dean
Reader - Ted
Greeter - Janet
Prayer - Ted
Counter - Debbie

Happy
Easter

St. Mark's Lutheran Church

Legend of the Dogwood

An old and beautiful legend says that, at the time of the crucifixion, the dogwood was comparable in size to the oak tree and other monarchs of the forest. Because of its firmness and strength it was selected as the timber of the cross, but to be put to such cruel use greatly distressed the tree. Sensing this, the crucified Jesus in His gentle pity for the sorrow and suffering of all said to it: "Because of your sorrow and pity for My sufferings, never again will the dogwood tree grow large enough to be used as a cross. Henceforth it will be slender, bent and twisted and its blossoms will be in the form of a cross - two long and two short petals. In the center of the outer edge of each petal there will be nail prints - brown with rust and stained with red - and in the center of the flower will be a crown of thorns, and all who see this will remember.



PHOEBE CIRCLE - 2015 REPORT

We are at the beginning of a new year and God is still busy showing the Phoebe's that giving is very rewarding and fulfilling. The more we give, the more God provides in the donations and support we get from others. We, as a ministry, are so blessed in multiple ways and joyfully go on to bless others.

Our outreach activities in 2015 included:

9 encouragement baskets were made and delivered

Hats, mittens and scarves were given to our after school program, Schenectady City Mission and Coats for Kids.

65 quilts were delivered to Schenectady City Mission, VA Hospital, Ellis Rehabilitation and Camp Erin.
13 quilts were given out locally.

22 pillows were made for the VA Hospital for surgical patients

Two dinners were held with money specifically being earmarked to go toward the church's mortgage and we were very blessed with the support we got for both. Along with these dinners, we gave away a door prizes of a quilt and wreaths.

The Phoebe's held several fund raisers and we wish to thank all who supported our efforts. Delicious strawberry jam was made along with some crafts and many, many wreaths and wall hangings. We thank Sharon Amendola for all the great ideas and supplies for the wreaths. Our annual pie sale was a great success as always. All the money we raised with our pie sale goes to pay for the supplies we need for our quilts. God is good.

We participated in our second year with the Miracle on Main Street by again offering free coffee, tea and hot chocolate along with brownies and our crafts were also on sale at this event. With our fundraisers of our crafts we were able to give \$1,756.00 to the mortgage fund.

We hosted receptions for Elizabeth Van Dyke and Doris Van Dyke for their memorial services.

One of the many highlights of our Monday lunch time is our bible study. This has been a great time of learning and often many lively discussions. Thanks to Carolyn Wyckoff who so diligently prepares these studies for us. We are still working on the 100 Women of the Bible.

2015 was another time of growth for the Phoebe's with an average of 10 to 12 people most Mondays. We grew so much we had to add another table for our lunch time. Please feel free to come visit us any Monday between 9am and 2pm. We will definitely find a project for you. Our fellowship and devotion time are wonderful.

Our mission is and always has been to be the hands and feet of Jesus in the world. God is so good all the time and he has richly blessed us in all of our endeavors to bless others.

"Love each other with brotherly affection and take delight in honoring each other. Never be lazy in your work but serve the Lord enthusiastically." Romans 12: 10 and 11

In His Service,

Sharon A. Nesbitt

Worship and Music

The word for 2015 by the Worship and Music team is "faithful". We can sing "Great is Thy Faithfulness" with a new and deeper meaning for God has indeed been faithful to St. Mark's.

After Pastor Rodney tendered his resignation, Cheryl accepted the responsibility of coordinating guest speakers who faithfully delivered God's message to us each Sunday. We are grateful to those who responded "yes" to God's call to serve and we continue to give God the glory for His provision.

With Pastor Rodney's departure, Carolyn is now St. Mark's representative at the Middleburgh Clergy meetings that are held once a month. This is a great opportunity for us to learn about events being hosted at other churches in the community and to be involved with ecumenical services. This is an example of God's faithfulness in connecting St. Mark's with our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Special services and events in which we participated in 2015 are:

- Ash Wednesday Service at St. Mark's
- Ecumenical Good Friday Service at Reformed Church
- Baccalaureate for Middleburgh Central School at Our Lady of the Valley Catholic Church
- Ecumenical Community Worship Service at MCS lawn
- Confirmation of Logan Bartholomew, Morgan Gordon, Dylan Hillicoss and Madison Palmatier
- Ecumenical Thanksgiving Eve Worship Service at St. Mark's
- Christmas Eve Worship Service at St. Mark's
- Two handbell concerts at St. Mark's (Spring and Winter)

Our choir continues to provide special music during the fall, winter and spring worship services. This year Doris VanDyke blessed our choir with the donation of new crosses for them to wear with their robes. God's faithfulness is seen through a lady who loved our Lord and our music.

A new endeavor this year has been the implementation of weekly prayer time when we come together before the throne of God to lift up our joys and concerns. God has been faithful to answer those prayers in some unexpected ways, including "wait", "yes" and "no". Please come join us on Thursday evenings at 5:30 p.m. and witness the power of prayer.

Thank you to all who have faithfully supported our Worship and Music team. We especially thank God as we lovingly lift our praise to Him for all glory and honor are His.

In Christ,
Cheryl Cater
Carolyn Wyckoff

Social Ministries - 2015

"You can help those in need by working hard. You should remember the words of the Lord Jesus: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' – Acts 10:35 (excerpt from 2016 Mornings with Jesus).

This report highlights most of our 2015 social ministries.

Food Pantry

Donations were received from school and community clubs, local churches, Scouts, U.S. Post Office and other community friends. Our congregation has also been generous with non-perishable and monetary donations.

We continued to purchase food from the Northeast Regional Food Bank and received a \$800 grant from the Hunger Prevention Nutrition Assistance Program. The assistance from these sources and many more made it possible to offer more nutritious foods and maintain our pantry's supplies. Many thanks are extended to Dennis Foland and Dennis France for faithfully picking up the food each month.

The "Jazzy's Place" grant allowed us to purchase food for family dogs.

| | |
|---------------------------------|-------|
| Number of visits to food pantry | - 203 |
| Number of children fed | - 186 |
| Number of adults fed | - 397 |
| Total number of individuals fed | - 583 |

A local Girl Scout troop decorated as well as provided some of the food that was given away in six Thanksgiving baskets.

"Bread" Ministry

"Sought After Ministries" and our local Stewart's shop donated bread, rolls, pastries and snacks to our food pantry.

Clothing Closet

Our community and congregation were generous with donations. We answered the needs for clothing, shoes, boots, bedding and household items. A relationship with "The Everything Shoppe", Department of Social Services and Bassett Navigation made it possible to meet specific needs.

| | |
|---------------------------|------|
| Number of children served | - 44 |
| Number of adults served | - 43 |

2015 referrals to our food pantry and clothing closet came from local schools, Head Start, DSS, Berkshire Farms, SCCAP, Catholic Charities, Bassett Navigation and the Joshua Project.

"Coats for Kids" and Adults

In cooperation with SCCAP, St. Mark's hosted a coat, snow pants, boots, hats, mittens and scarf give-away in which 36 coats were handed out. Again, through the generosity of our congregation, we were able to bless others with either new or gently used items.

Toiletries for SALT

An energetic group put together several toiletry bags to be distributed to children in the Gilboa area.

Summer Band Concert Ice Cream Social

Delicious desserts and ice cream were served and enjoyed by people attending the summer band concert on the MSC lawn. (Pie with scoops of ice cream on top were the favorite.) It was a wonderful evening of fun and fellowship with the proceeds benefiting our food pantry account.

Christmas Appeal

17 Operation Christmas Child shoeboxes were packed with love and delivered to the Samaritan's Purse Relay Center. In addition, 17 Walmart gift cards of different denominations were sent to Wings As Eagles Ministries in South Dakota to bless the Native American children with Christmas gifts.

"Neighbors Eating Together" (NET) Dinners

In 2015 on the fourth Wednesday of each month, our congregation prepared and served dinner for our neighbors. It has been a wonderful way for the kitchen crew to enjoy each other and to meet new people.

Coffee Hour

Families and friends prepared delicious refreshments that are served after our Sunday worship services. What a super time for fellowship!

Our Prayer

"Rejoice in the Lord always; again, I will say rejoice." – Philippians 4:4

Yours In Christ,
Pat McCoy

What Is a Pastor?

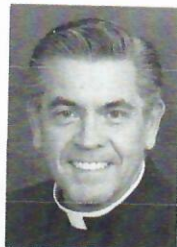
Jesus says, 'Feed and Tend My Sheep'

When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." He said to him, "Feed my lambs." A second time he said to him, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." He said to him, "Tend my sheep." He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, "Do you love me?" And he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep." Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were young, you girded yourself and walked where you would; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish to go." (This he said to show by what death he was to glorify God.) And after this he said to him, "Follow me."

— John 21:15-19

Let's be honest. There is something of a disease in our culture today that has "infected" the pastoral ministry as it has everything else. It is "narcissism." Narcissism is defined as excessive interest in oneself. It is related to vanity, self-admiration, self-absorption, conceit, self-centeredness, egotism. While I don't presume to be a psychologist, it's obvious that narcissist pastors see themselves as the center of the congregation, with everything having to revolve around him or her. There is little desire to involve other leaders, a need to control and not share decision-making, and a tendency to show offense when and if anyone should disagree because "Hey, it's all about me, and what I want and need and desire."

And before lay leaders might nod and conclude, "Yes, that's our pastor — the Narcissist," we also have to be honest and admit that many problems in congregations today are the result, not of narcissistic pastors, but self-centered, egotistical lay leaders who think the church is all about them!



Ministry Matters

Pastor David Wendel

Assistant to the Bishop
for Ministry and Ecumenism

And it doesn't take a psychology degree to see why there might be conflict in congregations where there are both pastor and lay leaders who have narcissistic tendencies!

Although there is an aspect in which the pastor is a central figure in the congregation and is called to preach, teach and lead, this position is entrusted to the pastor when he or she has earned the trust of the congregation. (More on "trust" in next month's "Ministry Matters" article.) The faithful and true pastor never enters the ordained ministry out of an unhealthy desire to be the center of attention or to feed our self-centeredness or egotism. Such a person in the pastoral office diminishes others in the congregation, leaders and members alike. The strategy of a narcissistic pastor will always be: "I must increase, so you must decrease."

This is not to say that pastors ought not be strong, competent leaders — self-assured, self-confident and capable of leading. The goal is not to have mousey, shy pastors who are not confident and allow others to walk all over them. Rather, healthy pastors are not "in it" for themselves, are not "needy," are not always seeking attention to bolster their lack of self-confidence. A healthy pastor is confident and whole as a saved, redeemed child of God, washed in the blood of Christ Jesus, able to serve Christ's Church with a stable, balanced, self-differentiated personality that seeks not to be served, but to serve — Christ and His "flock."

Continued on Page 13

That seems to be what the Lord is saying to Peter in their encounter at the end of the Gospel of John. Without a doubt, Peter had, at times, been self-focused if not self-centered. Now, Jesus is preparing to ascend and He has a heart-to-heart conversation with Peter, reminding him of the role of the disciple and apostle — to feed and tend the sheep!

Peter's purpose now was not to be the undisputed head of the Church, lording it over the others in Jesus' "absence," taking control as if that was his calling as an apostle. Rather, the Lord tells Peter, "Because I love you and you love me, feed my lambs, tend my sheep, feed my sheep." This is how Peter was to follow Jesus, finally dying a martyr's death as he gave all for his Lord and the Church.

The opposite of being a narcissist is to be unselfish, humble and willing to sacrifice for the sake of others. Being a called, ordained pastor doesn't mean neglecting yourself or your family for the sake of others, but it does mean being prepared to place the needs of others, even others in your family, before yourself and your own wants, desires and agenda.

A wise and trusted retired pastor in my former congregation in Colorado Springs once told me, "What matters is that the sheep are being fed. Everything else comes after that." Isn't that what the Lord is telling us? That the primary thing in ministry is to love the Lord by feeding and caring for His sheep?" And not just the sheep who show up for Sunday worship. We are to care for the lost sheep as well. The faithful pastor also cares for the lamb who has gone astray, the sheep who has wandered unwittingly into a dark and dangerous place, the lamb who needs to be uplifted and carried back into the safety of the fold, where there is nourishment in Word and Sacrament, tender loving care within the community.

Before pastors or church leaders point fingers at others in the congregation, declaring, "Narcissist!" the more helpful exercise is to engage in self-reflection and self-examination. The starting place is to ask oneself, "Is this all about me?" "Is this about what I want and need, or about feeding and caring for the flock entrusted to me?" "Is this about

my power and position and how I will look to others, or is this about the health and well-being of the congregation as a whole?" "Is this self-serving or in the service of others?" "Is this about making myself feel better or about building up the Body of Christ?" Ministry and leadership that is narcissistic is all about "me, myself and I." Ministry that is about Christ and His sheep is about being humble, sacrificial and unselfish, confident in who I am as a child of God and servant of the Lord. In the Body of Christ, we all do well to keep that in mind and strive for that as we seek to feed and tend Christ's sheep!

Next Month: Pastors Must Be Found Trustworthy!
(1 Corinthians 4:2)

Lenten devotions from Pastor Wendel are available online

Pastor David Wendel, Assistant to the Bishop for Ministry and Ecumenism has written daily devotions for the Lenten season.

The devotions are based on the daily lectionary in *Lutheran Book of Worship*.

The devotions are formatted for printing in a booklet called "From Ashes to Easter" available for download on the NALC website in regular and large-print formats.

The daily devotions on the NALC website and in the NALC Facebook group during Lent will be the same ones in the booklet.

In addition to the Lenten devotional, Dr. Wendel has created a Lenten discipline "action guide" that can be used in conjunction with the devotional.

The Lenten devotional material is available as a daily text message or email. To receive the daily text message, please text LENT to 614-333-0334. To sign up to receive the daily email, go to nalcnetwork.com/lenten-devotionals.