



St. Mark's Lutheran Church

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From Pastor Rodney

See Pastor's report.

E-mail: Pastorrodney@midtel.net

Pastor now has office hours Tuesday through Friday from 9-1. Please call ahead in case he had to leave.

New website

Our new webpage is up and running. Check it out. It is awesome! Thank you Angela. The address is www.stmarkslutheranmiddleburgh.com

Looking for new members!

If you would like to become a member of St. Mark's Lutheran Church please speak with Pastor Rodney.

CPR/AED/First Aid Class:

The class is scheduled for February 15th from 8 AM to 2 PM. The cost is \$20.00. Please sign up on the sheet in the hallway.

Prayers Concerns

Please lift the following people up in prayer:

Andrew Lamont
Georgia Van Dyke's family
Doris Van Dyke
Janet Abrams
Pastor's mother Barbara
Emma
Virginia Peterson
Tonya

Upcoming Events

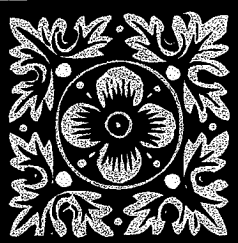
February 11 - Council meeting 6 PM

February 15 - CPR/first aid class 8-2

Hall Usage

Many groups have asked to use our facility for their meetings. If you happen to be at the church please double check that all lights have been turned off and both doors are locked.

Also please leave the doors going into the sanctuary open for the winter.



St. Mark's Lutheran Church

Servers for Feb

February 2:

Acolyte - Breanna/Mary
Ushers - Dean/Lori
Reader - Deb P.
Greeter - Maurice
Prayer - Chris
Counter - Diane

February 9:

Acolyte - Morgan/Logan
Ushers - Jessie/Jeremy
Reader - Bonnie
Greeter - Pat
Prayer - Gene
Counter - Carrie

February 16:

Acolyte - Hannah/Brianna
Ushers - Lori/Jenna
Reader - Michelle N.
Greeter - Deb P.
Prayer - Beth
Counter - Deb

February 23:

Acolyte - Gabby/Jenna
Ushers - Dennis/Diane
Reader - Ginny
Greeter - Jessie
Prayer - Georgia
Counter - Diane

What are you giving up?

We are reminded of Jesus' words in the gospel of Matthew 16:24, "Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me." This text comes alive to all of us whenever we read it, but; more so during the season of Lent.

Lent is a time where we cannot hide from the Love of God. We are forced to take an honest look at where we were, living recklessly in sin but then we were found by God and he saved us. God saved us not because we deserved it or earned it but because of his mercy and love. We can't help but feel grateful when we are saved, and we try to repay that debt of gratitude. We will never be able to repay the Lord for what He has done for us but it's admirable that we try.

It is typical during the Lenten season for us to give up something that we truly love, denying ourselves of it and following Christ? Some of you as you read this will be thinking about what you can give up, some chocolate, some all baked goods, others TV or social media.

Whatever it is that you plan to give up in terms of food or everyday vices, I also challenge you to look at this text from 2. Timothy 3: 1-5, "But understand this that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people."

We need to take a good look at ourselves and the people that we associate with and make sure that those qualities are not found in us or them. If it is, we can challenge them to change or ourselves to change. As Christians we need to possess qualities that are different from the people of the world. As Christians we are called to be selfless, generous, humble, supportive and forgiving. This Lenten season let us make a deliberate effort to draw near to God and make our life a living testimony of God's goodness and love. We are called to be generous, at the Annual meeting on Sunday we were encouraged to be more generous as we look at the finances of the church. I want to personally thank all of you for your contribution and for giving generously to the church.

Many of you would remember I am sure that during the Lenten season we were encouraged to give a Lenten offering; usually it's a dollar a day. I believe that if we start that again, it will go a far way in helping with the financial situation of the church. Please remember it will be \$40.00 for the Lenten season which is above and beyond your regular giving.

This is a Lenten challenge; if you can't afford a dollar a day, maybe you can afford fifty cents or a quarter a day, challenge yourself to give a Lenten offering this year whatever you can afford and I think you will be pleased. Lent is a time of self denial, deny yourself something that counts. What are you giving up? God bless you, and thanks for all that you do.

Submitted

Pr. Royan Rodney.



St. Mark's Lutheran Church

Happy Days !!!!!

Birthdays: February

February 3 - Harry Amendola and
Dee Harrison

February 6 - Logan Bartholomew

February 20 - Toni Burnett

February 21 - Butch Przychodny

February 23 - Bill Morton

February 24 - Kaleb Minton

Thrivent Challenge

Thrivent is offering a challenge to churches who serve the community through outreach programs. For every dollar donated to our food pantry between December 1, 2014 and March 31, 2014, Thrivent Foundation will grant 50 cents per \$1.00 raised up to a total of \$5,000. Please prayerfully consider participating in this challenge by making a monetary donation to our food pantry. Thank you!

Upcoming Youth Events:

See flyers in the hallway for more details and sign up for 2014 activities.

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.

St. Mark's Lutheran Church
Pastor's Annual Report for 2013

I greet you in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit! Amen. I would like to begin my report with **1 Peter 2:9-10**, "*But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for His own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.*"

When you stop to think about it, isn't it amazing that God wants to use us to be and to build His church? Think about it. In spite of our sins and our shortcomings, God allows us to be part of His church. He even says that each member is important in building the body of Christ. **Ephesians 2:21-22**, "*In Him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in Him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.*"

That is how much God loves us; in spite of our sins, He sees something beautiful that He can use. January 15, 2014, marked eighteen months since I was called to be your pastor. It's a role I take seriously. I am thankful for the opportunity to live out my calling everyday by being of service to Christ and His church.

It's amazing to me how eighteen months sounds like a very long time yet it goes by so fast. I am a strong believer in trusting in God for His direction and guidance and I am convinced that God brought me here at the right time. We have been through so much together this past year, and it was a tremendous learning experience for all of us as we embarked on this journey together. What a journey it has been, and God was with us every step of the way.

I saw the past year as an opportunity for me to get aquatinted with all of you and to get comfortable in my new surroundings. I have to say that when I wake up in the morning and look up at the beautiful hills that wrap around this entire county, it's a constant reminder that there is a God. I rejoice in the fact that people here at St. Mark's Lutheran Church know the Lord as their personal Savior. I am thankful that each week I am inspired by God to bring His message of hope and salvation to all of you. I pray that His word will not return to Him void, but it will bear fruit through all of us here.

As we move forward into this new fiscal year, I am excited about all the possibilities and blessings that the Lord has in store for us. With all the challenges that we are facing in our country, financially, emotionally, psychologically just to name a few, it's easy for us to become discouraged and give up on God. I want to encourage you to never give up on God. The days will not always be sunny. However, even when it rains, God is at work and He is present so you can trust Him to always provide for you and be with you as you whether the storm.

Often when we think of missionaries we think of people who are sent around the world to evangelize, but we should remember that missionaries are also sent around the block to share the love of Christ. All of us can do that, and it is my hope that we can each take a block and go around and tell people that we are here, that God is with us and He loves them.

I want to encourage us to pray about this and think about all the ways in which we can serve God in our community. Think of the resources we have and how we can best use them to cover a lot of ground and do outreach. Since coming to St. Mark's, I have officiated at weddings and funerals, baptized and confirmed, and worked with the youth, men and women of the church. In addition, I participated in outreach to the community and currently lead a worship service once a month at Fawn Ridge Assisted Living facility in Troy.

In addition, my monthly schedule as your pastor includes leading worship and presiding over the sacraments, teaching Bible study and confirmation classes, attending the Middleburgh Ministerial Association meetings and the Ecumenical Ministerial Association meetings. When members of our congregation have not worshiped with us for several weeks, I visit and/or call them to let them know they are missed and encourage them. I conduct counseling sessions and spiritual directions for our members, visit members who are in the hospital and nursing homes, attend other meetings and outreach events as they present themselves and most importantly, spend time in prayer and sermon preparation.

As part of my goals for this year, I am planning to have a challenge Sunday. "Bring your neighbors, family and friends to church day." This will be a Sunday where members of the congregation will be challenged to see who can invite the most number of people and bring them to worship. There will be an incentive, yet to be decided by the worship committee and approved by the church Council, for the one(s) who bring the most number of people. It will be exciting to see who accepts this challenge.

I will also seek ways to get our youth more spiritually connected and attend events that will strengthen their faith as well as give them the courage to serve and give back to the community. I will also seek God's guidance as well as work with the church Council and worship committee to find ways in which we can lead more people to join with us in our worship services on Sunday. We welcome your thoughts and suggestions in how to successfully embark on this endeavor.

In conclusion my goal for next year is to strengthen the new ministries that were established during my first year here, namely, the youth, men and women's ministry. This way we can meet the community and extend our mission and grow our church. Achieving these goals will take all of us so I will be seeking your prayerful support and cooperation as we move forward and seek to be faithful to God's mission. Matthew 28:18-20, *"And Jesus came and said to them, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.'"*

May we be reminded that this is our mission, and God will be with us as we seek to be faithful to his calling. God bless!

Faithfully submitted

Pastor Royan Rodney

St. Mark's Council President's Message

Greetings in the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ:

Another year has passed very quickly as well as my three-year term as your Council President. The three years certainly brought challenges as well as growth. Once again, thank you for all the faith, prayers and help during that time. We never would be where we are now if it wasn't in the Lord's plans. As long as our congregational family continues to work in His name, we will grow and reach our vision, which is to continue to grow in spirit, in our ministries and in our church family.

Recovery from the flood is almost complete with only the cellar yet to be repaired. With the help of SALT, we hope to have that finished by the end of 2014.

The youth building is ready for usage and the landscaping looks great. We are grateful to everyone who selflessly gave of their time and their donations to make all this happen.

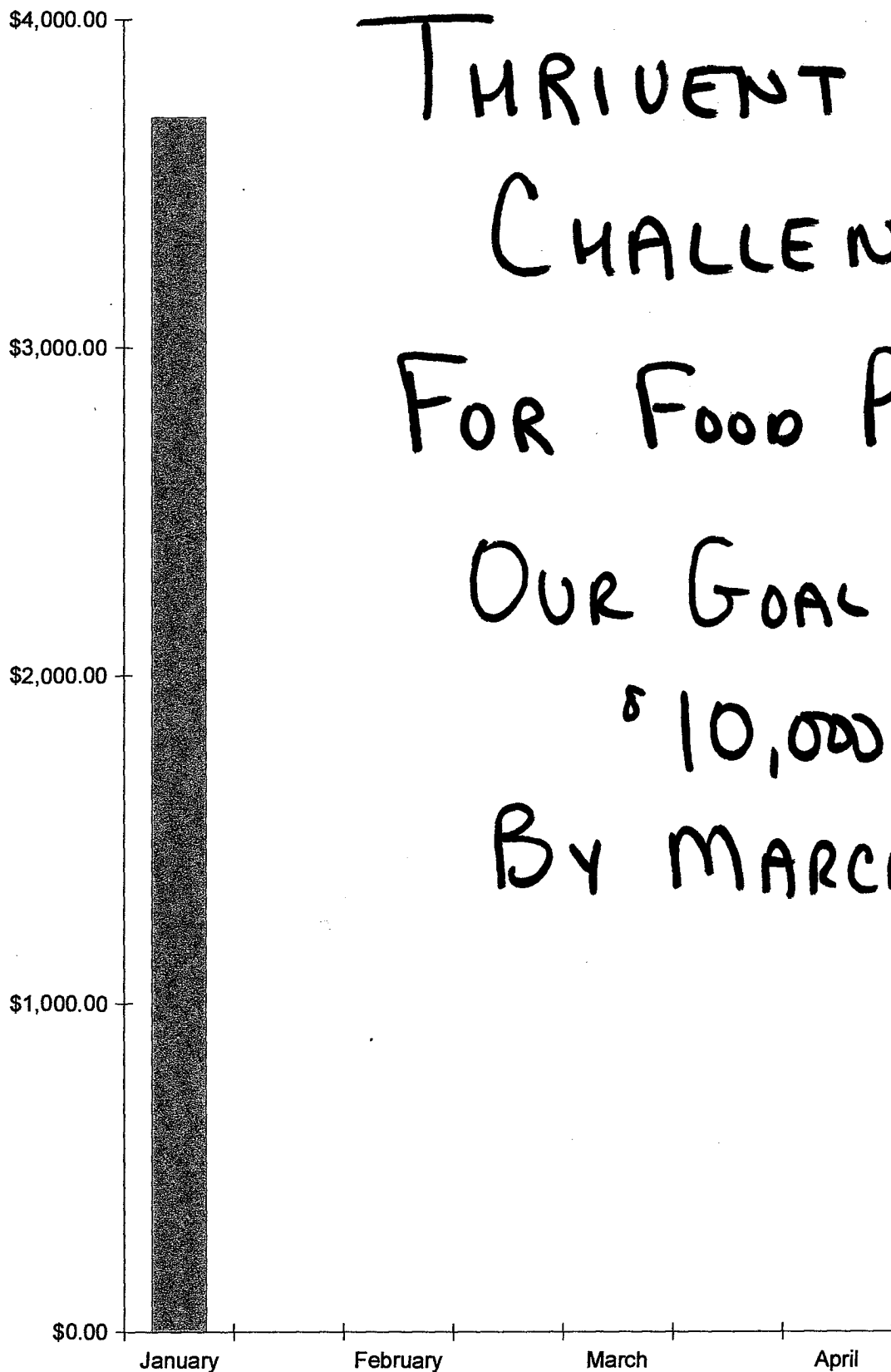
Other repairs to our property yet to be addressed include the driveway and the stained glass windows. However, with our budget being very tight, these repairs will have to be done with fundraisers.

We welcome suggestions and comments on any aspect of our church --- ministries, leadership, financial and property.

This is the house of the Lord and it is our responsibility as His congregational family to help it to grow and keep it stable. As I have said at various times in the past, we are one family and we need each other in service to the Lord. My prayer is that this coming year we will show growth both spiritually and physically and that our lines of communication will continue to be open.

God bless,

Diane France
President



THRIVENT
CHALLENGE
FOR FOOD PANTRY
OUR GOAL
\$ 10,000
BY MARCH 31

Series 1

WHY GOD MADE MOMS!

Answers given by 2nd grade school children to the following questions:

Why did God make mothers?

1. She's the only one who knows where the scotch tape is.
2. Mostly to clean the house.
3. To help us out of there when we were getting born.

How did God make mothers?

1. He used dirt, just like for the rest of us..
2. Magic plus super powers and a lot of stirring.
3. God made my mom just the same like he made me. He just used bigger parts.

What ingredients are mothers made of?

1. God makes mothers out of clouds and angel hair and everything nice in the world and one dab of mean..
2. They had to get their start from men's bones. Then they mostly use string, I think.

Why did God give you your mother and not some other mom?

1. We're related.
2. God knew she likes me a lot more than other people's mom like me.

What kind of a little girl was your mom?

1. My mom has always been my mom and none of that other stuff.
2. I don't know because I wasn't there, but my guess would be pretty bossy.
3. They say she used to be nice.

Why did your mom marry your dad?

1. My dad makes the best spaghetti in the world. And my mom eats a lot.
2. She got too old to do anything else with him.
3. My grandma says that mom didn't have her thinking cap on.

Who's the boss at your house?

1. Mom doesn't want to be boss, but she has to because dad's such a goof ball.
2. Mom. You can tell by room inspection. She sees the stuff under the bed.
3. I guess mom is, but only because she has a lot more to do than dad.

What's the difference between moms and dads?

1. Moms work at work and work at home and dads just go to work at work.
2. Moms know how to talk to teachers without scaring them.
3. Dads are taller and stronger, but moms have all the real power cause that's who you got to ask if you want to sleep over at your friends.
4. Moms have magic, they make you feel better without medicine.

What does your mom do in her spare time?

1. Mothers don't do spare time.
2. To hear her tell it, she pays bills all day long.

What would it take to make your mom perfect?

1. On the inside she's already perfect. Outside, I think some kind of plastic surgery.
2. Diet. You know, her hair. I'd diet, maybe blue.