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"Grab and Go" Meals in "Touch and Go" Times

Recently St. Mark has been playing an instrumental role in providing grab and go meals for the community luncheon. Members of our church have cooked, packaged, and distributed two meals for the food-insecure population of Norwich. This effort has not been easy considering the impact of COVID-19, but thankfully grab and go meals make the luncheon possible despite the pandemic. Thank you to everyone who is participating in this ministry! If you would like to get together a group and sponsor a date, please contact Brenda McDonald at 860-501-5122 or irishbren@att.net to reserve a date or for updated information about the meals.



Above: a delicious plum tart brought in for the luncheon staff to enjoy



To Contact
Pastor Mary:

email:
mimarobinson@aol.com

Pastoral Emergencies:
860-326-1031

If you would like
to make an appointment
with Pastor Mary,
please call
the St. Mark office at
860-887-6826 or
Linda at 860-334-1260

Morning Prayer

**by phone or
Internet Zoom
860-326-1031**

**Mondays and Fridays
at 9:00 a.m.**

To join the Morning
Prayer worship service
use the pastor's phone
number 860-326-1031
or ask for a Zoom
invitation.

Pastor Mary's Thoughts

I will set my eyes upon them for good, and I will bring them back to this land. I will build them up, and not tear them down; I will plant them and not pluck them up. I will give them a heart to know that I am the Lord; and they shall be my people and I will be their God, for they shall all return to me with their whole heart. Jeremiah 24:6

I know a wife and husband who discovered that they were in deep trouble in their relationship with one another. The wife came to their marriage with many hurts from her childhood. She covered those hurts by caring for her husband with lots of controlling help. The husband because of his physical disability expected that she would do most of the household work. Then he began to resent her controlling way of caring for the household, he went into a deep addiction that interfered with their communication and limited the love that should have been between them.

Both loved the Lord God and looked for ways to change. It was as if they were living in a foreign land and both wanted to return to the holy place where they had begun their marriage. One of the ways they began a healing process was to spend each evening lighting a candle, and telling each other their gratitude's. Their complaints, their resentments, their anger was left behind. The only words they spoke were from the heart. They spoke honest thank you for the good they had experienced during the day.

It seems to me that the reading from Jeremiah says it well. God set God's eyes upon them for good, and God will bring them back to a holy marriage. God will build them up, and not tear them down; God will plant them and not pluck them up. God will give them a heart to know that God is the Lord.

Gratitude is a gift that God gives. Every time a person is grateful from the depths of their heart there is the possibility of knowing God's desire for wholeness.

"Count your blessings name them one by one. Count your blessings see what God has done. Count your blessings Name them one by one. Count your many blessings See what God hath done" are the words of a song that I learned as a child.

During this time of sickness and sheltering in place we can think that we are burdened with a load of care. There seem to be many conflicts some great, some small. Some individuals are discouraged. Yet deep in my heart I know that God gives me help and comfort. From my heart comes gratitude for my many blessings.

A note from the office :

Currently, both the church office and the Pastor's office are open and functioning. Although indoor Sunday services have not resumed, we are conducting outdoor worship every Sunday at 9:30. Please see page 5 for additional building use guidelines.

For office questions you can reach Linda at 860-887-6826 or st.marklutheran248@gmail.com

For the Pastor please call Pastor Mary Robinson at 860-326-1031.



Birthdays



*Happy Birthday!
To those celebrating their
Birthday in September*

12 - Linda Allen
14 - Lucille Spanos
21 - Eleanor Caulfield
27 - Megan Armstrong
30 - Bruce Ashline

If you are celebrating your birthday, and you don't see your name here - please call the church office at 860-887-6826 so we can add it to our records.

September Worship Schedule

Sundays - 9:30 a.m.

Worship outdoors on the front lawn (weather permitting)

Bring a chair and wear a mask.

Or you can Worship on Facebook / YouTube

Mondays & Fridays - 9:00 a.m. - Morning Prayer

You can conference call or Internet Zoom with
Pastor Mary and others.

Just call her number 860-326-1031 or ask for a Zoom invitation.

Outdoor Worship

We are adhering to both the State and the CDC guidelines for in person worship. We so want to be together and also take precautions to avoid the spread of the coronavirus, therefore we will worship outside. Find us on the front lawn with the music leaders social distanced from each other. The music and speaking parts are being amplified from speakers set up near the front steps. Everyone is to bring their own lawn chair to sit on the front lawn or sidewalk. Some also choose to sit in their car. Face masks and social distancing are expected. Some sit under the shade of a tree, while those who are sitting in the sun bring umbrellas to create shade. Two "Instant Gazebos" have been provided by Charlie and Diane Regoto to give shade to band members and the sound person. A beach umbrella was given by Joy Bachand to protect the pastor.



Congregation Council Members:

Sandy Quarto, President	860-608-4298	sandyquarto@gmail.com
Brian Armstrong, Vice President	860-464-8338	bsa5870@gmail.com
Lili Rafeldt, Secretary	860-376-4833	lrafeldt@comcast.net
Joe Churney	860-884-6582	jchurney@snet.net
Joan Seidel	860-642-6316	seideljoan@yahoo.com
Sabrina Tolppi	860-444-6044	swtolppi@yahoo.com
Tom Tolppi	860-444-6044	tomtolppi@yahoo.com
Joy Bachand	860-564-7333	joybachand@yahoo.com
Pastor Mary Robinson	860-326-1031	mimarobinson@aol.com



God's Work Our Hands Sunday

God's Work Our Hands Sunday has been observed in September since 2013 across ELCA congregations. Our council members chose to provide music for this occasion. Chris O'Dell and Ian Frankel are ready to play in the Ensemble. Due to the danger of COVID-19 the music will be virtual rather than in person. We will be enjoying the St. Mark Gospel and Jazz Ensemble from the safety of our homes. Watch for time of broadcast on YouTube and information about how to make donations.

Blessing of the Animals

On October 4, St. Mark will hold our annual blessing of the animals to celebrate the Feast of Saint Francis. You are welcome to bring your pets to church for a blessing during our Sunday outdoor service. All pets are invited: dogs, cats, rabbits, etc.



Reopening St. Mark - Phase 2

CT continues to remain in Phase 2 of the statewide reopening plan however changes have been made to protocols for outdoor gatherings. At this time, those changes do not apply to our outdoor worship. St. Mark has reopened the church office, and has begun allowing groups to again begin meeting in Memorial Hall, and the Gathering Room. We have also begun in-person outdoor Sunday morning worship.

We are adhering to both the State and the CDC guidelines for opening churches. Procedures/protocols for being in the building will be made available to anyone needing entry.

Areas of the building that will be used during Phase 2.

- Memorial Hall
- Gathering Room
- Narthex and Handicap/Unisex bathroom
- Hallway leading to the Gathering Room
- The Men's and Women's bathrooms off that hallway
- The back entry foyer with burglar alarm controls
- The church office
- The Pastor's office
- The office hallway
- Front lawn

All other areas of the church are off limits to everyone except church staff for official church business.

Activities that may take place during Phase 2.

- Day to day operations in the church office.
- Day to day leadership and pastoral care in the Pastor's office.
- Monday evenings - Family Loss Grief Counseling Group meeting in Memorial Hall.
- Tuesday evenings - Family Reentry Program (not meeting yet).
- Tuesday evenings - Cornerstone Bible Study meeting in Gathering Room.
- Thursday evenings - Family Reentry Program (not meeting yet)
- Friday evenings - AA meeting in Memorial Hall.
- Saturday mornings - Cornerstone prayer meeting in Memorial Hall.
- Sunday mornings - St. Mark (9:30am) and Cornerstone (11:00am) outdoor in-person worship on the front lawn.

Following CDC guidelines, a thorough cleaning and disinfecting of the areas inside the church building used during these meetings and events will be completed after each one in preparation for the next meeting/event.

There are no plans at the moment to resume indoor in-person worship anytime soon.

Thank you,
Joe Churney

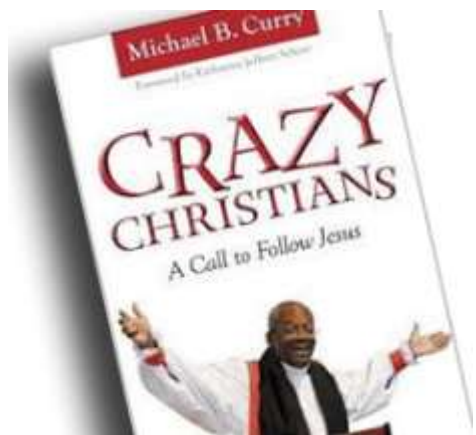
October Monthly Memo News Articles

Please send your articles for the **October Monthly Memo** to st.marklutheran248@gmail.com
by **September 17th**. Thank you.

September Volunteer Schedule

Date:	September 6	September 13	September 20	September 27
Reader	Megan Armstrong	Robin Slane	Linda Andrews	Joy Bachand
Ushers	Peter Armstrong & Lily Armstrong	Sandy Vanase & Sue Underhill	Jackson Houk & Brooklynn Houk	Tom Tolppi & Robin Slane

If you are unable to serve on your assigned dates, please let Linda Mandel in the office know who your replacement will be at st.marklutheran248@gmail.com or 860-887-6826 Thank you!



Book Club

Crazy Christians a Call to Follow Jesus by Bishop Michael Curry is the book currently being read by the Book Club. Anyone who has been turned off by Christianity but longs to fill the God shaped hole in their being should read this book and rejoice. “We need some Christians who are as crazy as the Lord. Crazy enough to love like Jesus, to give like Jesus, to forgive like Jesus, to do justice, love mercy, walk humbly with God—like Jesus. Crazy enough to dare to change the world from the nightmare it often is into something close to the dream that God dreams for it. And for those who would follow him, those who would be his disciples,

and those who would live as and be the people of the Way?” A quote from Bishop Curry. The book Club meets Monday’s at 10:00 a.m.. Contact Pastor Mary for a copy of the book and information about the Zoom method the Book Club uses.

Help Needed on Sundays

To keep our Sunday outdoor services running smoothly, we are currently in need of volunteers to help set up equipment and manage audio. Since Joe Churney has been managing the soundboard for several weeks, we are looking for someone willing to fill in for him occasionally. If you are interested in operating the audio equipment, please speak with Joe Churney for more information. To help with setup, simply arrive before the start of the service. Thank you for your help!

Our Building and Property Need Your Help:

For the first 3 months of the pandemic our building was closed and **we didn't have an** opportunity to tackle the spring cleaning and outdoor maintenance we typically do. In June, the property committee created a list of jobs that needed to be done. Many have been completed by volunteers but there are many more to go. **Please look over the following list. If you see a job that you're capable of doing,** please take it on. You can work at your own pace when it is convenient for you. Some can be done alone. Others would be better as family projects. You can even team up with fellow church members and work as a team. Just be sure to wear masks and maintain social distancing when working with people other than your own family. Please get in touch with Joe Churney if you want to take on a job or if you have any questions. Thank you.

1. Clean and sweep the pavement. Prune, trim and weed edges of the parking lot. Underway. The Tolppi's and Armstrong's have split this job into two and each family has taken part this task.
2. Paint the retaining wall railings. Started. Need a volunteer to finish the job.
3. Clean, weed and mulch gardens along the top of the concrete retaining wall. Underway. The Churney's have cleaned, weeded and pruned these gardens so far. Mulching still needs to be done.
4. Replace the old picket fence. Completed.
5. Clean and mulch in front of new picket fence. Completed.
6. Weed, clean, prune the gardens and plantings along the exterior church walls and the courtyard. Completed by a group of people at various times. Joy Bachand has volunteered to coordinate keeping the courtyard weed free. Sandy Quarto, Kurt Kallmeyer and Joan Seidel have helped Joy. This is an ongoing task so there is a need for other volunteers.
7. Power wash the brick building. Charles will take care of this.
8. Paint exterior doors. Charles will take care of this.
9. Get rid of the bees above the back door. Completed.
10. Repair gutters on the back of building. Replace any rotten trim. Completed.
11. Power wash the concrete retaining wall and clean along the base of the wall. Completed.
12. Fasten up the extension cords powering the exterior lights along the driveway. Not started. Need a volunteer.
13. Reroof the shed this year. Not started. Need a coordinator.
14. Repair the rotted sill on the shed this year. Not started. Need a coordinator.
15. Recoat the church roof this year. Not started. Need a coordinator.
16. Repair and repaint the exterior of the chapel cross-shaped window area. Not started. Need a volunteer.
17. Install carpet nosing where pews were removed from sanctuary to prevent a trip hazard. Not started. Need a volunteer.

Prayer List

We include in our prayers:

Homebound members: Betty & Bob Schmidt, Bruce Ashline, Hazel Lotring, Laura Nagel, Shirley Eliasson, Martha Johnson, Irene Signorino.

Clergy: For Elizabeth and Jim, our Bishops; for Mary, our Pastor.

We pray for the sick especially: Jim Quarto, Tom Seidel, Don Paulison, Rob Peterson, Frank Socha, James Signorino, Christina McCann, Lina McCann, Hope McCann, George Mason, Yvonne Scott, Sarah Sullivan, Parker Churney, Jennifer Bedell, Charles Peters, Jennifer Stark, Janet Hatch, Gary Ogren, Lou Rose.

We pray especially for: The Irizarry family, Those with addictions, their families & friends. Children being sexually abused, adults healing from abuse, the homeless, all persons living with HIV/AIDS, those who have been affected by COVID-19. Those who are out of work or looking for work; those with a mental illness, the families and friends who support them.



Prayers Needed:

We have received a letter from Mission of the Good Shepherd Church in Belize, Central America asking only for prayers for special children in need especially Susie Westby, Myrtle Tracey, Ashanti Obrien, Orlando Jackson and Stephanie Logan. We will be including all children at this church in our prayers at St. Mark at morning prayer on Monday and Friday and at our church services on Saturday and Sunday. We ask you to include these children in your daily prayers as well. These children have very immediate needs that only God can help with.

If You or a Loved One Go to the Hospital

- * Call the church office as soon as you know you will be admitted.
- * When asked if you are part of a local faith community answer YES, and tell them where you are a member. ***If you are not asked tell them.***
- * When asked if you want your name released to representatives of your church say YES. If you say no, or if you do not give our church's name the hospital will not be able to release your name to us.

Note: L & M Hospital is the only hospital that notifies us when our parishioners are hospitalized.

Facebook Page

We have increased our social media presence with an additional FB page:

ThePlace.StMark

This page is intended to share with the community the number of ways they can be fed at The Place, a place we all lovingly refer to as St. Mark Lutheran Church. A place for people to be enriched by diversity of religious traditions, to be in community, to be fed, to find music for all, to find peace, to find worship, to find book clubs, to be welcomed.



St. Mark is on Instagram

Check us out on Instagram - @ThePlace.StMark



Norwich Interfaith Food Pantry

Dear food pantry volunteers and supporters,

The Norwich Interfaith Food Pantry remains temporarily closed. However, the need for food in the Norwich area is growing daily, as more and more people are furloughed or laid off from their jobs. It appears that we are unsure when we will open.

If you have sent a monetary donation to NIFP since we closed, you may have seen that your check has not been cashed. We would like to hear from you whether or not you want us to keep your contribution to restock the pantry when it opens. If you wish, we will return your check so that you can redirect your contribution to another feeding program that is open during the pandemic. We would like to recommend: St. Vincent de Paul Place, 120 Cliff Street Norwich, CT 06360 (860) 889-7374

If you are contributing food, call them to find out drop-off hours. We will be in touch with volunteers and contributing religious communities when we're ready to begin re-stocking the food pantry. Thank you for your help.

Mary Elizabeth and Chris maryelizabethlang@yahoo.com, murthachristine@ yahoo.com



Cereal Ministry

Many Thanks to those of you who have brought and continue to bring in cereal for St Vincent De Paul Place. St. Mark continues their commitment to provide at least 25 boxes of cereal to the SVDPP food pantry each month. ***You may place cereal boxes in the blue bin during our Sunday morning offering. Alternatively, you can call Pastor Mary at 860-326-1031 or Linda Mandel at 860-334-1260 to arrange for drop off at St. Mark.***

A Special Thank You from St. Vincent de Paul Place

Dear Pastor Mary and Parishioners,

During these challenging times, it is sometimes hard to see the brighter side of things. Here at St. Vincent de Paul Place, we are often reminded of great things that are happening despite the current struggles.

During the last 12 months food donations from farms, merchants, organizations, and individuals totaled 234,312 pounds. At an estimated cost of \$1.72 per pound, the value is \$403,017. Thank you for your recent monetary donations. Your donations make it all possible.

Peace!

Jillian Corbin
Executive Director



NEWSLETTER OF
ST. MARK LUTHERAN
CHURCH



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September 2020 Newsletter



**Evangelical Lutheran
Church in America**
God's work. Our hands.