



The Messenger

VOL. LXII, ISSUE I

St. Mark's Lutheran Church

January 2020

Called by the Spirit. Equipped to Serve. Sent to love all!

Christmas at St. Mark's

Many thanks to everyone who helped December 7 with decorating the church for Advent and Christmas: Clark and Claudette Gilbert, Rich Schnier, Susan Saeugling, Michele and Ryan Gohl, Marcia Daugherty, Randy and Sara Jensen, Toni Sinaga, Paul Brettin, Rose Kvern, Mary Katherine Smith, and Patty Costello. A special thanks to Randy Jensen and Mike Gamel for coming in Friday morning to bring in the boxes from storage as well as hanging the angels and setting up the tree.

Thank you as well to all the volunteers who stayed after worship both December 22 and 29 to help with the installation and subsequent removal of the pew candleholders.

We need volunteers on Saturday, January 11 at 9 a.m. to help with taking down the seasonal decorations for placing in storage.



From the desk of the Director of Youth and Family Ministry

Kinna Nordstrom

On Sunday December 22 our youth had their annual Christmas Party.



OHANA (aka Family) Christmas Eve service was led by our OHANA Youth. We did a non-rehearsal family Christmas pageant, sang LOTS of favorite Christmas songs, had special music from two of our youth, shared in communion, and even hosted a photo booth for families to get a Polaroid and turn it into a Christmas ornament. We pray everyone had a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!



Thank you to everyone who purchased tamales for our OHANA Youth Fundraiser! We made 38 dozen tamales—or 474 tamales to be exact, plus a few extras! We were able to raise nearly \$1,000 for our OHANA Youth programming! Huge thank you to Liliana & Graciela who helped us cook all of the meat and taught us how to prepare the tamales; to Michele Gohl who did all the shopping; and Shannon, Fanus, Fanus’s friend, Mayra Guerrero, and Mary Bourque as our adult leaders. Thank you also for letting us take over the kitchen for a week. We hope you enjoy them, I know I have been enjoying my Rajas (mozzarella and jalapeños).



Fruit Baskets

Many thanks to those who helped with the preparations and assembly of the Christmas fruit baskets given to shut-ins, staff, and members in need of a little cheer.



SMLCW News

Mary Stephenson, President

Our annual Christmas Party was held Saturday, December 7. There were 24 guests present and everyone had a great time. The program was titled “Sweet Christmas”—re-telling the birth of Jesus but depicting the different candies to match the verses. Many thanks to Elaine Stanger who never ceases to amaze me with finding the right program and making all the little party favors to take home. She also provided the raffle bags of gifts so no one went away without this day. Refreshments were provided so everyone enjoyed veggies and sweet treats along with tea, hot cider, or coffee. This is always a fun time to celebrate with our Sisters in Christ. We were very excited to have Colleen Graham join us this day, too. Thank you to all who came, celebrated, and brought donations for the food pantry, gloves, and socks.



Also, many of us bid Patty Costello farewell and safe travels as this was her last time with us. I mentioned in my last article, she has served as our Treasurer for the past few years. We will miss her gift of laughter and help with all our events. Patty is officially an Oklahoman and had her move in day on December 20.

After the party, some of you came up to me to be part of our Board and help in any way. I am ever so grateful for your willingness to help and I will be in contact with you after the holidays.

SMLCW was able to make monetary donations to the following organizations this year: Aurora Mental Health, Comitis, Gateway Battered Women, New Beginnings Church, and Sarah’s Home. We are so blessed to be able to help these very worthy organizations each year.

The next event involving SMLCW will be our annual BAKE SALE set for Sunday, February 9, 2020. You have plenty of notice to dig out those great recipes and start your ovens for baked goods. We set up our sale just outside the library in the Narthex so no one can miss the food items.

It is hard to believe we are saying good-bye to another year/decade and welcoming a new year and the beginning of a new decade. My how days and months fly by. Life is full of changes and so is each New Year. What a gift we receive from God in the form of 365 days (366 this next year) to celebrate. No matter how you choose to spend your days ahead, always know God will walk beside, behind, and ahead of you. Make the most of this gift and don't forget to thank Him!

HAPPY NEW YEAR AND JANUARY BLESSINGS TO ALL!



Council Corner

Council Christmas Party

In place of the regular monthly meeting, the Church Council, along with committee chairs and special guests, gathered together for the annual Christmas party on Tuesday, December 10, 2019. Dinner was enjoyed at The Bent Fork restaurant, and a small white elephant gift exchange that followed the meal provided moments of fun.



Summarized Report of Income and Expenses

Submitted by Bill Stephenson, Treasurer

November, 2019			
Current Month	Amount	Year to Date	Amount
Total Income	\$13,857.00	Total Income	\$165,370.09
Total Expenses	-\$15,556.99	Total Expenses	-\$207,135.14
Net Income	-\$1,699.99	Net Income	-\$30,765.05
BUDGET COMPARISON OF ENVELOPE OFFERING			
Monthly Budget Amount	Actual Current Month	Budget Year to Date	Actual Year to Date
\$13,718.63	\$11,064.00	\$150,904.93	\$122,870.95
Over/Under Budget	-\$2,654.63		-\$28,033.98

Congregational Meeting Highlights—December 15, 2019

President Gohl opened meeting with Pastor Bev leading a prayer.

Discussion on Transition Team's Report of primary focus for the future:

1. Grow the church and receive new members
2. Get more youth and families involved
3. Continue our outreach programs: Wed. meals, Aurora Warms the Night, God's Work Our Hand, ESL, ACTS, and food pantry
4. Identified what our body of Christ within this neighborhood should consist of

Financial Health of the Church:

Giving is not keeping up with budget. We are \$30,765 under approved budget from last year. Due to some claims made, the insurance for the church has gone up significantly. Ryan asked people with Thrivent to direct their Choice Dollars to St. Mark's or charity of their choice. The budget will now be published each week in the bulletin and quarterly statements will be given to those who pledge.

In order to cut costs, it was decided to call a 1/2–3/4 time pastor and ask the office manager to work more hours with a raise in pay.

The proposed budget was discussed followed by a silent vote. It was accepted with a vote result of 46 'yes' votes versus six 'no' votes.

Other Business

- Bill Stephenson will be our male representative at the Synod Assembly in 2020.
- Members of the Transition Team were thanked for their service to our congregation in the process of preparing to call a new pastor.
- Members of the Call Committee were introduced and will consist of: Dorie Gerhardt, Norma Duncan, Michele Gohl, Clark Gilbert, and Ken Barger. Ryan will sit in as President of council, and is looking for one or two alternates.
- Council positions reaching term limits are: President, Treasurer, Financial Secretary, Parish Ed, and we still need someone to represent Building and Grounds.
- Shirley Kerezsi, Anne Barger, and Bernette Douin volunteered and were approved to serve as lay members from the congregation on the Nominating Committee. Council will appoint two members more to serve on committee.



Notes from the Office

Text

Mailbag

“Hope this finds you all in good health. I am slow in recovery from my broken foot. I am in a walking boot now. Thanks to God and all your prayers. May you all have a Merry Christmas and Blessed New Year!”

–Dawn Hines and family

“To the Saint Mark’s Lutheran Church family:
May the peace and beauty of the season be with you throughout the year

Thank you my St. Mark’s family for the gifts”

–The Remington Family

Thank you

I appreciated receiving the delicious fruit basket you gave me. That kindness makes me glad to be a member of St. Mark’s family. Thank you so much.

–Terri Gehler

Thank you to those special caring angels for the beautiful fruit baskets we received Christmas. Patrick was so happy to receive one, too. Your caring and generous gifts were greatly appreciated. God bless you all!

–Bill, Mary and Patrick Stephenson

Worship Service Schedule - January 2020

As of time of publication; subject to change

Greeters:

Gil and Rusty Bliss

Lector:

5th & 19th: Mary Katherine Smith

12th & 26th: Name TBD

Ushers

Clark Gilbert

Lou Martell

Kathy Clevenger

Communion Assistants:

Ryan and Tyler/Michele Gohl

Assisting Ministers:

5th: Sara Jensen

12th: Laura Cote’

19th: Name TBD

26th: Name TBD

Weekly Attendance

December 2019

Dec. 1st 81

Dec. 8th 67

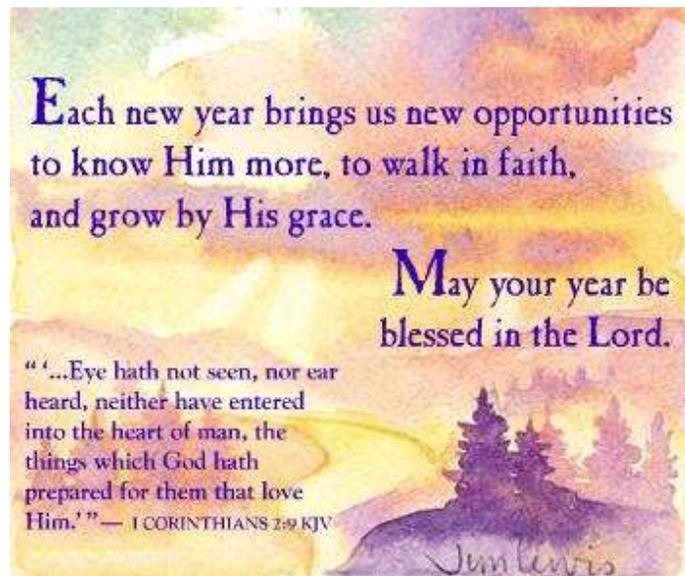
Dec. 15th 86

Dec. 22nd 84

Dec. 24th 5:30 115

Dec. 24th 10:30 68

Dec. 29th not available at press time



WORSHIP LIFE AT ST. MARK'S

January 2020

Sunday, January 5, 2020 ~ Second Sunday of Christmas

Within the gospel reading's profound words lies the simple message that God is revealed in a human person. Though we may try to understand how the Word existed with God from the beginning of time, the wonder we celebrate at Christmas is that the Word continues to dwell among us. Christ comes among us in the gathered assembly, the scriptures, the waters of new birth, and the bread and the wine. Through these ordinary gifts we receive the fullness of God's grace and truth.

Sunday, January 12, 2020 ~ Baptism of Our Lord

** Second Sunday of the month – food collection for St. Mark's Pantry and Aurora Interfaith Community Services*

In the waters of the Jordan, Jesus is revealed as the beloved Son of God. Through this great epiphany, Jesus fulfills all righteousness and becomes the servant of God who will bring forth justice and be a light to the nations. In the waters of baptism we too are washed by the Word, anointed by the Spirit, and named God's beloved children. Our baptismal mission is to proclaim good news to all who are oppressed or in need of God's healing.

Sunday, January 19, 2020 ~ Second Sunday after Epiphany

Today's gospel opens with further reflection on Jesus' baptism. He is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world and the one anointed by the Spirit. In the liturgy we come and see Christ revealed among us in word and meal. We go forth to invite others to come and worship the Holy One and to receive the gifts of grace and peace made known among us.

Sunday, January 26, 2020 ~ Third Sunday after Epiphany

Jesus begins his public ministry by calling fishers to leave their nets and follow him. In Jesus the kingdom of God has come near. We who have walked in darkness have seen a great light. We see this light most profoundly in the cross—as God suffers with us and all who are oppressed by sickness, sin, or evil. Light dawns for us as we gather around the word, the font, and the holy table. We are then sent to share the good news that others may be “caught” in the net of God's grace and mercy.



Happy Birthday!

January 1	Angel Black	January 16	Irene Seelmeyer Shiloh Lopeman
January 2	Marlis Feller Sandra Gonzalez-Tapia	January 19	Hannelore Moore
January 4	George Devers	January 20	Robert Gehler
January 5	Sara Jensen	January 22	Angela (Watson) Hunman
January 6	Anderson Sinaga	January 24	Alexis Tzenov
January 8	Velma Larson Palma Kruger	January 25	Phyllis Wilkey
January 13	Dominic Hunman	January 27	Bertha Krull
		February 3	Bernette Douin Mayra Guerrero

Please Keep in Your Prayers

We welcome your requests for prayers for persons in need or prayers of thanksgiving for blessings received. Please note that prayer requests will remain on the list for four Sundays; a request may be extended by contacting the church office.

Recent hospitalizations, illnesses, and concerns:

Ellie Weaver (*breast cancer*)
Esther Rusk (*home hospice*)
Gene Hesse (*Joan Gustafson's son-in-law, infected surgery wound*)
Ricky Shaw (*upcoming surgery*)
Doug Benson (*hospitalized for infection, kidney monitoring*)

For the faithful departed and those who mourn:

Family of Warren Benson (*Doug Benson's brother*)

For those diagnosed with cancer or long-term illness:

Reid Shea and family (*friends of Mary Katherine Smith, lymphoma lung cancer*)
Charlie Robertson and family (*friends of Chelsea Thompson*)
Jeannie Blom (*former member, eye infection*)
Vernita Wild (*recovery from fall injuries*)
Susan Saeugling (*digestive system issues*)
Chuck Martell, II (*Lou and Bubbles' son, heart issues*)
Virginia Martell (*Chuck's wife, Alzheimer's*)
Jean (*Jackie Kirk's sister, cancer*)
Lisa Wild (*friend of Patty Costello, kidney cancer*)
Cindy Lenzen (*Doris Seline's daughter, health*)
Doreen Goldsberry (*Doris Seline's daughter, breast cancer*)
Isaiah Daniels (*Ollie Daniels' grandson, deployed to Kuwait*)
Darrell Hesselius (*incurable health problem*)
Brian Hodgson (*health*)
Sandy Day (*health*)

For homebound members and friends:

Colleen Graham Lillian Ripper
Arlene Selk Clare Pankratz
Mark Heflin Gerry Redlin
George Devers
Don Snook and Trish Kulp

Jeff (*Hugo Redlin's son, health*)
Jeff Martin (*health*)
Rick Parsons (*friend of Diana Ratliff, cancer*)
Christine Slape (*friend of Brian Hodgson, cancer recurrence*)
Cogie Elzea (*sister of Sara Jensen, health*)
Kevin Dominguez (*son of Mary Ann Dominguez, health issues*)
Luci Stephenson (*Bill Stephenson's mother, health concerns*)
Ollie Daniels (*pain and breathing problems*)
Vivian Ryden (*Anne Barger's mother*)
Sally Lynch (*breathing issues*)
Marie Calaway (*mother of Karen Arensen, in hospice care*)
Ann Howell (*cancer maintenance treatments*)
Patrick Stephenson (*cancer maintenance*)
Nancy (*sister of Dorie Gerhardt, health*)
Roxanne Knutson (*serious pain*)
Jim Ekberg (*cousin of Chris Elbert, health*)

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If you wish to change how you receive our monthly newsletter *The Messenger*—whether it is via email or hard copy (either by picking up at the church or by receipt in the postal mail system)—please email admin@stmarksaurora.org or call the church office 303-366-9702.

**January 2020
 Highlights**

- 1st New Year's Day
Office Closed
- 9th ESL Classes resume
- 14th Council Meeting
- 20th Martin Luther King Jr. Day

**St. Mark's Council
 Members**

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| Ryan Gohl—President | OPEN—Building/Grounds |
| Bill Stephenson—Treasurer | Shannon Walsh-Vermaas—Youth |
| Patty Costello—Financial Secretary | Dorie Gerhardt—Parish Ed/Women |
| Ellie Weaver—Secretary | Terri Maniscalco—Stewardship |
| Claudette Gilbert—Social Concerns/ Fellowship | |