



The Messenger

VOL. LXII, ISSUE IV

St. Mark's Lutheran Church

April 2020

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

Virtual Worship

With the closing of St. Mark's worship services and gatherings on Saturday, March 14, we entered a new chapter of our congregation's life together where we gather online since we cannot be together in person. As of press-time, we have had two Lenten Wednesday and two Sunday virtual worship services. Many thanks to Kinna for becoming our "Zoom guru" and helping many of us with our first experiences in using this online meeting tool.

Given the guidelines from the Office of the Bishop in the Rocky Mountain Synod for ELCA churches in our synod to close through at least May 10, plus government "Safer at Home" orders through at least part if not all of April, we are planning for more virtual worship services for Holy Week, Easter, and other Sundays in April and May. Those who have provided their email to the church office will receive an email with information on each specific virtual worship service. You can also refer to our website's Virtual Worship page at <https://www.stmarksaurora.org/2020-virtual-worship.html> for up-to-date information on both upcoming and past virtual worship services or call the church office for information.

Palms for Palm Sunday

Our palms order arrived, so members who wish to have a few palms for use at home as part of our virtual worship service at 10 a.m. on Palm Sunday, April 5 may pick up a small bunch from the church on Friday, April 3 between 11 a.m.–1 p.m. *Please contact the church office to make other arrangements if you are not able to drive by during those hours.*

You can also print and color your own palm frond from <https://bit.ly/PalmSheet>



A Brief Guide to Joining Our Sunday Virtual Worship on Zoom:

On either your computer or your Internet-enabled device (i.e., smartphone or tablet), go to zoom.com. You can sign up for a free account but you are not obligated to. If prompted to download a software app, accept and allow it to download and install before you open it. If prompted, enter Meeting ID# 389 867 134 to be taken to our Sunday Virtual Worship meeting. This will be the same ID# for each Sunday through May 3, 2020 with the worship to begin at 10 a.m. MDT.

Those who do not have Internet connection can also listen in by calling one of a number of long-distance phone numbers, such as 1-346-248-7799 (Houston) or 1-669-900-6833 (San Jose); enter the meeting ID# when prompted to be join the meeting.

From the Desk of Pastor Ken Thurow

A Lot of Things Used to be ROUTINE!

Do you remember routines? Well, of course we still have an abundance of routines, but I've been encountering a lot of disrupted routines. Those of you who were at worship (via ZOOM) on Sunday are aware of my embarrassing liturgical goof. I realized later that liturgy involves not only responses and texts, but that those things are connected to space and movement, as from altar to my chancel seat to pulpit and communion rail. On Sunday I realized how connected liturgy is to movement – it used to be routine!

The coronavirus/COVID-19 crisis is extremely serious. The U.S., with about 5% of the world's population, has above 20% of the world's cases, and nearly 10% of the deaths. The measures to control the spread are necessarily stringent – “social distancing,” businesses and places of public gathering closed for an indefinite period, stay at home, shop online or carry-out, avoid unnecessary travel. It is a crisis that has brought grief to people we know. We pray for comfort for the victims and for continued health for ourselves and loved ones.

The coronavirus has meant more time at home (good), less time in traffic (also good), but also physical distancing (not good), more time connecting by means of technology (mixed)—which seems efficient and yet feels more demanding and stressful than just old-fashioned talking (not good). Okay, I know my age gets into my views of technology, so let's just stick with that thought of routines interrupted; such things as buying groceries, connecting with friends, a stop at Starbucks, eating out for lunch and dinner, and – of course – CHURCH!

But I've always been fond of a line in the hymn “Once to Every Man and Nation.” The line is, “new occasions teach new duties.” Our lives are always lived in response to specific situations. Many of us have moved from the area of our childhood, most of our ancestors left homelands, Israelites lived in Exile in Babylon, Hebrews left Egypt and spent years in the wilderness. It's an old story. At this time we may be waiting for the crisis to end and routines to return, but they may not, not in the same way. But whatever the course of this crisis, the church will still gather for worship, faith will live on, and promises of God will not fail.

To be sure, this Holy Week, this Easter will be unlike any we have experienced, but even now we will worship, remembering our Lord's Passion and rejoicing at his

Resurrection. We will hear the gospel and will celebrate Holy Communion in a way we have never known before. But be sure of this, if God can be with the church throughout the world, God can certainly be with the church in and around Aurora! That is YOU, people of St. Mark's, people of the cross, people of new life and hope. The good news and the meal are FOR YOU!

Holy Communion

After a Zoom meeting hosted by the Rocky Mountain Synod with more than 100 pastors participating, and after review by St. Mark's Church Council, we have decided to again include the Sacrament of Holy Communion in our Sunday services, as well as on Maundy Thursday. The pastors who took part in the Synod conversation hold a variety of views, including the view held by a good number that technology does create community where people are gathered in a live service, making celebration of the Sacrament appropriate.

The PROCEDURE: Members who wish to receive the Sacrament must have the same elements used at the church: bread and either wine or grape juice. The bread may be of any type, made with any kind of grain, unleavened or leavened, and would include such items as crackers or tortillas. The “beverage,” however, must be either wine or grape juice – not apple, tomato, etc. The elements should be made ready in your home before worship.

We will speak the Communion liturgy, using either the Eucharistic Prayer or the simple “Words of Institution.” After the Lord's Prayer the pastor will direct you to receive the Sacrament. Members of couples or families may serve each other; persons in one-person households may serve themselves. Though this might seem strange, it was standard practice for pastors to serve themselves back in the time when I was first ordained when most Lutheran worship did not include lay leadership (such as Assisting Ministers or Lectors).

If you do not have the elements, refrain from substitution, but wait until you have the elements or let the Church Office know that you need them. As we repeat again and again, the body and blood of Christ, under forms of bread and wine, are FOR YOU! We are happy to again be able to offer the Sacrament.

Pastor Ken Thurow

From the desk of the Director of Youth and Family Ministry

Kinna Nordstrom

Peace and healing to all! I'm sitting at my desk at home, staring out the window, longing for an adventure. At the same time, I remind myself that we are in the "Holy Saturday" of this pandemic, waiting for the resurrection, the new life post pandemic. I pray everyone is staying home and staying safe and well. I grieve with you at the loss of physical connection with family and friends. A couple of my friends with immunodeficiency disorders have to work to survive and are terrified of getting COVID-19, and I have a friend who just contracted the virus. It's a scary time, a time for the younger healthy folks to practice empathy for the most vulnerable, a time for physical distancing, a time for listening to the Holy Spirit as she speaks us into a new reality of being community.

OHANA Youth has begun this journey by purchasing an account for a video conference tool called Zoom, which we have also shared with the congregation to be able to worship online together. Our youth have met at least twice a week over Zoom since our weekend camp was canceled March 13–15 due to social distancing. They have loved being able to see their friends, play virtual games, and check-in through these trying times. We are able to do OHANA Chapel (Sunday School) and Affirmation of Baptism class over Zoom as well. One Sunday, we were on Zoom together for over three hours, when I finally had to kick them off so I could go do other things. I encourage them to stay connected though, and use other free video conferencing tools.



We appreciate your prayers for all of our families, as well as all of St. Mark's community, Colorado, the US, and the world as we navigate these new and hard times. I have some families who are struggling more than others with financial difficulties, not being able to work, and a dad with an immunodeficiency disorder. There hasn't been an immediate need that I can respond to yet, but I am checking in with them weekly. I hope we are all taking time to connect with our neighbors, friends, family, and St. Mark's community so we can continue to be a beacon of hope for one another.

In love and gratitude!
—Kinna Kemp



In lieu of our annual Easter Breakfast Fundraiser, the OHANA Youth Committee is making Easter Care Packages for our OHANA Youth and Families in need. If you would like to donate to help us with this effort, please make checks out to St. Mark's Luther League, or you can donate via

Paypal (<https://www.paypal.me/ohanayouth>) or
Square (<https://squareup.com/store/ohana-youth-ministry>).

Please mail checks to Kinna's home during this quarantine period: 8225 Fairmount Dr Unit 1-202, Denver, CO 80247

Generosity and Our Life Together

Beloved in the Rocky Mountain Synod,

ELCA Presiding Bishop, Elizabeth Eaton, said at our Churchwide Assembly in August: “We are not a dying church. We are a changing church.” The threat of COVID-19 has pushed the church into an unsettling place of change over the last several weeks. Suddenly, we understand that “church” does not mean “building.” It means people. And we are connecting in ways never before imagined.

Because of COVID-19, we are grieving what we treasure most as church: gathering together as the embodied people of God, who are the hands and feet and voices of Christ, made alive in the world. We long for the time when we can gather together again to sing, and to pray, and to embrace as people who genuinely greet one another with the peace and presence of Christ.

Yet this we already know: that the church remains vital and alive, even while our buildings are silent. We are, all the more, *better together*.

As people of faith, what might it mean to practice generosity in the midst of a pandemic? As a synod team, we acknowledge that the uncertainty of this time may impact your household’s capacity to give financially to your congregation. We also know the ministries in our synod will continue and need our continued support. Our Rocky Mountain Synod Executive Committee has made a commitment to continuing their generosity through regular giving to their congregation. Monetary giving is one of many ways to practice generosity. Prayer, spiritual practice, and extending care to others in appropriate ways are all important expressions of faithful stewardship.

Indeed, ministry is continuing through your congregation in spite of the challenges posed by COVID-19. Your church and synod leaders are acting in faithful, innovative ways every day as they discern how best to support the needs of the community and the wider world. Your financial gifts make possible the important work that will continue happening through all three expressions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (congregations, synods and churchwide) as well as through an abundance of ministry partners. The Gospel is still being proclaimed in many and various ways during this pandemic.

Please identify one of the following means through which you can facilitate continued generosity at any level in your ministry context.

1. **Mail a check to your congregation on a consistent basis.**
2. **Contact your bank to set-up automatic financial giving that comes out of your banking account and is mailed to your congregation on a regular basis.**
3. **Connect with your church leaders and request that online giving be an option.**

We do not know how long the threat of COVID-19 will interfere with our ability to gather together in person. But we do know that Christ is present nevertheless: yesterday, today, and forever. As you live out these challenging times that are marked by grief for what has been, be gentle with yourself as you embrace the gifts of grace and gratitude that are already ours.

In faith,

Bishop Jim Gonia
Earline Bohling, Synod Vice President

Council Corner

Council Highlights—March 10, 2020

President Gohl opened the meeting at 5:50 p.m. with a prayer. Pastor Ken was absent. Mary Katherine attended as a guest and Worship Chairperson.

Secretary, Treasurer, and Financial Secretary reports were reviewed and approved. Bill will look for a better quote for insurance on the church.

Pastor's Report

Pastor Ken has been visiting and taking communion to our members on the “pastoral care” list. He asks council to think of where an unchanged future leads and where changes can be envisioned.

Youth and Family Ministries

Council reviewed Kinna's printed report. She asked to host two youth groups from Other+Wise this summer at St. Mark's: 1. June 13–19 and 2. July 11–17. Council agreed to host both groups.

New Business:

The funding for ESL classes has run out, leaving St. Mark's with a deficit of \$400. Aliria Bello has been offered continued use of church if she can find funding elsewhere.

A request to have a late summer wedding at St. Mark's was approved.

Request for Wompost to place a compost bin in our parking lot for neighborhood use was denied.

President's Report

The door at the top of the education wing has been broken. Bids to replace it with a steel door and frame that will hold up better than the existing wooden door and frame are about \$4500. Ryan will ask some members of the congregation to help with replacement.

Roof repairs at the top of the stairs in the education wing have been completed. We are waiting for the bill.

Council discussed ways to address COVID-19 in our worship services and gatherings. Mary Katherine passed out a report on what churches can do to keep everyone safe. [**Note:** This was before services and gatherings were cancelled later in the week.]

Meeting ended with the Lord's Prayer.

Summarized Report of Income and Expenses

Submitted by Bill Stephenson, Treasurer

February, 2020			
<u>Current Month</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Year to Date</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Total Income	\$12,551.17	Total Income	\$22,881.21
Total Expenses	-\$15,730.53	Total Expenses	-\$25,893.20
Net Income	-\$3,179.36	Net Income	-\$3,011.99
BUDGET COMPARISON OF ENVELOPE OFFERING			
<u>Monthly Budget Amount</u>	<u>Actual Current Month</u>	<u>Budget Year to Date</u>	<u>Actual Year to Date</u>
\$13,941.05	\$10,644.99	\$27,882.10	\$20,399.98
Over/Under Budget	-\$3,296.06		-\$7,482.12

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:

Colleen Graham (*broken wrist*)
Robert Benson (*Doug's brother, COVID-19 patient*)
Andrea Stephenson and family (*daughter-in-law of Bill and Mary; passing of her father*)
Dorothy Parker (*injured in a fall*)
Sara (*Sandy Day's great niece, recovering from brain (benign) tumor surgery*)

For homebound members and friends:

Gil Bliss George Devers
Colleen Graham Mark Heflin
James and Marie Hughes
Les and Diana Ortt
Palma Kruger Clare Pankratz
Gerry Redlin Daphne Remington
Lillian Ripper Arlene Selk
Don Snook and Trish Kulp

For the faithful departed and those who mourn:

Family of Luci Stephenson (*Bill Stephenson's mother*) Family of Jorge Ramos (*Abel's father*)
Family of Emma Beck (*former member*)

For those diagnosed with cancer or long-term illness:

Allie Nicodemus and family
Roxanne Bell (*Sally Lynch's neighbor, cancer*)
Jean Rose (*back pain*)
Ellie Weaver (*breast cancer*)
Esther Rusk (*home hospice*)
Reid Shea and family (*friends of Mary Katherine Smith, lymphoma lung cancer*)
Charlie Robertson and family (*friends of Chelsea Thompson*)
Ricky Shaw (*surgery*)
Jeannie Blom (*former member, eye infection*)
Susan Saeugling (*digestive system issues*)
Chuck Martell, II (*Lou and Bubbles' son, heart issues*)
Virginia Martell (*Chuck's wife, Alzheimer's*)
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*)
Jean (*Jackie Kirk's sister, cancer*)
Darrell Hesselius (*incurable health problem*)

Brian Hodgson (*health*)
Sandy Day (*health*)
Jeff (*Hugo Redlin's son, health*)
Jeff Martin (*health*)
Rick Parsons (*friend of Diana Ratliff, cancer*)
Christine Slape (*friend of Brian Hodgson, cancer*)
Cogie Elzea (*sister of Sara Jensen, health*)
Kevin Dominguez (*son of Mary Ann Dominguez, health issues*)
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*)
Doug Benson (*health, dialysis*)
Nancy (*sister of Dorie Gerhardt, health*)
Roxanne Knutson (*serious pain*)
Jim Ekberg (*cousin of Chris Elbert, health*)

Dear Pastor Thurow and the people of St. Mark's Lutheran,

Thank you for your donation in the amount of \$200 to New Beginnings Worshipping Community in January of this year. Your annual gift makes a significant contribution to the ongoing sustainability of this unique ministry.

We are grateful to our long-standing partnership in ministry. St. Mark's has been a blessing to New Beginnings in myriad ways for as long as I know.

Perhaps a group from the congregation might consider visiting us for Friday evening worship. If so, please speak to Mary Katherine. She will pass the message on to me. We would love to have you in our midst!

Thank you again.

Peace and hope,
Pastor Terry Schjang



Community News

Call Committee Update:

While we are in the midst of social distancing, the Call Committee has been holding meetings and has also conducted three candidate interviews virtually through Zoom. A big thank you to the committee for adapting to our new meetings, and to Kinna for helping us get set up through Zoom! None of this would have been possible without the cooperation and help of others.

Please keep the Call Committee in prayer as we continue through this journey.

ESL Classes

The grant funding for the ESL classes has run out. Therefore, we will be cancelling classes until further notice.

Thank you

Three cheers for the individuals that contributed to God's Work Our Hands (GWOH) by making casseroles for Aurora Warms the Night to feed people that are provided temporary shelter at area hotels during adverse weather conditions. We will have another opportunity to participate in GWOH at a later date.

- Bernette Douin
- Rose Kvern
- Elaine Stanger
- Ellie Weaver
- Susan Whitcomb

Claudette Gilbert
Social Concerns

Quarterly Devotional Booklets

The April-May-June quarterly issue of *Christ in Our Home* devotional booklets have come in. If you ordinarily pick up a copy to use at home and would like one mailed to you, please notify the church office.



Changes to Synod Assembly

The RMS Council voted to move the planned five-location regional assembly to an all-digital format. Instead of gathering for two days of business, worship, and programming, the synod will gather individually via Zoom for a half-day assembly that will still include many of those elements.

What does this mean? Great question!

Date: Saturday, May 2 only

Time: TBD. Approximately 8:30 a.m.– noon

Location: Zoom

Agenda

- Worship and morning prayer
- Passing the 2020–2021 Budgets
- Approving updates to the RMS Constitution
- State of the Synod from Bishop Gonia
- Keynote Address and other programming, TBD!

Registration

Registration for visitors will be \$25. Registration information can be found here:

<https://www.rmselca.org/registration/>.

Registration deadline is now April 14, with a payment deadline of April 21.

Our voting members, Bill Stephenson and Pastor Ken, are already registered; anyone else from our congregation may register on their own to participate as a visitor if they are interested.

WORSHIP LIFE AT ST. MARK'S

April 2020

All worship services in April will be "virtual" online services on Zoom. Sundays' meeting ID#389 867 134 will be the same each week; Maundy Thursday and Good Friday services' meeting IDs will be emailed once they are scheduled.

Sunday, April 5, 2020 ~ Palm Sunday

Today, we encounter the paradox that defines our faith: Jesus Christ is glorified king and humiliated servant. We too are full of paradox: like Peter, we fervently desire to follow Christ, but find ourselves afraid, denying God. We wave palms in celebration today as Christ comes into our midst, and we follow with trepidation as his path leads to death on the cross. Amid it all we are invited into this paradoxical promise of life through Christ's broken body and outpoured love in a meal of bread and wine. We begin this week that stands at the center of the church year, anticipating the completion of God's astounding work.

Maundy Thursday, April 9, 2020

This evening our Lenten observance comes to an end, and we gather with Christians around the world to celebrate the Three Days of Jesus' death and resurrection. Tonight we remember Christ's last meal with his disciples, but the central focus is his commandment that we live out the promise embodied in this meal. As Jesus washed his disciples' feet, so we are called to give and receive love in humble service to one another. Formed into a new body in Christ through this holy meal, we are transformed by the mercy we have received and carry it into the world. Departing worship in solemn silence, we anticipate the coming days.

Good Friday, April 10, 2020

Life and death stand side by side as we enter into Good Friday. In John's passion account, Jesus reveals the power and glory of God, even as he is put on trial and sentenced to death. Standing with the disciples at the foot of the cross, we pray for the whole world in the ancient bidding prayer, as Christ's death offers life to all. We gather in solemn devotion, but always with the promise that the tree around which we assemble is indeed a tree of life. We depart silently, and we anticipate the culmination of the Three Days in the Easter Vigil.

Sunday, April 12, 2020 ~ Easter

This is the day the Lord has made! Christ is risen, and through him all creation is made new! Indeed, "God shows no partiality" (Acts 10:34): Christ's resurrection truly brings life to everyone. We sing hymns of praise, gather around sacred words, and proclaim God's faithfulness, power, and love in the feast of holy communion. With the women at the tomb, we are astonished, elated, and grateful. We depart with joy to proclaim the good news of God's endless love.

Weekly Attendance March 2020

March 1 73

March 4
11:30 a.m. 31
6:30 p.m. 16

March 8 71

March 11
11:30 a.m. 29
6:30 p.m. 15

March 15 Cancelled

*All subsequent worship services
were online:*

March 18
3:00 p.m. 9

March 22 27

March 25
6:30 p.m. 21

March 29 44

Sunday, April 19, 2020 ~ Second Sunday of Easter

In today's gospel the risen Christ appears to the disciples and offers them the gift of peace. Even amid doubts and questions, we experience the resurrection in our Sunday gathering around word and meal, and in our everyday lives. Throughout the coming Sundays of Easter the first two readings will be from the Acts of the Apostles and the first letter of Peter. Even as the early Christians proclaimed the resurrection, we rejoice in the new birth and living hope we receive in baptism.

Sunday, April 26, 2020 ~ Third Sunday of Easter

Today's gospel begins with two disciples walking to Emmaus, overcome with sadness, loss, and disappointment. They had hoped Jesus, who was crucified, would be the one to redeem Israel! Yet the risen Christ walks with them and then opens their eyes in the breaking of the bread. Each Sunday our hearts burn within us as the scriptures are proclaimed and Christ appears to us as bread is broken and wine is poured. The story of Emmaus becomes the pattern of our worship each Lord's day.

Happy Birthday!

April 2	Michael Coe	April 18	Andrew Stanger
April 4	Vonita Remington	April 19	Jeffrey "JD" Hines
April 6	Laura Cucinell	April 26	Rebecca Knutson
April 8	Alice Thurlow	April 27	Ann McGinniss
April 10	Richard Schnier	April 28	Fred Nimerichter
April 13	Patrick Stephenson	April 29	Diana Ratliff
April 14	Sara Dayton	May 1	Dawn Hines

Happy Anniversary!

Sonny & Janet Pethan
April 6, 1974

Rod & Karen Burns
April 21, 1963

James & Betty Falk
April 27, 1991

Gary & Sandy Lambert
April 28, 1973



Our food pantry could use fruit cups, pudding cups, pasta, and spaghetti sauce. Please contact the church office before bringing donations to the building to verify that they can be received.

St. Mark's Lutheran Church
111 Del Mar Circle
Aurora, CO 80011



Phone: 303-366-9702

Website: www.stmarksaurora.org

Email: admin@stmarksaurora.org

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

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.

April 2020 Highlights

- 1st Online Lenten worship
- 5th Online Palm Sunday worship
 Zoom Mtg ID #389 867 134
- 9th Online Maundy Thursday
 worship
 Zoom Mtg ID # 659 919 646
- 10th Online Good Friday worship
 Zoom Mtg ID # 630 845 675
- 12th Online Easter Worship
 Zoom Mtg ID #389 867 134
- 14th Online Council Meeting
- 19th Online Sunday Worship
 Zoom Mtg ID #389 867 134
- 26th Online Sunday Worship
 Zoom Mtg ID #389 867 134

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 | |