



The Messenger

VOL. LXII, ISSUE VII

St. Mark's Lutheran Church

Summer Quarter 2020

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

Congratulations and Welcome Pastor Nic Leither



Clockwise from top right: Bishop Jim Gonia, Rev. Reagan Humber, Rev. Asher O'Callaghan, Rev. Harlan Van Oort, Rev. Barb Martens, newly ordained Rev. Nic Leither

The last weekend of June was a busy one for our new Pastor, with his Ordination to the Ministry of Word and Sacrament on Saturday, June 27, and installation at St. Mark's the following afternoon. Due to social distancing concerns, both occasions were shared via livestream for those who could not attend in person. The video from the ordination may be found in searching videos on the Rocky Mountain Synod's Facebook page (at <https://www.facebook.com/rmselca>); the video of the worship service with the installation is posted on the church's web site (at <https://www.stmarksaurora.org/virtual-worship.html>) as well as in the library of videos from the St. Mark's Facebook page (at <https://www.facebook.com/stmarkschurchandpreschool/>).



Rev. Nic Leither with his mother Doree, wife Tamara, and father Jim



On Sunday, Bishop Jim Gonia preached and presided at Pastor Nic's installation from home via Zoom, while a small group met at St. Mark's for the worship service.



When not speaking, attendees at the ordination wore masks in keeping with COVID-19 precautions



From the Desk of Pastor Nic Leither

Dear St. Mark's Family,

I know I have said this before, but the first month here has been a wonderful whirlwind. They said in seminary that ministry in the Church would never look how we expected, and I guess they were right. I never thought that I would start working at a church where most of my contact is via Zoom, I never thought that we would be needing to experiment with new ways to be community together quite this fast, and I never thought I would be drinking my after-church coffee in a mostly empty sanctuary.

But really, it feels like I am getting to know you well, and that our relationships together will forever be different because of this, maybe even stronger. As we press forward, learn new things, and overcome new challenges together with generosity and grace for one another, it feels like our community is getting stronger. I know that it can be stressful and disarming to be away from a place and rhythm you love so much for this long, and I want you to know that I miss that too... but I do think that there is new community happening and flourishing here and that God is moving in new and exciting ways.

Here are SOME of those sightings:

1. In our Tuesday meet and greets it seems like people are learning new things about one another. Not just you all learning about me and me learning about you, but people who have known each other for a long time are spending time with each other and having conversations about their lives and new relationships and friendships are being planted where there was once only acquaintance. If you haven't been to one of these yet, you should try and make it to one. They really are beautiful.
2. We have had some really honest and brave conversations about the lectionary texts after the service is over where we have expressed curiosity about how God's word is alive and speaking to us even today in our current contexts. If you have been a part of this, thank you. It has been a breath of fresh air to me. I encourage you all to stay after the service and chat with us.
3. The beautiful gardens at St. Mark's Park and all around the church. Thank you to all the volunteers who make that space so nice and welcoming. Your work and dedication to that space is an illustration of how much you love your family here. Thank you.
4. Our young people are super involved in doing great things for the Church (with a capitol C). The more I learn about our youth program and the ways that St. Mark's supports this part of our ministry, the more proud I am to be the pastor here. For instance, I just learned that one of our young people MC'd the ELCA Youth Gathering in front of 30,000+ people (A HUGE DEAL)! I am learning more and more about all the ways they are asked to educate other youth about their experience as being young people of color in the church, and specifically in the ELCA, which is the least racially diverse denomination in the country. The work they are doing, which can be vulnerable and exhausting, broadens not only our understanding of Christ, but the whole ELCA's understanding. What they are doing is awesome, and I am already proud of them, so I am sure you are too.

As we move forward together, please be on the look out for more of these God sightings and the ways that we are growing in new and different ways. It can be hard and it might seem like the church is "shut down" but I promise you, as someone who has been on the lookout for God, it is very alive, and still very active.

Peace and Blessings,
Pastor Nic



Meet & Greet Pastor Nic

Each Tuesday Pastor Nic hosts a meet-and-greet event for up to ten members to join him for conversation in St. Mark's Park. The next three events are July 7 at 5:30 p.m., July 14 at 3:30 p.m., and July 21 at 7:30 a.m. Please visit the [sign-up link](#) to register ahead of time or contact the church to be added to the list.



Book Club

In August we are going to start a Book Club in Adult Faith Formation, beginning with the book, *Dear Church: A Love Letter from a Black Pastor to the Whitest Denomination in the US*. I hope that this can be a time where we as a community do some reflecting on our own potential areas of growth and that it can be a space of open and honest conversation. You will find the book description below. If you are interested, and would like to put an order in through the church, please let us know by RSVPing and we will put in a group order. Our first day with the book will be August 9. We will place our group order July 21. Please join, I am really looking forward to it.



Lenny Duncan is the unlikeliest of pastors. Formerly incarcerated, he is now a black preacher in the whitest denomination in the United States: the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). Shifting demographics and shrinking congregations make all the headlines, but Duncan sees something else at work--drawing a direct line between the church's lack of diversity and the church's lack of vitality. The problems the ELCA faces are theological, not sociological. But so are the answers.

Part manifesto, part confession, and all love letter, *Dear Church* offers a bold new vision for the future of Duncan's denomination and the broader mainline Christian community of faith. *Dear Church* rejects the narrative of church decline and calls everyone--leaders and laity alike--to the front lines of the church's renewal through racial equality and justice.

It is time for the church to rise up, dust itself off, and take on forces of this world that act against God: whiteness, misogyny, nationalism, homophobia, and economic injustice. Duncan gives a blueprint for the way forward and urges us to follow in the revolutionary path of Jesus.

Coffee, Prayer, and Conversation



We are going to try to do a weekly online prayer and coffee group at 9:30 a.m. Thursday mornings. We will use this Zoom link <https://bit.ly/Coffee-conversation>. There is no need to RSVP for this or anything. I will be in the Zoom meeting prior to 9:30 with what will likely be my second cup of the day. We will visit together, drink some coffee, share what is going on in our lives, and pray for our community as well as each other, and give thanks to God for our many blessings. If you have any feedback about this or would like to be part of the leadership around the prayer group, please let me know.

Peace and Blessings,
Pastor Nic

From the desk of the Director of Youth and Family Ministry

Kinna Nordstrom Kemp

Affirmation of Baptism Final Projects, Part 2

Affirmation of Baptism classes are now finished, and all 11 students have finished their final projects/papers. We are excited to share their projects with you over the next few months. Enjoy!

Santiago Mendia Guerrero – 8th grade

Through all my time of being in the Affirmation of Baptism class I have learned a lot about the story of Jesus and God. I personally enjoyed my time as a student in the class, because I learned a lot. I will be talking about three main things that stood out to me in the class: The Bible, “wilderness school”, and the Ten Commandments.

Let’s talk about the Bible first. What I learned about it was that while not all of the stories in the Bible are 100% real, the message it provides is true. Another thing that I learned about the Bible is that it is recommended to read with others. This is because you can see/hear other people’s points of views. This is important because if we read it by ourselves then we only see things in our perspective, but if we read it with others we see a variety of things in the Bible.

Now let’s talk about “wilderness school.” The school taught the Hebrews how to live with each other and with God after being freed from the Pharaoh’s rule. Three main things that they learned about were: hoarding stinks, “the manna way,” and the gift of sabbath. First of all God gave the people in wilderness school manna, which was like their daily bread. When they tried to hoard the bread it would rot, which taught them that they needed to trust God. The manna way taught people that there is enough manna for everyone. Finally, the gift of sabbath gave the people a day to rest.

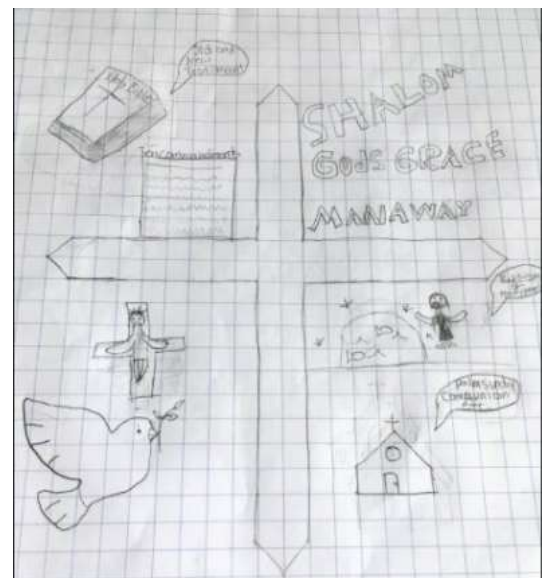
The last thing that I want to talk about is the Ten Commandments and why they are what they are. The Ten Commandments are a gift that teaches us how to live with one another and with God. The Ten Commandments are very important because if they didn’t exist everything would be chaos. God gave the Ten Commandments to Moses for him to teach others. They can be found in the Small Catechism, written by Martin Luther.

The Affirmation of Baptism class taught me a lot throughout my time there. It taught me about the Bible, “wilderness school”, and the Ten Commandments. It also showed us how it was back in the time when Jesus was alive. In general, the class taught me why we are who we are today as Lutherans.

Rolando Ferrufino – 7th grade

For my Affirmation of Baptism project, I drew the Bible and the Ten Commandments because we read stories from the Bible and because I think the Ten Commandments are the principles of life. I also wrote shalom, God's grace, and Manna Way because they are important words that I learned from the stories we read. Shalom means peace, grace is a gift given freely by God, and Manna Way means “everyone has enough.”

I drew Jesus on the cross because I learned Jesus died on the cross for committing sedition. Three days later he resurrected to show us that death doesn't get the last word. I learned that the dove represents peace, a messenger, and the Holy Spirit. I also drew a little pond because it was part of a story when everyone was getting baptized. Finally I drew a church because I learned about it and Palm Sunday, Good Friday, communion, prayer, etc. Palm Sunday is the Sunday before Easter and when Jesus



entered Jerusalem on a donkey. Good Friday is the day of Jesus' crucifixion. Communion is when we take and eat a piece of Jesus' blood and body (wine and bread) in the remembrance of Him. Prayer during worship is a conversation with God.

Azael Muñiz – 6th grade

In this essay I will talk about what I learned in Affirmation of Baptism. In Affirmation of Baptism we read a book called "Manna and Mercy" in which there is a recurring theme. We are all human and we are all equal. It talks about how there are little deals and big deals and how that is just another way to keep the people at the bottom down and to discriminate. The book also talks about how we should be generous and how we as humans are not always capable of that.

Throughout Affirmation of Baptism class we also talked about grace. What about grace? What is grace? Grace is the forgiveness of sins. It is also a free gift, one we don't have to seek. God gives it to us for free and we should be grateful. God gives it to us for free because He knows that the people do not have the power to forgive sins, and because God will always love you no matter what you do.

We also learned about perspective and how we must read and study the Bible with other people. We must study the Bible with other people because we all have gone through different things. This means that we see things differently and we can see the stories in the Bible differently. This is good because when we understand different views, it can add more depth to the Bible stories.

I've also learned that faith doesn't only mean to believe in God, but to also understand why Jesus died for us. The way he died was by crucifixion, which means he was hung up on a cross to die. He was crucified with charges of sedition because he was breaking the Jewish law. Jesus came to the earth to take our sins so we could be forgiven and to show that death does not have the final word.

We also learned about how we should be humble and how we should share the good things in life. We should not put ourselves on a pedestal and believe ourselves better than anyone. We should be willing to share everything we own and to understand that nothing is ours. It is God's.

Ellie Bourque – 5th grade



What I learned in Affirmation Of Baptism class is that there is nothing I can do to stop God's love for me. AOB class was a way for me to understand communion, the Bible, and baptism. In order to take communion in some churches, you have to have a membership at the church or if you haven't confessed in a long time you can't take communion. At our church we give it to anyone who wants it. Martin Luther couldn't even admit to all his sins and when he tried the priest kicked him out of confession.

I also learned that the Bible is true even though not all the stories actually happened. Genesis is the first book of the Bible and it's the story of creation. The book of Revelation is the last book in the Bible. It is not about our future but it was predicting the fall of the Roman Empire. In the New Testament the Roman Empire is the oppressor during Jesus's life. They crucified Jesus, and they put people in jail for just telling the truth.

"Baptism is an individual's incorporation into the crucified and risen body of Jesus. It is symbolic of God's love for all and provides a sense of comfort and assurance that all are saved from sin in the name of Jesus Christ." We learned that it's a choice to get baptized and there is no one forcing you. Also, you can be any age to be baptized. I also learned that we are both Saints and Sinners at the same time. I cannot wait to affirm my baptism.

Carlos Ferrufino – 11th grade

I'm Carlos Ferrufino and this is my Affirmation of Baptism essay. I'll explain what I learned from four different stories.

The first story is when Jesus died on the cross. I learned from this story that he died to forgive us from our sins. Also to show us that God has our backs no matter what. And that no matter what type of sin you do you'll be forgiven but you'll still be punished. The way this has changed me is that I'm trying to make better choices and realize how my choices affect the people around me.

The next one is the Ten Commandments. The Ten Commandments were given to Moses when he freed the slaves from Pharaoh. I learned that God made the Ten Commandments so each person loves their neighbor as God loves us. They were also made to show us how to love God and respect God. The Ten Commandments have helped me to care for other people.

The third one is the church. I learned that in a church you do these five things: hear the gospel, take communion, read scripture, pray, and offer gifts to God and the community. I also learned that for communion you don't need to have done your baptism to take communion. People are able to take communion because it is a gift from God. I have also felt that the church is a place to connect with God and talk to him even though you can connect with God anywhere

The last story is Jesus's baptism. I learned that Jesus wanted to show people that he was the Son of God and to show the start of his ministry through being baptized. I also learned that getting baptized symbolizes admission and being reborn. It also showed how dedicated he was to show people that God was real and that He loves us.

In conclusion, I learned that God loves you no matter what and He is always there for you. The stories that were made are to understand Him and to see the reality of things. But he also teaches us that life is precious and not to take it for granted. I know that no matter what type of doubts or questions I have of God, He will still love me.



<https://www.mealtrain.com/trains/z1k1le>

If you wish to drop off a gift after Sunday, you may at the church, we will see that it is directed to the family.

Community News

Thank You

Thank you, dear people of St. Mark's, for your prayers for healing and expressions of support following our June 6 car accident. Robert's bumps and bruises are shrinking and fading. My arm will be in the sling for a few more weeks while the fractures heal. Neil and Rose have been so helpful and supportive during this healing time. Thanks be to God for the prayers, for helpful family and friends, and for injuries that weren't more serious. God is good!
—Lyn Goodrum

Directory Updates

Congratulations to our Luke Balsley on moving into a new place! Please update your directory to reflect that his new address is:
2675 S Danube Way, Unit 103
Aurora CO 80013

Please submit any corrections, updates, or additions to your contact information to the office by either calling 303-366-9702 or e-mailing them to: admin@StMarksAurora.org.

Update on Peaches

Regrettably, the Aurora Kiwanis Foundation of Colorado has announced that they will not be able to hold their annual peach sale this summer due to April frost that wiped out most of the western Colorado peach blossoms.

Given the annual peach sale is their largest fundraiser for their college scholarship fund, as well as due to the coronavirus, they have had to scale back the number of scholarships they could offer this year. Last year they awarded eight \$1,500 scholarships; this year, they could only offer five.

As they are committed to once again offering eight \$1,500 scholarships for 2021, they are in need of donations to their Foundation's Scholarship Fund in lieu of the peaches sale to help with funding. The donation is tax-deductible.

If you are willing to make a \$10 or \$15 contribution, there are two convenient ways to make this donation:

1. Write a check to The Aurora Kiwanis Foundation and mail it to PO Box 44174, Aurora, CO 80044-1774
2. Go to <https://aurora-co.kiwanisone.org/Page/48784> and follow the directions to enter your credit card information.

A special thanks to Dave Heflin for his efforts to facilitate St. Mark's members participation in past sales and sharing the word of this year's efforts, and thank you to all of you for your past support with peach sales.



Summer Worship Helpers

If you are interested in serving as a lector or assistant minister for any of our online worship services this summer, please contact the church office or visit <https://bit.ly/2020-Summer-Worship-Help>. Your help is greatly appreciated.

Weekly Attendance June 2020

June 7 th	74
June 14 th	59
June 21 st	60
June 28 th	80

Council Corner

Council Highlights—June 9, 2020

President Gohl called the meeting to order at 6 p.m. on Zoom. Pastor Nic Leither joined Council for his first meeting and led the opening devotion.

Secretary, Treasurer, and Financial Secretary reports were reviewed and accepted.

President's Report

Ryan will be meeting with Pastor Nic Thursday and before every Council meeting.

Pastor's Report

Pastor Nic has moved into the church office. He has met with Bishop Gonia to set up his Ordination and Installment services. He is working on ways to connect with members of the congregation; either a coffee hour on Zoom or a few small meetings in the park.

Youth and Family Ministries

Kinna has been talking with her youth and parents to find a way to have a safe Summer Camp. The youth are tired of virtual meetings. She has thought of hosting a camp with a few children, possibly different age groups each day. To do this, Kinna will need several volunteers.

Old Business

Discussion on having a Congregational Meeting to change the wording in our Constitution to be able to keep Bill on as Treasurer. This will need to be voted on by the congregation.

The Nominating Committee needs to find volunteers to fill the positions of: President, Secretary, Financial Secretary, and Stewardship Chair.

New Business:

Ken Barger helped Clark and Claudette pick up 1,100 pounds of food from Rocky Mountain Food Bank. St. Mark's is required by RMFB to order 1000 pounds of food twice a year.

Pastor Tyg of Aurora Warms the Night has moved the Shower Trailer to St. Mark's parking lot for the summer. On Wednesday nights it will be open at St. Mark's. In the past the Wednesday night meal crew fed the truck workers along with our guests. Since we do not have enough people able to fix meals, Claudette asked if they could hand out brown bag meals in the pavilion.

Council is working on how to safely reopen the church facilities.

Meeting ended with the Lord's Prayer.

Welcome to Baby Finn!

Ron and Terri Maniscalco are overjoyed to share the news that their grandson, Alex Grimes and his wife Ashley, along with their daughter Grace, welcomed their second child, baby boy Finn Theodore on Tuesday, July 7. At 7 pounds, 2 ounces, and 19.5 inches long, baby Finn is strong and healthy, and his mother is doing just fine as well.



Summarized Report of Income and Expenses

Submitted by Bill Stephenson, Treasurer

May, 2020			
Current Month	Amount	Year to Date	Amount
Total Income	\$28,819.99	Total Income	\$83,984.58
Total Expenses	-\$11,828.99	Total Expenses	-\$64,987.59
Net Income	\$16,991.00	Net Income	\$18,996.99
BUDGET COMPARISON OF ENVELOPE OFFERING			
Monthly Budget Amount	Actual Current Month	Budget Year to Date	Actual Year to Date
\$13,941.05	\$10,194.99	\$69,705.25	\$55,716.95
Over/Under Budget	-\$3,746.06		-\$13,988.30
<i>Note: Total Income includes \$17,000.00 from PPP loan.</i>			
<i>The portion above the amount of expenses to be forgiven, if any, will be determined at a later date.</i>			

Fellowship Report

Susan Saeugling, Committee Chair

After church on Sunday, June 14, a small group of members made the drive up to Boulder on a lovely warm afternoon to surprise Pastor Ken Thurow with a car parade outside his house as an informal goodbye celebration to thank him for his ministry at St. Mark's over the past five months. We delivered cards and gifts to him from the congregation and engaged in a few minutes of conversation with Ken and Marlys on their lawn. Thank you to all who contributed and participated in making this occasion special.



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:

Dave Heflin (*hospitalization, lung infection*)
Mark Heflin (*hospitalization*)
Larry Darnall (*Ellie Weaver's brother, home from hospitalization*)
Jeff Gamel (*hospitalization*)

For the faithful departed and those who mourn:

Family of Lucy Flintrop (*Dawn Ramos' mother*)

For those diagnosed with cancer or long-term illness:

Lyn Goodrun and Robert Herbst (*Neil and Rose Kvern's daughter and her friend, car accident*)
Judith Graham (*Quai Barker's mother, cancer*)
Irene Seelmeyer (*dislocated shoulder, rehab*)
Karen Arensen (*July 9 colonoscopy results*)
Chris Prillwitz (*health*)
Susan Saeugling (*employment closing*)
Shelly and Nathan (*family of Sandy Day*)
Fran Carlson (*former member, congenital heart failure*)
Allie Nicodemus and family
Jean Rose (*back pain*)
Ellie Weaver (*breast cancer*)
Reid Shea and family (*friends of Mary Katherine Smith, lymphoma lung cancer*)
Charlie Robertson and family (*friends of Chelsea Thompson*)
Chuck Martell, II (*Lou and Bubbles' son, heart issues*)
Virginia Martell (*Chuck's wife, Alzheimer's*)
Lisa Wild (*friend of Patty Costello, kidney cancer*)
Jean (*Jackie Kirk's sister, cancer*)

For homebound members and friends:

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

Cindy Lenzen (*Doris Seline's daughter, health*)
Isaiah Daniels (*Ollie Daniels' grandson, deployed to Kuwait*)
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*)
Sally Lynch (*breathing issues*)
Ann Howell (*cancer maintenance treatments*)
Patrick Stephenson (*cancer maintenance*)
Doug Benson (*health*)
Nancy (*sister of Dorie Gerhardt, health*)
Roxanne Knutson (*serious pain*)
Jim Ekberg (*cousin of Chris Elbert, health*)

WORSHIP LIFE AT ST. MARK'S

Worship Online via Zoom

Sunday worship services through at least August will be online via the Zoom platform, at 10:00 a.m. and found at <https://zoom.us/j/87548596133>. Or enter Meeting ID: 875 4859 6133 and the meeting password: ***** in your computer, phone, or tablet's Zoom app.

You can also call either 1-346-248-7799 (Houston) or 1-669-900-6833 (San Jose) to listen by phone. If prompted for a passcode, enter 061732.

Each Sunday's bulletin is published on Friday and posted on our website at <https://www.stmarksaurora.org/virtual-worship.html>. You can also view video recordings from the past month's worship services from this page.

Happy Birthday!

July

6 Rusty Bliss
7 Rohani Sinaga
Christian Mayta
14 Mary Stephenson
19 Joan Gustafson
23 Matthew Nackowicz
26 Shirley Kerezsi
27 Tyler Gohl

August

2 Diana Ortt
Jean Rose
10 Angel Dominguez
11 Ken Barger
12 Laura Coté
15 Lillian Ripper
Paula Kerezsi
17 Dorothy Parker
David Mackey
19 Mary Crum
21 Genevieve LaBonde
23 Anne Barger
Elias Dominguez
27 Jacqueline Kirk
29 Chris Elbert

September

4 Tommy Lopez
5 Bianca DeLong
8 Brooklyn Worcester
9 Devin Lopeman
10 Terry Hamm
14 Karl Feller
15 Kris Bethscheider
17 Kathy Clevenger
20 Terri Gunther
Teilene Bliss
23 Neil Kvern
Karen Arensen
Chris Prillwitz
25 Karen Burns
26 Ron Maniscalco
27 Carl Stanger
Allie Nicodemus
29 Rod Burns

Photo by Andreas Weiland on Unsplash

Happy Anniversary!

July

Abel & Dawn Ramos
July 4, 1998
Ron & Terri Maniscalco
July 4, 2001
Robert & Marlene Brelsford
July 6, 1963
Lue & Bubbles Martell
July 9, 1983
Sara & Debra Dayton
July 10, 2010
Sergio & Allyson
Dominguez-Bower
July 23, 2012
Gerald & Colleen Graham
July 26, 1953

August

Clark & Claudette Gilbert
August 3, 1968
Robert & Teilene Bliss
August 4, 1996
Ryan & Michele Gohl
August 6, 1994
Neil & Rose Kvern
August 27, 1961
Bill & Mary Stephenson
August 29, 1970

September

Hugo and Gerry Redlin
September 1, 1955



Photo by Ed Robertson on Unsplash

St. Mark's Lutheran Church
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Aurora, CO 80011



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Website: www.stmarksaurora.org

Email: admin@stmarksaurora.org

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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.

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**