**SCHEDULES TO NOTE**

**The Lutheran Hour (Radio)**

 Sunday at 6:00 a.m. KWLM (1340 AM dial)

 7:00 a.m. KBMO (1290 AM dial)

 12:30 p.m. KMRS (1230 AM dial)

**Woman to Woman (Radio)**

 Wednesday 6:00 p.m. KDMA 1460 AM

 Thursday 10:30 a.m. KSDR 92.9 FM

 Sunday 1:00 p.m. KMSD 1510 AM

**Time of Grace Ministry**

Sunday 6:30 a.m. KMSP – Ch. 9

**Lutheran Public Radio** (24/7 Lutheran music/talk)

<http://lutheranpublicradio.org>

**LCMS MISSION STATEMENT**

In grateful response to God’s grace and empowered by the Holy Spirit through Word and Sacraments, the mission of the LCMS is vigorously to make known the love of Christ by word and deed within our churches, communities and the world.

**MISSION STATEMENT OF THE**

**MN NORTH DISTRICT OF THE LCMS**

The mission of the Minnesota North District of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod is to further the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20) and to assist congregations as Great Commission churches.

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Church Telephone: 320-843-4131

Office e-mail address st.markslcms@centurylink.net

St. Mark’s Website: [www.stmarks-benson.com](http://www.stmarks-benson.com)

Pastor’s Cell Phone: 402-335-7518

Pastor’s Email address: jwolter78@hotmail.com

Sunday Worship Service: 8:00 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.

Sunday School and Adult Bible Study: 9:15 a.m.

Communion Services: The first and second Sundays of the month.

Sunday morning worship services on KBMO Radio (1290 AM) at 9:30 a.m.

**January 2021**

**ELECTION RESULTS**

The Annual Voters Meeting was held on December 13, 2020 and the following individuals were elected:

* Chairman: Gary Weckwerth
* Treasurer: Pam Mansfield
* Finance Secretary: Sandy Fossen
* Finance Board: Staci Ascheman and Yvette

 Rajewsky

* Board of Elders: Darin Vergin, John Huston and Jason Schwendemann
* Board of Trustees: Pat Winters
* Board of Evangelism: Steve Kraft
* Board of Education: “open”
* Head Usher: Kevin Wilts
* Cemetery Committee: Steve Mortenson

Installation of new officers will be on Sunday, January 10th at both services.

**QUILTING GROUP**

The afternoon quilting group will start on Tuesday, January 5th at 1pm. Please join us if you are interested in sewing quilt tops or tying quilts. There is a quilt on the quilting frame if anyone is interested in coming in before January 5th to work on it.

**THANK YOU CARDS**

There are simple "thank you" cards in the back of the church, which can be used to show your appreciation for the "little things" that other members have done to bless you or our church.  One of the most powerful ways of encouraging people to give of their time and talents... is to let them know how much you appreciate it when they do!  Let's continue to build one another up and encourage the loving and faithful service that our fellow saints are rendering to us (and ultimately, to the Lord), by acknowledging their work and thanking them for it!

**SUNDAY WORSHIP**

On Sunday, December 27th and on January 3rd, there will only be one service at 9am. Starting on Sunday, January 10th, we will be going back to two services on Sunday, one at 8am and the other at 10:30 am.

**STATISTICS**

**DEATH: Alvina Amundson -** Born: July 9, 1931

 Passed Away: November 26, 2020

 Funeral Service: December 17, 2020

**JANUARY BIRTHDAYS**

Jan. 2: Benji McGee, Darlene Tolin and Jacob Wolter

Jan. 5: January Szczesniak

Jan. 6: Vincent Birch and Connie Ollendick

Jan/ 7: Alex Amundson and Taylor Babcock

Jan. 8: Adlai Honebrink and Bev Klemm

Jan. 10: Bob Boraas and Hudsyn Schwendemann

Jan. 12: Cody Hammerschmidt and Olivia Vergin

Jan. 13: Jeremy Amundson, Jen Hammerschmidt, Karen Quigley and Wendi Razink

Jan. 14: Lance Mumm and Jed Sherod

Jan. 15: Melissa Wiebold

Jan. 17: Brody Solomon

Jan. 18: Derick Pownell

Jan. 19: Sydney Moe and Jack Solomon Jr.

Jan. 20: Hazel Mumm

Jan. 21: Sharon Gode

Jan. 22: Charlene Waslaski

Jan. 23: Will Sondag

Jan. 24: Rick Birch and Jaclyn Van Lith

Jan. 25: Shannon Schmidt

Jan. 27: Lewis Mansfield and Kyle Schwendemann

Jan. 30: Arianna Hofland and Al Pagel

Jan. 31: Tyler Huettl and Zeb Wolter

**S**

**NEW MAILING ADDRESS**

Starting January 1st, St. Mark’s will longer have a P.O. Box. Please use the following address:

414 15th St. N. Benson, MN 56215

**ANNUAL REPORT**

It is that time of the year again. All organizations are asked to submit their 2020 Annual Report to the church office by January 10th.

**WEATHER ALERTS**

In the event that there is dangerous weather on a Sunday morning, DO NOT assume that we will still have church.  Before taking any unnecessary risks, please check the St. Mark's Facebook page... or call the church office.  Weather related announcements will be posted there.

*The Rev’s Ramblings...*

 “...cast all your anxieties on Him, because He cares for you...” *(1 Peter 5:7)*

My dear friends in Christ, 2020 was a challenging year. There was the Covid virus (obviously), but there was also unrest in many of our cities... and a political season unlike any that we’ve ever known. Over a variety of different issues, neighbors have turned against neighbors, friends have rejected one another, and even families have been divided. On top of all these societal challenges, many people have experienced physical and emotional suffering in their own lives. Some have even had to say goodbye to their loved ones. Would anyone disagree with the statement: that 2020 was one of the worst years ever? I wouldn’t.

Will flipping the calendar... from December to January... fix that? Somehow, I don’t think so. God-willing, the Coronavirus will be a solved issue- such that it won’t have the wide-spread impact that it has had. And the election- for better or worse- is over. But, somehow, I think that we’re in for another challenging year. Perhaps not as bad as 2020... but it will still be full of all kinds of stress and struggles. Of that we can be certain: because we are living in a fallen and corrupt world.

So when tough times come (and they WILL come- in one form or another), what do we do? In Peter’s first letter to persecuted- and scattered- Christians, he told them (*and us*) what to do: “**Cast all your anxieties on Him, for He cares for you**.” We can’t stop trouble from finding us. Sometimes that trouble will be trivial (car trouble, home repair, problems with a teacher / student at school); other times it will be tragic (broken relationships, debilitating conditions, losing someone we love).

In each and every circumstance, the remedy is the same: go to the Lord in prayer. Talk to Him about whatever is causing you any kind of anxiety. There has never been a human being more spiritually perfect than Jesus was. But as strong as He was, He knew that, even He, couldn’t do it alone. That’s why He constantly turned to His Father in prayer. If the King of Kings needed to cast His anxieties on the Father... we certainly don’t have to feel strange about doing it, too.

In fact, He gives Himself to us for that very purpose: so that we can turn to Him at any time... about anything... and receive the comfort and strength that He promises to give us. He doesn’t promise to take our troubles away; but He does promise to help us endure them... and to make them work out- somehow- for our spiritual good.

And when we go to Him, we know that He can sympathize with our troubles. It’s not like trying to explain poverty to a billionaire. As it says in the Book of Hebrews: “**He is not ashamed to call them [His] brothers... For surely it is not angels that He helps, but He helps the offspring of Abraham.**

**Therefore He had to be made like His brothers in every respect, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For because He Himself has suffered when tempted, He is able to help those who are being tempted**.” *(“propitiation” means an “atoning sacrifice” by which forgiveness is received*)

“**Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need**.”

“In every respect, He has been tempted as we are...”. Really? Yes! Jesus knew suffering. At some point in His young life, He had to mourn the death of Joseph, His earthly father. Later He grieved over the death of His friend, Lazarus. His friends often deserted Him (both emotionally and physically). They even turned against Him and betrayed Him. He knew what it felt like to be exhausted... He felt the gnawing pain of hunger... and He suffered some of the worst physical pain that anyone can imagine. He even knew that His death was imminent. And you know what He did in all of those challenging life circumstances? He turned to His Father.

As we prepare to face whatever fresh trials and tribulations will be coming our way, let us never forget: that we have a Friend who knows what we’re going through... and cares deeply about us. He has made Himself an ever-present help (and resource) for us, no matter what the problem is. I pray that you (and I) will never neglect to take advantage of the blessings that He promises to give us... when we remember to go to Him in prayer. He is not only our source for hope in the life-to-come; He is also the source of the comfort and strength that we need to get through *this* life!

Although we just had a very special celebration of the fact that God is “with us”, those celebrations don’t need to end. After all, He is still “God with us”! Therefore, let us continue to seek Him out: both in the tangible places where He promises to be found (in His Word and Sacrament)... and in the prayerful conversations that He longs to have with us. Granted, He may not “speak” to us... but He has already spoken to us: all the words of love, peace and joy that we’ll ever need to hear. What we need now... is to talk to Him and cast all our cares upon Him. And we can do that confidently, knowing that He cares for us!

May God be with you and your family throughout this new year. I don’t know what is going to happen; but I know that God will be there for you, no matter what. And if I can help out in any way (as the under-shepherd of the one, true and Good Shepherd), please don’t hesitate to let me know. You’re never a bother! This is why I became a pastor: to serve the children of God and bring them words (and deeds) that declare His gracious love for them. May the peace of God, which surpasses all our human understanding, guard and keep your hearts in Christ Jesus our Lord: now and forevermore. Amen!

St. Mark's Lutheran Church

Annual Meeting

December 13, 2020

***Present***: Tom Ascheman, Jack Burns, Sandy Burns, Linda Carstens, Kelly Demuth, John Huston, Howard Mansfield, Pam Mansfield, Lois Mitteness, Steve Mortenson, Allen Mumm, Hazel Mumm, Karen Mumm, Scott Rajewsky, Yvette Rajewsky, Dennis Rohloff, Darin Vergin, Shelly Vergin, Donna Weber, Randy Weber, Gary Weckwerth, Mary Weckwerth, Pastor Wolter.

The meeting was called to order by Gary Weckwerth at 1:02 p.m. with a prayer by Pastor Wolter.

***Secretary's Report***: The minutes of the 11/9/2020 meeting were approved as printed.

***Treasurer's Report***: Everything has been paid to date. Kelly will start that application for the Payroll Protection Plan loan forgiveness. Treasurer’s Report was approved as printed.

***Assistant Treasurer's Report***: No report available.

***Committee Reports:***

*Elders*:

Discussion was had on church service days and times. The 8:00 and 10:30 Sunday services are going well and the elders recommend the church continues these two services next year. Wednesday services will be eliminated until lent. Motion by Dennis Rohloff, second by Scott Rajewsky to continue with two services on Sundays. Motion carried unanimously.

*Trustees*: A pump motor is out in the boiler room which affects the north bathrooms and the office.

*Evangelism*: No Report

*Education*: No Report

*Ushers*: No Report

***Old Business*:**

A mailbox will be purchased, the PO Box will be canceled and mail will be delivered to the church.

***New Business*:**

\*Election of Officers. Motion by Shelly Vergin, seconded by Pam Mansfield to cease nominations. Motion carried unanimously. Motion by Hazel Mumm, seconded by Pam Mansfield to cast a unanimous ballet. Motion carried unanimously. Results of the election are as follows:

 Chairman: Gary Weckwerth

 Treasurer: Pam Mansfield

 Financial Secretary: Sandy Fossen

 Finance Board: Staci Ascheman, Yvette Rajewsky

 Board of Elders: John Huston, Jason Schwendemann, Darin Vergin

 Board of Trustees: Pat Winters

 Board of Evangelism: Steve Kraft

 Board of Education: Open – still searching

 Head Usher: Kevin Wilts

 Cemetery Committee: Steve Mortenson

\*The Synod is asking to push the National Convention back to 2023 due to COVID. This will allow districts to have time hold their conventions. Motion by Randy Weber, second by Dennis Rohloff to vote “yes” to allow the Synod to push the convention back. Motion carried unanimously.

\*MN North mission work was discussed during the Elder’s meeting. Last year, the commitment was dropped from $11,000 to $5,000. The Elders asked if an additional stipend could be offered this year. Motion by Randy Weber, second by Pam Mansfield to send an additional $2,500 to the MN District for mission work. Motion carried unanimously.

\*The 2021 budget was presented.

Section A: Motion by Pam Mansfield, second by Scott Rajewsky to approve Section A. as presented with a total of $5,000. Motion carried unanimously.

Section B: Motion by Randy Weber, second by Dennis Rohloff to approve Section B. as presented with a total of $21,150. Motion carried unanimously.

Section C: Property/Work Comp bill was received, changing the budget to $7,000. Motion by Dennis Rohloff, second by Pam Mansfield to approve Section C. as adjusted with a total of $26,100. Motion carried unanimously.

Section D: Discussion was had on pay increases for staff. Motion by Donna Weber, second by Scott Rajewsky give the following raises: $.75 an hour to secretary and janitor; 5% to pastor and to raise organist pay to $55 per service. Motion carried unanimously.

Budget changes include: custodian to $11,000 ; housing allowance to $45,741; organist to $6,400; pastor salary to $16,633; secretary salary to $13,800. Motion by Randy Weber, second by Karen Mumm to approve Section D as adjusted with a total of $139,604. Motion carried unanimously.

***Pastor's Report*:**

\*Pastor thanks all the members who have given so generously their time and talents toward the support of the ministries of the church.

\*Church attendance has increased after going back to two Sunday services. However, keeping with two Sunday services will mean there will be a delay of 1 week of online services.

\*Christmas service options were discussed. It was decided to offer a 4:00 and 7:00 service on Christmas Eve to allow smaller gatherings in the church. Christmas morning service will remain at 1 service.

\*Pastor gave an update on online programs.

 -The church’s YouTube channel has 40 subscribers.

 -The November 15 service had 47 views; the November 22 service had 52 views; the November 29

 service had 60 views and Advent service #1 had 25 views.

 -The number of people watching Bible studies each week varies from 7 to 32.

 -Pastor has heard from non-members who are also tuning in.

\*Pastor is doing home visits only by the family’s invitation. Otherwise, he is calling members. He will be doing a Christmas service at Scandihaven in which he will bring communion to St. Mark’s members.

\*The ACT Youth group held a kick-off event on November 22. Unfortunately, only 2 kids showed up; 1 has expressed serious interest in going to next year’s conference. Pastor continues to work with kids and their parents to encourage them to attend ACT events and take on a more active role in leadership.

\*Pastor will be on vacation for a week starting December 28. Pastor Don Kirsch will be covering on January 3.

The meeting was closed at 1:58 with the Lord’s Prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Shelly Vergin, Secretary