St. Mark’s Lutheran Church PRESORTED STANDARD

Lutheran Church Missouri Synod U.S. Postage

P.O. Box 37 Benson, MN, 56215

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 Call 1-800-322-6889

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Church Telephone: 320-843-4131

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

St. Mark’s Website: [www.stmarksbenson.com](http://www.stmarksbenson.com)

Pastor’s Cell Phone: 402-335-7518

Pastor’s Email address: jwolter78@hotmail.com

Sunday Morning Worship Services

8:00 a.m. and 10:30 a.m.

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

Communion Services: The first and second Sundays

of the month.

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

**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.

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**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.

**June/July 2020**

**WELCOME BACK (HOME)!**

Thank God for making it possible for us to return to His House! In the “*Rev’s Ramblings*”, I use my experiences in Russia to put this current “return to the Lord’s House” in a proper context for us. But, although being in God’s House again is important for our faith, I hope that the desire to be there isn’t motivated by the Law. Being “free” to worship together is a gift from God, in many different ways! Not only is it one of our First Amendment rights (which many have fought and died for); it is also a privilege. When we gather together, we receive the gifts that Jesus died to give us. We also build up (*and are built up by*) the other members of our church family. This fellowship creates a beautiful and powerful bond that unites us in ways that nothing else can. And when it comes to our children, the church serves as an “incubator”: that gives our little ones the warmth, protection and nourishment that they need to grow up into faithful followers of Christ. I hope- *and I pray*!- that the blessings our Lord offers us (*when we come together to meet Him in His house*) will be sufficient to inspire an eager zeal to want to be there.

**JACOB’S GRADUATION PARTY**

All the members of St. Mark’s are invited to celebrate Jake’s graduation with us! His party will be held in the St. Mark’s Fellowship Hall on Saturday, June 27th, from 1pm-4pm. In addition to the “normal” foods (like a fruit and veggie tray), we will be serving Fleischkuekle (pronounced “*flysh-keek-la*”), which is a German-Russian food that is beloved in North Dakota. It consists of a piece of spiced beef, pounded flat and surrounded by dough... which is then deep-fried. It is especially delicious with ketchup! We’ll also have various kuchens for dessert (*a North Dakotan kind of “pie*”).

**CHURCH SERVICES ARE RESUMING AT**

**ST. MARKS!**

After meeting with the Elders, we have devised a way to abide with all required protocols AND begin having “in-person” worship services! Praise be to God! All of the things that members need to know about these protocols are posted on our church’s web page, as well as at the church.

We will be having 3 services per week, in order to keep our sanctuary from becoming over-crowded. Our first worship opportunity will be on Wednesday (June 3rd) at 7pm, with that same service repeated on Sunday (June 7) at 8am and 10:30am. Doors will be propped open, disposable bulletins will be used (*not hymnals*) and we will employ appropriate social distancing and sanitation practices.

\*\*\* NOTICE\*\*\* If you are at any kind of risk (*either due to age or other health issues*) **PLEASE** consider waiting until you feel comfortable in attending. Don't worry: our services will continue to be recorded and made available online (*just like we’re doing now*). Also, if you- *or any other member of your household*- have any of the symptoms for Covid-19, please **DO NOT** attend church until you have been cleared by a medical professional. If, by some wonderful miracle, we exceed the allowed capacity, you may be asked to come back at a later service. All of this will require a kind of “learning-curve” for us all. So please be patient with us as we strive to be faithful to God and obedient to the earthly authorities that He has placed over us. May God continue to bless and watch over all His people and keep them safe... and, by His Holy Spirit, guide us to know- and do- His will in all things.

On the next page are the protocols and procedures that you will want to know:

**Things to Keep in Mind bout Our Return to**

**In-Person Worship:**

* If you, *or anyone in your household*, has ***any*** of the symptoms of Covid-19, **PLEASE do not** attend church today.  And if you do experience any of those symptoms ***while you are here***, please alert one of the Elders and then leave immediately. In either case, please make sure that you are checked (*and cleared*) by a medical professional before you attempt to attend church in the future.
* The church sanctuary will be sectioned off, prior to your arrival.  An usher will show you to your designated “space”.
* Once inside the building, there will be tables on which the following will be placed: bulletins, devotionals (*for you to take home*), hand sanitizer, tissues, masks (*if you want one but didn’t bring one*) and a place for you to put your offering into.  You are encouraged to wear a mask, especially if you feel that you may be at any kind of risk or a risk to others!
* Hymnals will not be used.  All of the liturgy will be printed out in the bulletins (*as it is now*).  In fact, you can even use the bulletin from the church’s web page (*on your phone*), if you prefer.
* Communion will be celebrated in this way: members will be directed by an usher to take their place *in front of* (not at) the Communion rail.  At that time, the bread and wine will be placed on a cloth on the rail. Then you will be welcomed to the Table and “communed”.  After you are dismissed from the Table, an Elder will dispose of the cloth and sanitize the railing.
* After the service, worshipers will be directed to leave and go directly to their cars. If members choose to visit, it should be done outside while following all appropriate social-distancing recommendations.
* Between the services, the sanctuary will be sanitized, following the recommended procedures.

**\*\*\* ONE LAST THING\*\*\* Remember, any of these things may be adjusted as our situation changes. That may mean only having one service on Sundays (if two aren’t necessary)... or changes to our other protocols. If you are able, please keep an eye on our church’s Facebook page for any future changes.**

**Excerpt from the letter that was sent to Gov. Walz on May 26th**

From the presidents of the MN North and South Districts, along with other confessional Lutheran churches (WELS and ELS)

People of God,

As representatives of various confessional Lutheran Church bodies in MN, we have been working with the government since the beginning of the pandemic to love our neighbors and protect people from the spread of illness... Along with Catholic bishops, we submitted a plan to the Governor on May 8 for his review that detailed the public health measures we would take... These protocols are consistent with practices that are already in use in many churches throughout the United States. We were thus surprised and disappointed when the Governor rebuffed our efforts at coordination and refused to move toward the reopening of churches...

Throughout this crisis, we have attempted to model Christ’s love among our communities, which is why Lutheran churches made the very difficult decision to suspend public worship services, school, childcare operations, and congregational activities independent of any executive orders issued by the Governor. We hoped that our efforts would be seen as supportive of Governor Walz’s leadership and allow our beloved state to prepare the necessary infrastructure to save lives and limit the spread of COVID-19. We believe that the efforts of all Minnesotans were instrumental in flattening the curve and protecting those groups who are particularly vulnerable to the ill-effects of the virus. We expect that none of that will change as Minnesota “turns the dial” to the next phase of disease prevention....

*(continued on the next page)*

In our decision-making, we have also sought to respect the rightful authority of the civil magistrate—another important biblical principle. In doing so, we have sought to be good stewards of our gifts by serving our communities in numerous ways. Members of our communities have pulled together and given sacrificially of their time, their finances, and their skills to be a light, all finding creative ways to exercise our faith without the balm of gathering together for worship... We believe that we are capable of sharing the gospel within our communities and maintaining safe practices, making it unnecessary to further delay the scriptural exhortation to “meet together.” (Hebrews 10:25)

Given these circumstances, and the well-researched protocols that we plan to follow, protocols which have been successfully implemented elsewhere, how can reason require us any longer to keep our faithful from coming together and being fed by the Word preached and the Word carried by water, bread and wine? We are very grateful for the constitutional guarantee of the free exercise of religion that we have... We share the governor’s concern about the importance of taking all reasonable precautions to prevent the spread of COVID-19, and therefore have charged our congregations with the task of preparing for a limited return to public worship, though we are by no means requiring them to do so...

We trust local leadership will determine when they are able to satisfy these requirements. We also recognize that some congregations may choose, for now, to continue to adhere to the existing ten-person limit. We are also aware that congregations will have to stay alert to changes in local circumstances and be prepared to re-impose more stringent limits in the event of an outbreak in the community. We expect that they will continue to urge those at greater risk to stay and home and that they will continue to provide various technological means (live-streaming, YouTube, etc.) to serve the needs of those unable to physically attend services.

**Happy Father’s Day**

**&**

**Happy 4th of July**

**JUNE BIRTHDAYS**

June 1: Josh Rajewsky June 2: Ryan Hampton

June 3: Lincoln Amundson and Kelsey Rajewsky

June 4: Dustin Baker, Sandy Fossen, Isaiah

 Hamblin and Leroy Sanders

June 6: Lori Martin, Sandy Muehlbauer and

 Beatrice Thompson

June 7: Brayden Jobgen, Howard Mansfield and

 Duane Neuhuas

June 8: Mason Bailey and Dawn Grossman

June 9: Ron Mills June 10: Sharon Sanders

June 11: Pat Winters June 12: Mitch Mattheisen

June 17: Zach Arneson and John Huston

June 19: Carolyn Drews

June 20: Staci Schulz and Jake Tessem

June 21: Brent Moe June 22: Travis Schlieman

June 23: Randy Weber June 24: Katelyn Brown

June 26: Heather Ollendick

June 27: Gracilynn Amundson and Mark Brehmer

June 28: DeLaynie Naig

June 29: Matthew Brehmer and Tami Koosmann

June 30: Page Anderson, Thea Anderson and Zeke

 Peterson

**JULY BIRTHDAYS**

July 1: Stan Antolick and Matt Van Lith

July 2: Marianne Grussing, Kaden Kurkosky,

 Darlene Miller & Ian Rajewsky

July 3: Kristi Baker, Anissa Demuth & David Holt

July 4: Shirley Ferguson July 5: Tracy Huettl

July 7: Kelsey Fahlen, Emily Peterson & Kellen

 Schmidt

July 9: Alvina Amundson, Jason Bailey, Abbie

 Mitteness, Allie Mitteness & Savannah

 Schlief

July 10: Jarret Payne

July 11: Kristen Schwendemann

July 12: Liz Mansfield July 13: Brad Neuhaus

July 14: Bradley Birch July 19: Laurie Mortenson

July 20: Scott Rajewsky July 21: Ruger Klyve

July 22: Darold Martin and Steve Mortenson

July 23: Jayden Winters July 24: Mary Hess

July 25: Lois Brandt, Rita Connelly, Landen

 Kurkosky and Dylan Mattheisen

July 27: Dorothy Hoffman, Helen Klucas and

 Melissa Paulsrud

July 28: Natasha Staton July 29: Alex Hetrick

July 31: Emma Crow and Stephanie Sondag