**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.

**ST. MARK’S LUTHERAN CHURCH STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

The purpose of this congregation shall be to serve its member and to spread the Kingdom of God by the preaching of the Word of God, by the administration of the Sacraments and by the religious instruction of youth and adults, according to the confessional standard of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod; and to foster Christian fellowship and charity.

**SCHEDULES TO NOTE**

**St. Mark’s Church Services (Radio & TV)**

Sunday at 9:30 a.m. KBMO (1290 AM) Radio

Sunday at 9:30 a.m. Channel 180, TV, Benson

**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 10:30 a.m. KARE – Ch. 11

**Lutheran Public Radio**

(24/7 Lutheran music/talk)

<http://lutheranpublicradio.org>

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

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.

*The Rev’s Ramblings...*

“Your Father knows what you need before you ask Him..”

*(Matt. 6:8)*

During my time at the Seminary, I had the “privilege” of meeting a couple of guys... who never should’ve been there. One of them was Matt. Matt had all kinds of goofy ideas about ministry... about theology... and about God, Himself. One day, while Matt was sitting next to me in a class on “worship”, the professor posed this question to the class: “Why should we pray?” Matt leaned over to me and whispered, “We shouldn’t.” I looked at him in amazement and said, “What?!? Why not?” He said, “Because God already knows what we need before we ask Him. So why should we bother telling Him things that He already knows?”

Did Matt have a valid point? No! Not unless you think that point of prayer is to ask God for stuff. But is that all prayer is? Absolutely not! Prayer is- *above all else*- our method of connecting with God. As any marriage counselor will tell you: communication is the cornerstone of every healthy relationship. And we *ARE* in a relationship with God, after all: He is our “Husband”... and He calls us His “Bride”. God continually speaks to us in His Word. He tells us about Himself... about His will for us... and, most of all, His plan to unite Himself to us forever. Through His Word, God tells us all these things... and more. Prayer is our opportunity to talk to God and respond to the things He has already said to us.

Yes, it’s true: God *does* know what we need, *even* before we ask Him. But that’s not what prayer is about. *My wife* usually already knows most of the stuff that I talk to her about. But I talk to her about those things, anyway: because we’re in a relationship. And that’s what people do when they love each other; they talk to one another. Whether problems get solved... or circumstances are changed: the point of talking is to share our burdens, open ourselves up to another and enjoying the fellowship that is created through conversation. *THAT’S* why we pray: to grow (*deepen*) our relationship with God, through His prescribed method: prayer. Prayer is *our* conversation with God, by which we share our burdens with Him, open ourselves up to Him and enjoy the privilege of talking to our Heavenly Father.

Why should we pray? Luther begins his section on the Lord’s Prayer by answering that question. He said, we pray: because God gives us the privilege to do so (*and also because He commands it).* Since the question of “why we pray” is fairly obvious (*to everyone except Matt*), let’s talk about “*how*” we should pray.

In Confirmation class, I encourage the kids to pray- *out loud*- for the entire class. I believe that this is a good practice, that will help them get more comfortable with the idea of praying with- *and for*- others. Someday, God may call them to lead their friends (*or classmates*) in prayer. Or perhaps they will help teach their younger siblings to pray. God only knows: when others may be blessed... through the prayers that these Confirmands will someday offer for others.

But before I have the Confirmands lead our class in prayer, first I teach them “*how*” to pray. Simply put, I tell them that prayer has- *basically*- two parts: praises and petitions. In every prayer, we should give thanks to (***praise***) God for something He has done for us. And then, we can ask (***petition***) Him for those things that we need (*or want*)- with special attention given to those around us (*those who are sick or struggling with various kinds of troubles*). That’s how we pray in Confirmation class.

As we mature in our faith, our prayer-life should *also* mature. President Matthew Harrison (president of the LCMS) has spoken (*and written*) extensively about “how” we should pray. Rather than settling for the 2 **P’s** (***Praises*** and ***Petitions***), Pres. Harrison talks about: “**I-T-C-P**” (**I**nstruction-**T**hanksgiving-**C**onfession-**P**etition). I would like to encourage my fellow saints to remember these 4 letters... as they engage in their own prayerful conversations with God:

**Instruction**: In this part of our prayers, we mediate on what God has said in His Word. We especially remember His promise to be with us in all times and places; and to forgive our sins.

**Thanksgiving**: This is the part of our prayer in which we give thanks to God for all the things He has already given to us / done for us. And we have *lots* of things to be thankful for! If we tried to thank God for *all* the blessings He’s given us, our prayers would never end! Therefore, this should be the part of our prayer that comes most easily and naturally: because God has been so good to us!

**Confession**: In our conversations with God, He already knows our weaknesses, failures and acts of rebellion. We don’t need to make *Him* aware of those things. But *WE* need to be aware of them and then acknowledge that those things are not God’s will for us. Denial only enslaves us to those things even more. Confession frees us: not only by accepting that God’s Law is true... but also by recognizing that His Gospel is, too! For when we ask Him for forgiveness, we know that we **already have it** (*for the sake of our Savior, Jesus Christ*)!

**Petition**: Here is the part of prayer where we ask God for stuff: both the stuff that He knows we need... as well as the stuff that we want. When we pray, we need to remember that God has only promised *certain* things to us- not necessarily everything that we might want. When we ask for forgiveness, stronger faith, help being more humble or faithful, etc... we can pray for *those* things with boldness and confidence: knowing that God WILL give them to us- because that’s what He’s promised to do. But there are *other* things- that have not been guaranteed to us (*like healing, better financial situations, “happiness”, etc*.). We certainly may ask God for those things; but when we pray for them, we must pray as Jesus did: that ***His*** will be done. And when we humbly seek that God’s will be done, let us also remember that He has promised to ***work good in all things for those who love Him*** (Rom. 8:28). That way, even if we don’t get what we asked for, we can know that God will still find a way to bless us.

There is one prayer- the perfect prayer (*according to Luther*) that contains all of these things: the Lord’s Prayer. Throughout this Lenten season, we’ll be focusing on the Lord’s Prayer during our midweek services. May God bless us as we meditate on His prayer... and “***rejoice always, praying continually,and giving thanks in all circumstances***” (*1 Thess. 5:16-18*).

**March 2020**

**LENTEN SERVICES**

 The theme for our Lenten services this year is, "The Lord's Prayer".  When our Lord taught us His prayer, He not only gave us the means for communicating with Him, He also reminded us about the things for which we ought to pray.  Our Lenten journey will continue on Wednesdays at 7pm.  Lent will "end" on Good Friday (April 10th 1pm & 7pm service), where the Tenebrae meditations will focus on the 7 Prayers of Jesus.  Once again the church will be open on Saturday, April 11th, for the Holy Easter Vigil (from 8am-8pm).  During that time, all people are invited to come into the Lord's House of Prayer for a time of devotion, meditation and prayer.

**LENTEN SUPPERS**

(Serving from 5:45 pm-6:45 pm)

All remaining suppers have been cancelled.

**EASTER LILIES**

St. Mark’s will be ordering Easter Lilies from Super Valu and the cost will be $7.00 per lily. There is a sign-up sheet in the narthex for anyone wishing to order one in memory or honor of someone. When you sign-up please print your name and who the lily is in honor or memory of. After the second service on Easter (April 12), please feel free to take a lily from the altar home if you ordered one.

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**SOUP AND PIE - POSTPONED**

[**This was the original announcement**] Soup and Pie Luncheon will be Sunday, March 22nd serving 11:30 am-1:00 pm. The menu includes home-made soups, breads and a variety of pies. Cost is $8. Children 10 and under $4. We will be asking members to bring pies and help serve ~ watch for sign-up sheets.

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**SKIING / TUBING EVENT for ACT**

**/ YOUTH (*and their families*)**:

Andes Tower Hills Skiing and Tubing (near Alexandria) is offering a special discount rate for Friday, March 13th. For $15, you get your ski-lift ticket and your ski rental. Also, the slopes will be lit up with neon lights and lasers, with a DJ playing music in the background. This rate is only good from 5pm-midnight... and is only good for groups of 10 or more. On that same night, there is a discounted tubing rate ($14 for 2 hours): *if* there are 10 or more signed up for tubing.

A free instructional lesson will also be available that night. There is a sign-up sheet on the back table, so that we can know how many folks are going to attend. The deadline for signing up is March 1st. Remember: this is not just for our Youth! We want whole families to do this together! But our Youth are certainly encouraged to join us, even if their parents cannot (or do not want to) go.

**CHOIR PRACTICES**

Choir practices will be held at 8pm on Wednesday evenings, after our midweek Lenten services.

[These have been cancelled until further notice]

**SEVEN MISSION PRIORITIES**

1. PLANT, sustain and revitalize Lutheran churches
2. SUPPORT and expand theological education
3. PERFORM human care in close proximity to Word and Sacrament ministries
4. COLLABORATE with the Synod’s members and partners to enhance mission effectiveness
5. PROMOTE and nurture the spiritual, emotional and physical well-being of pastors and professional church workers
6. ENHANCE early childhood, elementary and secondary education and youth ministry
7. STRENGTHEN and support the Lutheran family in living out God’s design

**CLASS: LIVING WELL WITH**

**CHRONIC CONDITIONS**

Living Well with Chronic Conditions is a six week interactive workshop. Class leaders share tools to help better manage ongoing conditions like Heart Disease, COPD, High Blood Pressure, Daily Pain, Diabetes, Parkinson’s and High Cholesterol to name a few. Chronic conditions can cause fatigue, loss of physical strength, anger, anxiety or a sense of helplessness. A healthy way to live with a chronic disease is overcoming the physical, mental and emotional problems caused by a condition. The goal of this workshop is to help people be proactive managers of their health care. **Cost:** Free. **When:** Classes will be held on Thursdays April 2nd-30th and May 7th. **Time:** 9am-11:30 am each class is 2 ½ hours. **Where:** At the SCBHS Clinic Conference room. **Instructors and Registration Contacts:**
Cindy Carruth 320-567-2127 and Michele Sonnabend 320-843-1377

**MARCH BIRTHDAYS**

Mar. 2: Molly Amundson, Adilyn Evenson, Amy Jobgen and Meagan Odegaard

Mar. 3: Sawyer Boorse

Mar. 4: Jordan Bartz, Bradley Berens and Brandon Sondag

Mar. 5: Jay McGee and Judy Winters

Mar. 6: Eli Huston and Hilary Wilts

Mar. 7: Irene Gades and Pat Hess

Mar. 9: Shawn Suess

Mar. 11: Caitelyn Drews

Mar. 12: Jordan Arneson

Mar. 13: Blake Brehmer, Mya Denzer, Krystalynn Peterson, Robin Rittenour and Chantz Thompson

Mar. 14: Myron Schliemann

Mar. 16: Jeremiah Brown

Mar. 18: Philip Manska

Mar. 19: Eric Alsaker

Mar. 20: Vanessa Bartz, Linette Berens, Thomas Broesder, Madyson Chan, Daniel Hermes, Kathy Molden and

 Karen Mumm

Mar. 21: Samantha Galagher

Mar. 22: Raelyn Rivera and Del Schulz

Mar. 23: Riley Meyers-Quirk

Mar. 25: Margaret Thomas

Mar. 26: Linus Suess

Mar. 29: Carter Honebrink and Arnie Pagel

Mar. 31: Ethan Nash and Peggy Wold

**ANNIVERSARIES 50 YEARS AND MORE**

**3/10-Valgene and Lillian Molden (58 years)**-Their address is: 660 20th Ave. NW, Benson, MN 56215

**COME HOME TO THE ISLAND**

We are inviting past staff and campers to "Come Home to the Island" in 2020. If it has been a while since you've been at camp, think about one of our family events or a reunion. If you have grandchildren consider paying for them to go to Summer Camp this year. If you are looking for a new camp home, try us out. A home is where you feel welcome, loved, and get to be yourself. Lutheran Island Camp and Christ Serve Ranch provides not only great facilities but also caring, professional staff. Our 2020 summer schedule is now available. You can check it out on our website or you can request a brochure by sending your contact information to **info@islandcamp.org**

**SUNDAY SCHOOL CORNER**