**May 2020**

**CHURCH WEBSITE**

**Our new church website address** is: [www.stmarks-benson.com](http://www.stmarks-benson.com)

Just a reminder that our services are now online at our church website (above). Also on our church website is the weekly bulletin, Bible studies, resources for Youth and Sunday School kids, links to some great theological sites (*where people can hear daily chapel services, get daily devotions or listen to Lutheran “talk radio*”).

**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)**

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

**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.stmarks-benson.com](http://www.stmarks-benson.com)
* Pastor’s Cell Phone: 402-335-7518
* Pastor’s Email address: jwolter78@hotmail.com
* Sunday morning Worship Services are online at 9am
* Sunday morning worship services are also on the radio (1290 AM - KBMO) at 9:30 a.m.

**ABOUT THAT NEW WEBSITE**...

Here are some of the things that can be found on our new website:

* Bulletin Announcements
* Sunday School (*links to Christian radio serials and weekly online games / activities*)
* Monthly Calendar
* Monthly Newsletter (see note below)
* Pictures of St. Mark’s events
* Place for giving online offerings

*And on our “****resources****” page, we have links to*:

* Daily Devotions
* The LCMS and MN-North District
* KFUO (*amazing place for worship, devotions, Bible study, and Lutheran “talk”; there’s even a “Ladies Lounge”)*
* Lutheran Hour Ministries (*devotions, Bible study and ways to share faith with others*)
* Issues Etc. (*worship and sacred music*)
* Main Street Living (*various media ministries, including re-runs of “This is the Life*”)

**GIVING AN OFFERING?**

For those who are interested in giving their offerings electronically, there is an "Offering" page on our church's website.  But, for those who prefer to do it "the old fashioned way" (*by mailing a check to the church*) that is ALWAYS an acceptable alternative.   Just so you know: if you choose to use the church website to give your offering, the company that runs our online "store" takes 3% of the offering (+ $0.30).  So a $100 offering to the church, via the website, will result in $96.70 going into the church's "offering plate".

**GET YOUR NEWSLETTER ONLINE?**

For those who didn't know it: the monthly newsletter is now available on our church website, including a printable calendar.  If you're interested in getting your newsletter from the church's website (rather than having it mailed to you) please let Robin know.  If you have already contacted Pastor Wolter about this, there's no reason to contact the office again.

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**RECEPTION FOR 2020 GRADUATES, 2020 CONFIRMANDS & NEW MEMBERS**

When services resume at St. Mark’s there will be a reception for our New Members (*since May 2019*), our 2020 High School Graduates and our 2020 Confirmands. Please let us know if we have missed anyone.

**New Members**: Vernon, Mitchel and Dennis Peterson, Josh Minchow, Howard Thomas, Emma and Gracilynn Amundson.

**2020 High School Graduates**: Mariah Ahrndt, Josie Connelly, Noah Denzer, Tyler Huettl, Elizabeth Mansfield, Abbie Mitteness, Allie Mitteness, Harleigh Schlief, Cassidy Vergin and Jacob Wolter.

**2020 Confirmands**: Alex Amundson, Katlyn Reinke and Anissa Demuth.

On the day of the reception, the quilts the ladies have made will be displayed in the sanctuary and the 2020 Graduates will be invited to choose a quilt for themselves as a gift from St. Mark’s congregation.

**PRAYERS FOR LUTHERAN ISLAND CAMP**

Lutheran Island Camp and Christ Serve Ranch are asking for your prayers during this very difficult time. It is unknown right now what impact this will have on the summer programs. Programs will be cancelled or postponed until at July.

**STATISTICS**

**DEATHS:**

**Diann Solomon**

Born: April 19, 1950

Passed Away: April 4, 2020

Funeral Service: Will be held at a later date

**Cindy Giese**

Born: September 11, 1954

Passed Away: April 16, 2020

Funeral Service: A grave-side Committal service was held on April 22, 2020. A Celebration of Life will be held at a later date.

**MAY BIRTHDAYS**

May 1: Savannah Crandall

May 6: Emily Rajewsky

May 8: Victoria Hermes

May 9: Maddison Miller

May 10: Dylan Ascheman and Susan Firchau

May 12: Alena Conyers

May 13: Hunter Solomon and Zack Sonnabend

May 14: Wyatt Vergin

May 15: Imani Brehmer

May 16: Haley Moseng

May 18: Jeremy Bailey, Chelsie Gandsey and Jill Martin

May 20: Matthew Goossen and Kaden Schmidt

May 21: Justin Boraas

May 22: Don Brehmer, Gavin Kittleson and Mitch Koosmann

May 23: Char Klucas and Dar Thorsland

May 24: Joe Mast Jr.

May 25: Jason Huettl, Landon Paulsrud and Michael Paulsrud

May 26: Jack Burns and Derrick Huston

May 28: Madisen Rode

May 29: Bill Hrncirik

May 30: Donna Martin and Devin Vergin

*The Rev’s Ramblings...*

“Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that you

do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope.”*(1 Thess. 4:13)*

A lot has changed in the last month. Although the *cause* of the changes (*this frustrating and dangerous virus pandemic!* ☹)is bad... God has still worked good for us- in it- as He has promised to do. For one thing, we now have a better website- one that is able to serve as a go-to source for all kinds of helpful resources:

* For parents who are looking for helpful, Christian resources for their families, they can find some on our Sunday School / Youth page.
* For those who want to deepen their faith or enrich their daily devotional life, they can go to our “Links to helpful resources” page and find all kinds of spiritual-growth opportunities.
* And, for those who are unable to make it to church, there is now a way for people to watch our services at home. This is something that was talked about for awhile; but now we got the kick in the pants that we needed to make it happen.

Another good thing that has come about during this time... is the number of people (*even non-believers*) who agree with the Christian point of view: that *everyone* is our neighbor. This is one of the things that I hope won’t change, once life goes back to “normal”. (*I have written more about this in the MN-North Newsletter for April*!)

But what I *really* want to talk about this month is the relevance of Easter. Most of us acknowledge that it is one of the highest of all High Church Holidays. Church attendance always goes up... the choir sings... trumpets are played... and people are more “spiritually inclined” at this time of year, than any other time of the year. That’s certainly true for me: Easter morning is the only day of the year that I will actually look forward to getting up at 4am; I get emotional when I sing, “*Jesus Christ is Risen Today*”; and I love playing “*The Champion*” (*by Carman*) for my kids at home. (*There’s also a link to that music video on our Sunday School / Youth webpage*.)

I have no doubt that most of you feel the same way: that Easter... is awesome. It’s not only a sacred season for our church family... it’s also an important time of personal spiritual growth. But more than anything else, the resurrection of our Lord is a source of comfort and hope for those who have experienced the death of a loved one. That’s why *this* Easter has taken on an extra measure of importance.

Since the beginning of this year, we have lost six of our fellow church members- including four in the last month. Some were sudden and unexpected. Others weren’t surprises, due to the fact that they had been wrestling with serious health issues for a long time. But all were tragic. And all left behind some very sad families and friends.

One of the most common comments that mourning family members will share with me is this: “*How do people- who don’t have Jesus- cope with this grief*?” I don’t know the answer to that question. I’m just glad that we (as Christians) don’t have to try. That’s what this verse (*at the* *top of the previous page*) is all about: being able to grieve- with hope.

In addition to being our source of comfort and hope, the resurrection of Jesus gives us other blessings, as well. For one thing, it gives a greater- and higher- purpose to our lives: as we recognize that we don’t have to strive for “paradise” here (*in this world*), since we’re certain that we’ll have it in the world-to-come. So, rather than spending so much time and energy trying to make *this* life “comfortable”, we can just focus on taking up our crosses and following Jesus.

The resurrection also gives us peace-filled patience and confident endurance: as we face the various trials and troubles of this world. Knowing that (*eventually*) we will be crowned with glory... and raised to new- *and eternal*- life with Christ: we can persevere (*with joy*!) through whatever struggles may come, as Paul said in Rom. 8:18: “***I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us***.”

When I think about what it means to compare our present suffering with the future glory that awaits us, I always remember what the teacher of our Lamaze class said about childbirth. She was honest about the fact that it was going to hurt. And then she said, “*But once you’re holding your child in your arms, none of that will matter. When you see your baby, you’ll agree that it was all worth it*.”

We can say the same thing about our time on earth (*no matter how difficult our days may be*), because of the fact that Jesus rose from the dead- and promised to raise us up, too. That gives us hope- even as we mourn the deaths of our loved ones. Various Biblical characters expressed the hope they had: that they would see their deceased loved ones again someday. And we have that same hope, too: if our loved one “*belonged*” to Christ (*by saving faith in Him*). His promise to them (*and to us*) was: “***though they die, yet shall they live”.*** And, as the empty tomb reminds us, Jesus keeps His promises: “**He is not here. He has risen *just as He said***.”

Therefore, since Jesus rose from the dead, we don’t ever have to say “goodbye” to those who belong to Him. Though we are separated from them for “***a little while***” (*definitely a relative term for those who are missing their loved ones*!), we know that we’ll see them again. On that day (*when we are gathered around God’s throne, with all of His redeemed saints*), we will be reunited with our loved ones. What a comforting thought: to know that we will see them again! Because of our Lord’s resurrection, we *can* grieve with hope! Thanks be to God! God’s peace be with you all!

Your brother and servant in Christ,

Pastor Wolter