**October 2020**

**WORSHIP SCHEDULE**

On Monday, September 21st the Voters’ Assembly voted on our “new’ worship schedule. We will continue to have worship services on Wednesday nights at 7 pm and starting October 4th we will begin having our Sunday service at 8am with Sunday School and Bible study at 9:15am.

**SUNDAY SCHOOL ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Sunday School is scheduled to begin on Sunday, Oct. 4th at 9:15 am. Whether your child will be attending Sunday School or not this fall, we ask that you please fill out the Covid-19 Sunday School Enrollment Form (one per child). A form is included in this newsletter or you may pick one up at church or on the Sunday School’s facebook page.

We are currently a member short for the Sunday school Board.  There is a spot to check on the Enrollment form if you are interested or please reach out to Pastor, TaiAnna Moe or Melissa Payne.

We are looking for Sunday school teachers and for volunteers to help with Social Distancing for Sunday school.  There is a spot to check on the Enrollment form if you are interested or please reach out to Pastor, TaiAnna Moe or Melissa Payne.

**TRUNK-OR-TREAT**

Looking for a great FREE family-fun event? Then you don’t want to miss St. Mark’s 3rd Annual “Trunk-or-Treat” celebration on Saturday, October 31st, from 6pm to 7:30 pm in the church parking lot! Hot Dogs and Hot Cider will be served. This is open to the community. Please invite your friends!

Not sure what “Trunk-or Treat” is? St. Mark’s members will decorate their car “trunks” and hand out treats. Kids dress in their Halloween costumes and go from car to car collecting treats! Maybe you don’t have a car? Then set up a table and decorate it and hand out treats! There will be treats available for you to pass out, but you may also bring your own.

Are you wondering how you can help? Here is what we need:

* Donations! Treats and/or money to purchase treats and food! Please bring to the church office.
* Decorated Trunks! Get ideas from the internet by googling “Trunk-or-Treat” ideas. Also, Oriental Trading has Trunk or Treat Kits that you can order!
* Volunteers! To hand up posters around town and also the night of the event to help with serving hot dogs and hot cider.

If you have any questions, please call the church office at 320-843-4131, or contact Tracy Wolter at tracywolter@gmail.com or call/text 402-921-0981. Thank you!

**NO BAKE “BAKE SALE”**

Due to Covid-19 there will be no aprons handed out. Instead a container will be set out on October 7th & the 11th. They ask for you to please leave your donation in the container on the back table located in the church. The Women’s Guild would like to thank you for your support.

**CHRISTMAS CANTATA???**

We are planning on having another Christmas Cantata this year. It is scheduled to be Wednesday, Dec. 23rd. Since this is a celebration of music: individuals, groups and choirs may wish to begin practicing now! It would also be great if we could have a dramatic presentation of some kind, to go along with the various performances and readings. Please let Pastor Wolter know if you are interested in sharing your gifts in any of these ways.

**SECOND ONLINE QUILT AUCTION**

The second online quilt auction supporting Lutheran Island Camp will take place from October 1-9, 2020. The auction will once again be hosted by the Proxibid.com platform. They will be providing links on their website, social media and on their Tuesday e-news in the coming weeks. Be sure to watch for your opportunity to purchase some of these beautiful works of art. This auction also includes a number of craft items. It is the perfect chance to finish some of your Christmas shopping.

**OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS**

Oct. 1: Jordan Krosch and Sue McDonald

Oct. 2: Jaida Madden and Dean Weckwerth

Oct. 3: Toni Christianson

Oct. 4: Darlene Wilts

Oct. 5: Marissa Connelly

Oct. 6: Nathan Fladung and Todd Sonnabend

Oct. 7: Steven Hamblin

Oct. 8: Denice Conyers-Martin, Carolyn Klucas

 and Jon Solomon

Oct. 9: Luke Muehlbauer

Oct. 10: Blade Schlief and Gary Weckwerth

Oct. 11: Marcel Hoffman

Oct: 13: Melody Reuss

Oct. 15: Kathy Petersen

Oct. 16: Dan Martin and Hannah Weber

Oct. 17: Beth Fridgen, Josh Minchow and

 Wayne Thompson

Oct. 18: Julie Suess and Melinda Wrobleski

Oct. 19: Vernon Baumgartner

Oct. 20: Levi Muehlbauer and Jan Pagel

Oct. 21: Christa Ahlmann and Pam Schulz

Oct. 22: Dylan Grussing and Al Schlieman

Oct. 23: Gary Klemm, Janelle Madden, Dennis

 Peterson and Mitchel Peterson

Oct. 24: Abe Miller and Attaviah Vergin

Oct. 25: Shelly Vergin

Oct. 26: Julie Anderson, Janice Gades, Ethan

 Goulet and Leah Tessem

Oct. 29: Henry Boutain, Allison Moser, Daxton

 Pownell and Mary Weckwerth

Oct. 30: Yvette Rajewsky and Judy Rittenour

Oct. 31: Sandy Burns and Dennis Rohloff

**ANNIVERSARIES 50 YEARS AND MORE**

**10/7-Gary and Leslie Erickson (53 years)**-Their address is: 21150 62nd St. NW, Sunburg, MN 56289

**10/9-Jack and Sandy Burns (55 years)**-Their address is: 311 13th St. S., Benson, MN 56215

**STATISTICS**

**BAPTISM: Micah Lewis Huston** son of Patrick and Jenessa Huston.

 **Born:** August 12, 2020 **Baptized:** September 9, 2020

St. Mark's Lutheran Church Council Meeting

August 10, 2020; Via teleconference

***Present***: Tom Ascheman, Kelly Demuth, John Huston, Howard Mansfield, TaiAnna Moe, Steve Mortenson, Scott Rajewsky, Lynette Tessem, Darin Vergin, Shelly Vergin, Gary Weckwerth and Pastor Jason Wolter.

The meeting was called to order by Gary Weckwerth at 7:05 p.m. with a prayer by Pastor Wolter.

***Secretary's Report***: The minutes of the June 8, 2020 meeting were approved as printed.

***Treasurer's Report***:

Everything has been paid and all transfers between funds are current. Balance of early August about $27,000. Received about $29,000 in grants; $5,000 of which might have to be repaid. Report was approved as printed.

***Assistant Treasurer's Report***:

All money borrowed back in May has been replaced in their respective accounts. There was a request to sponsor a seminary student; no action taken. Report was approved as printed.

***Committee Reports:***

*Elders*: Motion by Steve Mortenson, second by Tom Ascheman to appoint Pat Winters to fill the vacant spot on Trustees. Motion carried unanimously. This is to replace the position left vacant by Matt Van Lith.

*Trustees*: The toilet is still acting up. They will look at the toilet as well as the missing brick.

*Evangelism*: No report

*Education*: No report

*Ushers*: No report

***Old Business*:** No Old Business

***New Business*:**

There were 126 offering envelopes not picked up. They will no longer be ordered with a savings of about $300.

***Pastor's Report*:**

\* Ken Halverson is a new member.

\*A new health plan will need to be decided on by early September. Gary Weckwerth will meet with Kelly Demuth and the elders to choose a plan once more details are received.

\*Worship and Sunday School were discussed. Sunday School will have a delay start of October 4th to allow the Education Committee to have a COVID plan. Online only services will continue through Labor Day. In person will resume Wednesday, September 9 at 7 p.m. Sunday, September 13 will have Bible Study at 9 a.m. and church at 10:00. Wednesday night service will be recorded and continued to play online. This church schedule will continue through September. The church schedule will be discussed at the congregational meeting on September 21.

\*The Congregational Meeting will be moved back to September 21 to allow conversations on what a new church schedule will look like: Wednesday and Sunday; two on Sunday; times; etc.

The meeting was closed at 8:50 with the Lord’s Prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Shelly Vergin, Secretary

*The Rev’s Ramblings...*

 “Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?” He said, “The one who showed him mercy.” And Jesus said to him, “You go, and do likewise. *(Luke 10:36-37)*

Those words (*above*) are how Jesus summarized the Parable of the Good Samaritan. What makes this parable so powerful is that the hero of the story... was a hated Samaritan (*Jews and Samaritans hated each other).* But what we sometimes forget... is *why* Jesus told this parable in the first place. A man had come to ask Jesus about the Laws of God. Jesus told him that there were only two Laws: Love God... and Love Your Neighbor. The man responded by asking, “But, who is my neighbor?” To answer that question, Jesus told this parable.

The “neighbor”- to the Jewish traveler who had been attacked, hurt and left for dead- was actually his “hated enemy”. Yet, by the Samaritan man’s act of mercy, (*he helped the Jewish man),* the “enemy” showed that he- *more than anyone else*- was the only one who acted like a “neighbor” towards the hurting Jewish man. As the Jewish man lay dying, at that point, he didn’t care about “*who*” helped him. He just needed help!

The reason for pointing this out now (*in the October newsletter*), is because we have an election coming up... and I think that there’s something in this parable that we can use... as we consider who we should vote for. Now, I have to acknowledge right up front: that this may *seem* to be an endorsement of one particular candidate over another. And I admit, that it was *this moment in time*... that really helped me to understand the insight that I hope to share in this writing. But it’s not my intention- *with this “Rambling*”- to promote one candidate over another. This applies to *every* election... at every level of government.

In recent times, there has been less discussions about political platforms and policies... and more discussions about the politicians themselves. Therefore, candidates no longer seem to be trying to prove that their *policies* are better; rather they’re trying to prove that they- *themselves*- are the better *person* (*by demonizing their opponents*). It’s almost like high school all over again: where class officers are elected based on how *popular* they are, rather than on what they would actually *do* if they were elected.

Of course, that mindset isn’t limited just to high school. In college, our school (Concordia, St. Paul) elected Scott to be the president of our student body. Scott was good-looking... and well-liked. He was also my roommate and friend. But Scott wasn’t very smart... and he certainly wasn’t interested in doing any kind of work. So, within a month of being elected, Scott quit. The vice-president had to take over. Everybody (*including me*) loved Scott. But he wasn’t interested in- or capable of- doing the work that he had been elected to do.

I think that our state and national elections have become similar contests: based on the *personal popularity* of a candidate, rather than on what they will actually *do* when they are elected. Now, does God tell us whom we should vote for? Of course not. God is clearly “pro-life”; so *that* should be *one* of the issues that Christian voters consider.

But there are other issues that are also important to people. My goal is not to tell you *which* issues should be more important to you than others. In fact, I don’t want to “*tell*” you anything.

Instead, I want to ask you to consider: ***which candidates will be most helpful to your neighbor***? Which candidate will enact the kinds of policies that will best protect the lives and liberties of your neighbor? To put it another way: what matters to you most in a *doctor*- one that can cure your illness... or one that is good-looking? Or what is most important in your pastor- that they get along with everyone... or that they are faithful to God’s Word? A doctor’s job is to heal (*not to make friends*)... and a pastor’s job is to preach, teach and administer the Sacraments (*not be popular*). Ideally, doctors would be friendly... and pastors would be likable. But that’s not what’s most important. Likewise, an elected leader’s job is to enact policies that will best help our neighbors: be it at the local, state or national level.

Luther addressed this issue in the 16th century. At that time, they actually *did* have a kind of election... so this question did matter- even then. Here’s what Luther wrote, “*the reasonable question has been asked: whether it is better to have a good (but foolish) ruler... or a wise one who was- personally- bad? Moses, here, certainly calls for both a good and prudent ruler. However, if both qualifications cannot be had: a wise ruler- who is not personally good- is better … because one who is only personally good rules nothing; but is, himself, only ruled- and only by the worst of people. Even though a wise- but personally bad- ruler may harm good people, he nevertheless rules the evil ones at the same time, and this is more necessary and proper, for the world is nothing but a mass of evil people*.”

In other words: if you can’t have a candidate that is both “good” (*personally*) *AND* who has (*wise*) policies that will be good for our neighbors (community / state / country)... and you had to choose between a *someone who* ***was good*** vs. *someone who* ***did good***: the better option would be to choose *the one who* ***does good***, because that’s what will best serve our neighbor (community / state / country). As your pastor, it’s my opinion that the things that will best serve our neighbor are: pro-life legislation (*which not only protects the unborn, but also the elderly and those with special needs*)... religious freedom... protecting parental rights... economic prosperity (*which leads more people to be more generous towards those who are not as blessed*)... and the safety / security of our neighborhoods. There certainly are other important issues that could- *and should*- be part of our decision-making process. But these are the ones that are most directly supported by Scripture.

Being a Christian means that we have the duty of being good citizens. In America, that duty is also a privilege: because- not only do we *obey* our leaders- we get to choose who they will be. No matter who is elected, let us remember that **Christ** is still our King. May our allegiance always be- *first and foremost*- to Him.

God’s peace be with you!

~ Pastor