Sunday - October 4, 2026
Blessing of the Animals
The World Is Full of Your Creatures
Feast of St. Francis and World Animal Day

WELCOME TO ST. MARK'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

3350 N. Delany Road, Waukegan, IL 60087
Phone: 847-623-5135
Email: stmarkslutheran@gmail.com

St. Mark's is a member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

We welcome you to worship with us today and hope you will join us again soon!
Our worship service is also available online each Sunday at 10:00 AM.
To find us online, please visit our website or follow us on YouTube and Facebook:

Website: https://www.stmarkslutheran.us
YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCCSZGBTjTxsR3QcZ9YX0xNw
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/StMarksLutheranWaukegan/

October Mission of the Month: Social Justice Prison Ministry

Please refer to the September - December issue of the Messenger for further information regarding the mission of the month.

Pastor Colin Cranmer: Welcome

Call to Worship
Come, people of God, with every creature that lives and breathes.
The earth is full of God's creatures.

Come with the animals who share our homes, the wild ones we rarely see, the birds above us, and the life beneath our feet.
The earth is full of God's creatures.

Come to wonder again at the life God already delights in.
We come to praise the Maker and Lover of all.

Gathering Song: Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee

1 Joyful, joyful we adore thee,
God of glory, Lord of love!
Hearts unfold like flow'rs before thee,
praising thee, their sun above.
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness,
drive the gloom of doubt away.
Giver of immortal gladness,
fill us with the light of day.

2 All thy works with joy surround thee,
earth and heav'n reflect thy rays,
stars and angels sing around thee,
center of unbroken praise.
Field and forest, vale and mountain,
flow'ry meadow, flashing sea,
chanting bird, and flowing fountain
call us to rejoice in thee.

3 Thou art giving and forgiving,
ever blessing, ever blest,
wellspring of the joy of living,
ocean-depth of happy rest!
Thou our Father, Christ our brother,
all who live in love are thine;
teach us how to love each other,
lift us to the joy divine!

Greeting
The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
And also with you.

Peace
The peace of Christ be with you always.
And also with you.

Prayer of the Day
God of sparrow and salmon, oak and orchard, dog and dragonfly: every life is held in your delight.

Teach us to receive our fellow creatures with wonder, to honor the needs and boundaries of every living thing, and to love this world as neighbors within it. By your Spirit, make us tender in care, joyful in praise, and faithful to the life you have entrusted to us; through Jesus Christ, in whom all creation is held.
Amen.

WORD

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

First Reading: Genesis 1:20-25, 31a
A reading from Genesis.

God said, "Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the dome of the sky." So God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, of every kind, with which the waters swarm, and every winged bird of every kind. And God saw that it was good. God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth." And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.

And God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind: cattle and creeping things and wild animals of the earth of every kind." And it was so. God made the wild animals of the earth of every kind and the cattle of every kind and everything that creeps upon the ground of every kind. And God saw that it was good. God saw everything that God had made, and indeed, it was very good.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Psalm 104:10-18, 24-30
The assembly responds after each section: The earth is full of your creatures.

You make springs gush forth in the valleys; they flow between the hills, giving drink to every wild animal. By the streams the birds of the air have their habitation; they sing among the branches. From your lofty abode you water the mountains; the earth is satisfied with the fruit of your work.
The earth is full of your creatures.

You cause the grass to grow for the cattle and plants for people to use, to bring forth food from the earth. The trees of the LORD are watered abundantly, the cedars of Lebanon that God planted. In them the birds build their nests; the stork has its home in the fir trees. The high mountains are for the wild goats; the rocks are a refuge for the rock badgers.
The earth is full of your creatures.

O LORD, how manifold are your works! In wisdom you have made them all. Yonder is the sea, great and wide, creeping things innumerable, living things both small and great. There go the ships and Leviathan that you formed to sport in it.
The earth is full of your creatures.

These all look to you to give them their food in due season. When you give to them, they gather it up; when you open your hand, they are filled with good things. When you hide your face, they are dismayed; when you take away their breath, they die and return to their dust. When you send forth your spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the ground.
The earth is full of your creatures.

Gospel Acclamation: Praise and Thanksgiving

1 Praise and thanksgiving, God, we would offer
for all things living, you have made good:
harvest of sown fields, fruits of the orchard,
hay from the mown fields, blossom and wood.

2 God, bless the labor we bring to serve you,
that with our neighbor we may be fed.
Sowing or tilling, we would work with you,
harvesting, milling for daily bread.

Gospel: Matthew 6:25-30
The holy gospel according to Matthew. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

Jesus said, "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And which of you by worrying can add a single hour to your span of life?

"And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will God not much more clothe you - you of little faith?"

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.

Sermon

Hymn of the Day: Sparrows and Lilies — Pat Barrett

Brother lay your head down
Sister don't you know
Ain't no rest in worry
Troubles come troubles go
I have seen the sparrow
I have watched her fly
No she does not worry
Tell me why should I

So hold on love
Things are gonna get better
Things are gonna get better
I know it's hard
Hold on love
Things are gonna get better
Things are gonna get better
I know they are

Do do do do do do
Do do do do do
Do do do do do do

I have seen the lily
Dancing with the wind
Open to the sunshine
Open to the rain
Dressed in all her beauty
Given what she needs
If I listen closely
I can hear her sing to me

So hold on love
Things are gonna get better
Things are gonna get better
I know it's hard
Hold on love
Things are gonna get better
Things are gonna get better
I know they are

So hold on love
Things are gonna get better
Things are gonna get better
I know it's hard
Hold on love
Things are gonna get better
Things are gonna get better
I know they are

Do do do do do do
Do do do do do
Do do do do do do

Blessing of the Animals
People may come forward with an animal, a photograph, an empty collar, ashes, or simply a name held in the heart. Animals may remain wherever they are comfortable. No animal needs to be handled, brought forward, or made still.

These creatures do not become sacred because we bless them. They are already lives God has made and loves. In this blessing, we give thanks, promise care, and practice wonder.

Prayer of Blessing
Creator of all life, your wisdom moves in wing and paw, hoof and fin, feather and fur, shell and skin. You call each creature into being and delight in lives unlike our own.

Bless the animals gathered among us today and those represented by a photograph, a collar, ashes, or a cherished name. Give them food, shelter, play, rest, skillful care, and lives shaped by gentleness.

Bless the animals in wild places and the creatures whose habitats are threatened. Bless animals on farms, animals who labor alongside human beings, animals waiting for homes, and animals who have no one to tend them. Bless the creatures we fear, the creatures we overlook, and the lives too small for us to notice.

For the animals we have loved and lost, receive our gratitude and hold our grief. Let memory ripen into tenderness for the lives still in our care.

Bless us with humility to learn from our fellow creatures, courage to protect them, wisdom to honor their needs and boundaries, and joy in the astonishing abundance of life. Through Christ, in whom all things hold together.
Amen.

Individual Blessings
For an animal present or living elsewhere:
[Name], beloved creature of God, may you be blessed with safety, health, delight, and faithful care. May the love you awaken deepen our care for all creation. **Amen.**

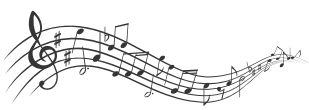
For an animal who has died:
For [Name], beloved creature of God, we give thanks for the life you shared with us. May your memory be a blessing, and may those who miss you be held in peace. **Amen.**

Offering Song: All Creatures, Worship God Most High!

1 All creatures, worship God most high!
Sound ev'ry voice in earth and sky: Alleluia! Alleluia!
Sing, brother sun, in splendor bright;
sing, sister moon and stars of night:
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

2 Sing, brother wind; with clouds and rain
you grow the gifts of fruit and grain: Alleluia! Alleluia!
Dear sister water, useful, clear,
make music for your Lord to hear:
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

3 Sing, brother fire, so mirthful, strong,
drive far the shadows, join the throng: Alleluia! Alleluia!
Dear mother earth, so rich in care,
praise God in colors bright and rare:
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!



6 O sisters, brothers, take your part,
and worship God with humble heart: Alleluia! Alleluia!
All creatures, bless the Father, Son,
and Holy Spirit, Three in One:
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

Prayers of Intercession

Gathered with every creature under heaven, let us pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

God of wonder, draw your church close to the earth. Teach us the attention of a naturalist, the humility of a guest, and the delight of a child meeting a creature for the first time.
God of all life, **hear our prayer.**

God of habitats and seasons, shelter forests, grasslands, rivers, oceans, farms, and neighborhoods. Renew damaged places, protect the homes of wild creatures, and strengthen all who labor for the healing of the earth.
God of all life, **hear our prayer.**

God of every creature, watch over animals in homes and shelters, on farms and in wild places. Guide veterinarians, farmers, rescue workers, shelter staff, neighbors, and all whose care gives another creature room to flourish.
God of all life, **hear our prayer.**

God of mercy, tend all who hunger, grieve, fear, or hurt. Be near to people and animals displaced by war, disaster, or a changing climate. Bring safety, daily bread, patient companions, and healing.
God of all life, **hear our prayer.**

God of memory, receive our thanks for the animals who have shared our lives and whose absence still has a shape. Comfort all who mourn, and keep love alive in us.
God of all life, **hear our prayer.**

God of joy, thank you for wagging tails and watchful eyes, for feathers, whiskers, scales, and song, and for every holy interruption that teaches us to laugh, notice, and love.
God of all life, **hear our prayer.**

Into your open hands, O God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting your love for the whole creation; through Jesus Christ our life.
Amen.

Sending Song: Counting Every Blessing — Rend Collective

I was blind now I'm seeing in color
I was dead now I'm living forever
I had failed but You were my redeemer
I've been blessed beyond all measure

I was lost now I'm found by the Father
I've been changed from a ruin to treasure
I've been given a hope and a future
I've been blessed beyond all measure

I am counting every blessing
Counting every blessing
Letting go and trusting
When I cannot see
I am counting every blessing
Counting every blessing
Surely every season
You are good to me

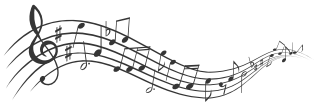
Oh You are good to me
Oh You are good to me

You were there in the valley of shadows
You were there in the depth of my sorrows
You're my strength my hope for tomorrow
I've been blessed beyond all measure

I am counting every blessing
Counting every blessing
Letting go and trusting
When I cannot see
I am counting every blessing
Counting every blessing
Surely every season
You are good to me

Oh You are good to me
Oh You are good to me

Surely Your goodness pursues me
Surely Your heart is still for me
I will remember Your mercies
All my days
Through every storm and gale



I am counting every blessing
Counting every blessing
Letting go and trusting
When I cannot see
I am counting every blessing
Counting every blessing
Surely every season
You are good to me

I am counting every blessing
Counting every blessing
Letting go and trusting
When I cannot see
I am counting every blessing
Counting every blessing
Surely every season
You are good to me

Oh You are good to me
Oh You are good to me

Blessing
May the God whose breath fills every living thing, Christ in whom all creation is reconciled, and the Spirit who renews the face of the earth bless you and every creature entrusted to your care, now and always.
Amen.

Dismissal
Go in peace. Delight in God's creatures, and tend the life entrusted to you.
Thanks be to God.

Altar Flowers Presented By: Paul & Genie Durand
In honor of Lynn & Chris Schroetter's Wedding Anniversary!

Announcements

October 6th - December 17th
White Crane Wellness Center Presents: Bingocize
Tuesdays and Thursdays / Time: 10:00 a.m.
Enjoy 20 Classes with a Suggested Donation of $20
No class on Tuesday, November 3rd, or Thursday, November 26th

Sunday, October 18th - Save the Date!
St. Mark's Fall Fest 11:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
Join us for a fun afternoon of food, games, and fellowship!

Food & Treats
Hot Dogs • Brats • Vegan Wraps • Chips • Drinks • Cookies

Fun & Activities
Cake Walk • Bingo • Go Fish • Pulla Bake Sale

50/50 Tickets Available

1 Ticket - $1.00
6 Tickets - $5.00

Get your tickets early and support our church community!
Winner will be drawn at Fall Fest!
You do not need to be present to win.

Please feel free to join the following groups:
Women of St. Mark's - 1st Monday of the month @ 7 PM
Yarns of Compassion - 3rd Monday of the month @ 7 PM
(Yarns of Compassion does not meet in December)
Reflections in the Seasons - 1st Tuesday of the month @ 11 AM
(September - May)
Reflections in the Spirit - 1st Tuesday of the month @ 7 PM
(July & August as participants are available)
Zoom Weekly Bible Study - Wednesday Night @ 7 PM
Gather Bible Study - 3rd Friday of the month @ 5:30 PM
Alcoholics Anonymous Meeting - Fri. Night @ 7 PM in the fellowship hall

Altar Flowers
Altar flowers for worship may be purchased in honor
or in memory of a loved one.

If you are interested, please refer to the sign-up sheet located in the narthex.
The cost is $42.

Please indicate the person(s) you would like to honor or remember,
along with your preferred flower color.

Come as You Are, Whoever You Are

Everyone is welcome at St. Mark's, no matter what you have done, what has been done to you, what darkness or struggles you have faced, and regardless of whether you have been marginalized by society or denied involvement by other churches.

All are worthy of God's love and grace. We celebrate diversity, and seek to be inclusive of every race, ethnicity, faith background, age, economic status, political affiliation, sexual orientation, gender identity, mental ability, or anything else that divides us.

Christ's church is not ours to control, nor is it our job to sort, divide, categorize or exclude. But it is our place to love all our neighbors, aid the less fortunate, and to be a voice on their behalf.

Welcome!
Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God. ~ Romans 15:7

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ST.MARK'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

St. Mark's Member/Visitor Information Card
Please provide the following information:

First Name:_____

Last Name: _____

Email Address: _____

Physical Address: _____

Home Phone: _____

Cell Phone: _____

If you'd like more information about St. Mark's, please scan the St. Mark's Website QR code below.

If you'd like to receive emails from St. Mark's or update your contact information, please scan the Contact Form QR below. You may also fill out this form and place it in the offering plate.

St. Mark's Website

Contact Form