

# *The Messenger*

From the Desk of Pastor Colin

Dear St. Mark's Family,

As the crisp air of December heralds the arrival of Advent, our hearts and minds turn towards the cherished traditions and the deep spiritual journey that this season brings. Here at St. Mark's, we're preparing to welcome you with open arms to a series of special services that are the heart of our Advent celebrations.



Advent is a time of reflection and joy, a period to pause and ponder the miraculous story of Christ's birth. It's a period rich with meaning, and our church is dedicated to making it a memorable experience for each of you. We have planned a variety of services throughout December, each designed to bring us closer together in faith and fellowship.

Imagine the warm glow of candles during our evening services, the beautiful voices filling the Sunday worship, and the special serenity of our Christmas Eve celebration. These moments are not just about following traditions; they're opportunities to feel connected, to share in the joy and love that defines our community at St. Mark's.

In the midst of the holiday rush, I encourage you to find moments of peace within our church walls. Whether you come with your family, friends, or simply bring your own contemplative heart, you'll find a space of welcome and warmth. Our church is a haven where we can all come together, united in the spirit of the season.

This Advent, we also embrace the spirit of giving and kindness. Your involvement in our community outreach efforts, whether through volunteering, donating, or offering a prayer, is a reflection of the love and generosity that Advent inspires in us all.

(Prayer)

Heavenly Father,

In this sacred season of Advent, we open our hearts to Your grace. As we prepare to celebrate the birth of Your Son, Jesus Christ, guide us in the path of love, peace, and joy. Help us to be mindful of the true spirit of this season, finding moments of quiet reflection amid the festive flurry. May our hearts be filled with Your light, and may we extend that light to those around us. Bless our church, our community, and all who seek comfort and joy in this holy time. May our gatherings be reflections of Your love and our actions be inspired by Your wisdom. In this time of anticipation, let us cherish each moment, each prayer, and each act of kindness, as we await the joyous celebration of Christ's birth. **Amen.**

As your pastor, I look forward to sharing these beautiful Advent services with you. Let's come together to make this a time of spiritual depth and communal joy. Your presence is what makes our church community so special!

Wishing you a blessed Advent filled with peace and joy,

Pastor Colin

3350 North Delany Rd  
Waukegan, IL 60087



## **Our Staff**

Pastor Colin Cranmer

Victoriya Berezchna  
Organist

Eric Aho  
Director of Musical Ensembles

Jill Shepherd  
Stephen Ministry  
847-989-1919

Joanie Ryan  
Office Manager

Ken Swanson  
Facebook Page

Cody Ammons  
Webpage Master

Wayne Voss  
Council Chair

## **Contacts:**

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**On Facebook:**

"Friends of St. Marks"

"St. Marks Youth & Family"

"St. Marks Lutheran Church"

"St. Marks Yarns of Compassion"

"God's Work. St. Mark's Hands"

## **Our Mission Statement:**

*Come celebrate  
the gift of Jesus Christ.  
Grow together in faith and love.  
Share the Good !*





### Happy December Birthdays!

"May the light of the Lord shine upon you and grant you happiness on this birthday and for many years to come."

## Happy Anniversary



### Happy December Anniversaries!

"May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you."



### COOL FOOD PANTRY - FOOD OF THE MONTH:

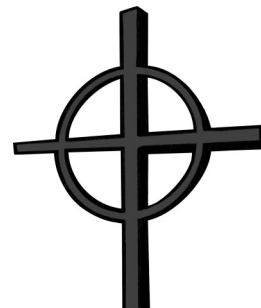
#### December: Side Dishes



### Because church is like a family reunion.

"Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God."

**Romans 15:7**



**Invite someone to church, we'll save a seat!**

### *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*





### December Calendar Reminders

Saturday, Dec. 2nd	9 AM Prayer Ministry 5:30 PM Child-friendly Carol Sing-A-Long 6:30 PM Christmas Light Show Kick Off. Savor hot cocoa & pizza, courtesy of Galloway Senior Living
Sunday, Dec. 3rd	10 AM Worship Service Heritage Sunday Advent Begins
Monday, Dec. 4th	7 PM Women of St. Mark's
Tuesday, Dec. 5th	7 PM Reflections in the Spirit
Wednesday, Dec. 6th	Finnish Independence Day
Friday, Dec. 8th	7 PM Gather Bible Study
Sunday, Dec. 10th	10 AM Worship Service Christmas Radio Pageant
Monday, Dec. 11th	7 PM Church Council
Tuesday, Dec. 12th	12 PM Reflections of the Season
Sunday, Dec. 17th	10 AM Worship Service Celebration of the Seasons Blue Christmas
Sunday, Dec. 24th	4 PM Christmas Eve Worship
Monday, Dec. 25th	Merry Christmas! No Worship Service
Saturday, Dec. 30th	Tentative Creation Walk
Sunday, Dec. 31st	10 AM Renewal Worship Service

*December Schedule Subject to Change*



If you have not done so in the past year, please fill out a communion registration card, next time you are at church. This card, along with a contribution of record, will allow you to vote at our Spring 2024 Congregational meeting.

Completed cards can be left in the offering plate, or in the donation box located outside the sanctuary wall in the Narthex. If you have any questions, please contact the church office



God has welcomed me into the body of Christ. I trust in Jesus Christ as my Savior. I confess my sin and my need for God's grace; I desire to live a new life in Christ; I believe that Christ is truly present in this Sacrament with gifts of forgiveness, life, and salvation. I declare my desire to come to the Lord's Table.

#### COMMUNION REGISTRATION

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

(If you are a member of another congregation, you may write on the back of this card your church's name and location.)

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### 2023 Poinsettia Orders

Consider enriching the Christmas Eve Service with a red poinsettia, which can be picked up after worship. Contributors and designations will be published in the Christmas Eve Worship bulletin.

Poinsettia plants provided by Mary's Greenhouse

7" Pot (\$20.00 each)

10" Pot (\$35.00 each)

(Foil will be green and no bows will be provided)

Order forms are available in the Narthex & online.

Deadline is Friday, December 1st, 2023



Stephen Ministry  
Walking with God  
Christmas Greetings December 2023

*May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit*  
Romans 15:13

### A Christmas Message

I remember standing in the crypt of a small church in Bethlehem. We had driven in an Arab bus with Arab guides through the shuttered Arab towns that lay between Jerusalem and Bethlehem to one of the central shrines of the Christian world, the place where Jesus, the stories told, had been born. In the public square, Jewish soldiers sat in jeeps mounted with machine guns. There was passion on both sides and sullen determination everywhere. These were foreigners in their own land, both the Arabs and Jews.

I looked across the hillsides that surrounded the village and the church. I tried to imagine David and his sheep, a young man and his pregnant wife, a band of angels and let the soldiers stomp through life. Let the cold winds blow. Let the birth points of all our lives be drowned in obscurity. Let the days seem mundane and fruitless. This place in Bethlehem, cold, dark, small, worn down by years of discovery, justifies them all. Jesus had been here before us. Bring on the days of our lives. We have a God who has already walked them and found them holy-making.



We knelt on the marble floor, the sticky August day steaming around us, and we sang "O Little Town of Bethlehem" slowly and softly. "The hopes and fears of all the years," we sang with new conviction, new understanding, "are met in thee tonight."

Jesus had been born into the very world in which I, myself, was living. And weathered it and loved it and changed it. Whatever the difficulty of any other dimension of belief, this element was obvious. No historian had ever doubted it or contested it or

challenged the truth of it. Jesus had been born. They synagogue took issue with him. The state feared him. The people saw in him a figure like no other. Clearly, the face of God had shone upon us. What else could I possibly need to live my own life more fully?

### A Blessed Christmas and New Year to All of You— Joan Chittister

We are so blessed with a beautiful church with beautiful people and beautiful hearts! Please join us this Christmas to helping people, worldwide, who are suffering from hunger and poverty. In a world of conflict and uncertainty, with God guiding, us we can lift up hope and new opportunity for those in need.



### Here are the ways to make a donation to ELCA World Hunger:

Pay by mail - Make checks payable to "ELCA World Hunger" and mail to

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
P.O. Box 1809  
Merrifield, VA 22116-8009

Give by phone - 800-638-3522

Monday-Friday, 8:00am-5:00pm central time

Give through your congregation -

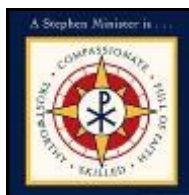
Make checks payable to your congregation, write "ELCA World Hunger"

in the memo line, and place your gift in the offering plate.

Wayne Dyer: "Make a conscious decision to look for the unfolding of the Spirit in everything and everyone you encounter."

### Aurora Leigh

Earth's crammed with heaven, And every common bush afire with God; But only he who sees takes off his shoes, The rest sit round it and pluck blackberries  
-Elizabeth Barrett Browning



May hope, peace, joy, and love fill your hearts this holiday season!

Jill Shepherd  
Stephen Leader







**St. Mark's Chili Supper**  
**"A Party With A Purpose"**  
 All proceeds support the  
**COOL Food Pantry of**  
**Waukegan, IL.**





**Nov. 17, 2023**

The Women of St. Mark's thank all members and friends who made the Fall Church Yard Sale and Pulla Bread a success.



Even though heavy rain forced the yard sale inside the Fellowship Hall, sales were made. A special thank you to Pastor Colin for getting the word out through social media and for setting up the tables and chairs in the church fellowship room for members to set-up items for sale.

The monies earned enabled the Women of St. Mark's to contribute \$400.00 to St. Mark's Maintenance Projects and Foundations for the Future fund, plus monies to 3 of the 10 missions Women of St. Mark's supports – North Chicago Veteran's Closet, Lake County Pads and WELCA Disaster Fund.

Our thanks to Amy Fontana and Helen Ostman for organizing the Fall Pulla Bake.

Members gave of their time to make the bread on Saturday.

Monies earned from the sale have been donated to St. Mark's Church to help with the lights for the church Christmas outdoor light project and the following local outreach missions, "Keeping Families Covered", and a local family in need.

The words from 1 Peter 4:10 reflect our purpose: God's Work Our Hands. "God has given gifts to each of you from His great variety of spiritual gifts. Manage them well so that God's generosity can flower through you." 1 Peter 4:10 NLT (New Living Translation).

**From the Women of St. Mark's Ministry Team**

**Nov. 17, 2023**



Thank you to all St. Mark's members and friends who worked together to make the 14<sup>th</sup> Annual COOL Chili Supper a success. A special thanks to Amy Fontana and Helen & Bob Ostman for coordinating the event.

A combination of ticket sales and additional monies donated resulted in a \$1200.00 plus donation to the COOL Food Pantry.

Participants also gave food donations at the door to help feed those in need.

We are reminded of the words from Proverbs 19:17

"If you help the poor, you are lending to the Lord – and He will repay you"

Thank you for sharing your gifts with others in need.

**Bridgette Otterbacher**



**Feeding the Hungry ~ Housing the Homeless**

Dear Friends,

*On behalf of all the staff, board members, volunteers and clients served at COOL, I would like to express our sincere appreciation to you and all of the members and volunteers at St. Mark's for your help in hosting the Annual Chili Supper this year in support of our work at COOL.*

*We truly appreciate the time and effort of everyone involved in making this event a success. Due to your efforts this year, COOL received \$1,366.00 from St. Mark's for the chili supper proceeds and \$650.00 in additional donations for a total of \$2,016.00 and 170 pounds of food and veteran items. These funds will surely go a long way toward helping us to serve those who come to COOL in need this season.*

*Blessings to you and everyone at St. Marks for all you have done throughout the year and thank you for hosting this annual event.*

Sincerely,

*Mindy Lindholm, E.O.*

Mindy Lindholm  
Executive Director

**Please join us on Wednesday nights from 7pm to 8pm for our Zoom discussion group.  
Come be encouraged by hearing about God's work in each other's lives!**



### PLEASE NOTE

St. Mark's has installed a smart lock (timed lock) on the East fellowship (basement) entry door.

For safety reasons, the door will automatically lock at 10:15 am on Sunday's.  
Therefore, if you are not upstairs - or, are late to church, please proceed to the main entrance upstairs.  
Thank you in advance for helping keep us all safe!



If you are presently not using Simply Giving, but are a consistent contributor to St. Mark's you may want to consider the Simply Giving option.

Simply Giving allows you to donate via credit card or direct withdrawal from checking or savings which allows for better financial management of the church budget.

For further information please contact the church office or Wayne Voss.

For those of you already using Simply Giving, thank you sincerely for your repeated contributions and your support of St. Mark's in this manner.

If you have a 'Thank You Note' that you would like the congregation to be aware of please email to the church office prior the 15th of each month, in order to make the "next month's" publication.



St. Mark's would like to offer our sincerest thanks to the following individuals for their gifts in memory of family & friends.

#### In Memory of Mary Arneri

Carol Bonnes  
Jill Shepherd  
Lucille Tolonen

#### In Memory of Henna, Martin and Steve Granvik

And, Beatriz Ramos Dos Santos  
E. Helen Collins

#### In Memory of Walter Griffin

Albert, Mae & William Klass

#### In Memory of Helen Hart

Jill Shepherd

#### In Memory of Carolyn Poole

John Poole

#### In Memory of Eleanor Senteney

Bob & Helen Ostman  
Lise Myllymaki  
Paavo & Helena Pelkonen

#### In Memory of Leonard Tolonen

Lucille Tolonen

### Yarns of Compassion

doing God's work with their hands!!

Stop by the counter in the narthex to see their latest display & pick up a prayer square.





### Yarns of Compassion

Join us the 3rd Monday of each month (Jan. thru Nov.) from 7 - 8 PM at St. Mark's.

Feel free to join them as they continue to do God's work with their hands.

New members (of all skill levels & age groups) are always welcome!

If you don't know how to knit or crochet, they will be glad to teach you.

*"Kindness with Every Stitch Created for you with love and prayers."*

Dear Helen,

Thank you Very Much for the baby hats  
and afghans. They are all beautiful.  
The family and babies are grateful!!!

May God Bless Everyone who made  
these beautiful gifts!

thanks,

11.7. 2023

Thank you for the booties + hats.  
New babies, family and staff appreciate  
your time and thoughts.

Blessings to you all!

*Jiji Stahl*  
↓



  
VISTA  
HEALTH SYSTEM

**Thank You  
Yarns of  
Compassion**



### Christmas Party Parking Lot Shindig!

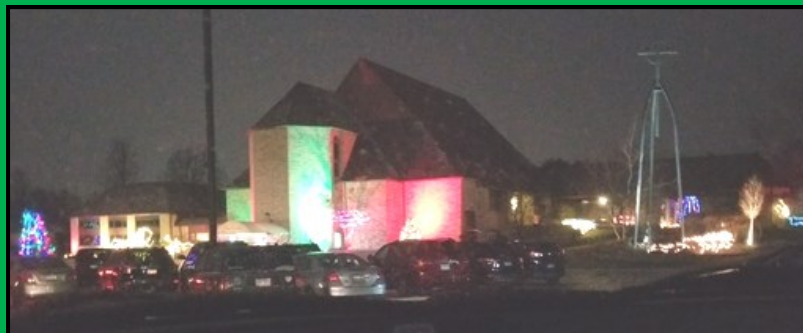
Please join us on Saturday, December 2nd at 5:30 PM  
for our Christmas-themed Contemporary Worship Service,  
and then directly following at 6:30 PM for our Christmas light kickoff!!  
Free food! Savor hot cocoa & pizza from Brooks Wood Fire Pizza Food Truck,  
Courtesy of Galloway Senior Living

Our Christmas light display covers over a football field in length,  
is automated and timed-to-music.  
We will countdown to our lighting launch and then have a party in the parking lot  
with the Doughnut Hut Food Truck and other vendors.

We will also be raising funds to support a local charity called  
Keeping Families Covered  
which provides diapers and other basic needs to families.  
Their mission is to eliminate the barriers that exist to access basic human needs  
for the most vulnerable residents in the local Waukegan/Lake County  
communities.

We are asking attendees to please bring diapers, and period supplies  
to help fill their diaper truck!!

<https://www.keepingfamiliescovered.org>

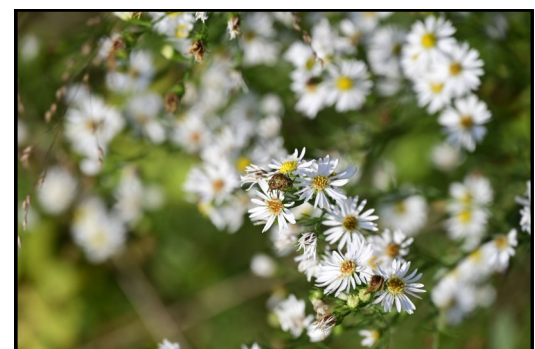
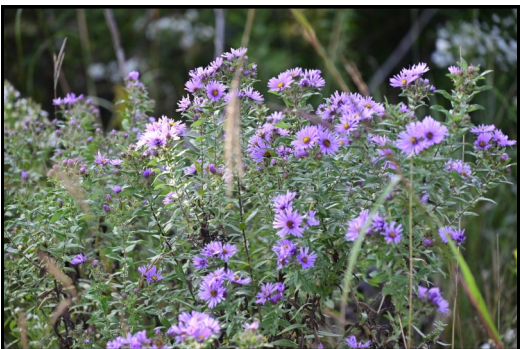




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"Church is not something you go to,  
it's a **family** you belong to."



**December 2023**

St. Mark's Lutheran Church  
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Waukegan, IL. 60087

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