



The Lookout

March-April 2026

Invitation: To the Dirty Dust, Mucky Mud, and Living Waters of Lent

Have you ever met anyone from the upper Midwest whose favorite month is March? I haven't. Even though the first day of spring falls this month, March seems to be made up of roughly 70% winter and 30% mud, with filthy roads, encrusted shoes, and dirty entryways. In March, it can feel like springtime will just never come.

The last Sunday in February was also the first Sunday in Lent, and on that day, we heard about Jesus' 40 days in the wilderness, as told in Matthew 4. Like March, Lent can feel like a wilderness. We start with the dusty ashes smudged across our foreheads on Ash Wednesday, only to follow that with the gritty gravel of the desert. It can feel like Easter will just never come.

Just like the mud we track inside in March, the dirt and dust of the desert will also soften into mud as we travel through Lent and hear Jesus' stories and teachings about water. The second Sunday in Lent, we will hear Jesus tell Nicodemus that "no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit" (John 3:5). And in the waters of baptism, God gives us new life, even amid the desert.

The third Sunday in Lent, we will hear the story of Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well. Jesus will ask her for a drink of water for his bodily thirst, yet just a few sentences later, he will also explain to her that "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life" (John 4:13-14). Jesus will reveal himself as the source of living water – as the source of all true life.

On the fourth Sunday in Lent, Jesus will mix mud from the dirt at his feet and his own saliva, spread it over the eyes of a man who was born blind, and tell him to wash his eyes in the pool of Siloam. In splashing his face with water, the man will miraculously gain his sight (John 9:6-7). Slowly but surely, our March and Lenten mud will be cleared away.

Finally, on the fifth Sunday in Lent, we will remember how Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead. Lazarus' body was buried in the earth, but his resurrection is accompanied by the most profound waters of all – the tears of grief that Jesus wept over the death of his friend (John 11:35).

As we journey together to the cross, we may find ourselves wandering through many kinds of wildernesses – sickness, depression, grief, or any other dry, lonely period in which we find ourselves. In times like these, it's all too easy to think that new life will just never come. But this March and this Lent, I invite you to look for signs of rain, softening our parched wildernesses into fertile soil in which something new can grow - new hope, new mercies, new life. I invite you to look a little more closely under the bushes where yesterday there was only soggy muck – soon there may just be a few snowdrops and crocuses. Soon the well-watered soil of our lives may yield more flowers and fruit than we thought was possible. And when March and Lent are over, we may just find ourselves standing with Mary Magdalene at the empty tomb, supposing Jesus, with fresh dirt under his fingernails, to be the gardener (John 20:15).

Peace, Pastor Laura

St. Mark's Church

424 Hyde Park Avenue
Waukesha, WI 53188
262-547-8213

Welcome2stmarks@gmail.com

Worship Services

In Person and Live Streaming
Sundays at 9:30 a.m.

Office Hours

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday
9:00 am—1:00 pm
Administrative Assistant
Courtney Saffran

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FOOD Pantry
OF WAUKESHA COUNTY



March and April

Wanted: canned items

Put your detective skills to work to help end hunger. Tammy and Benjamin are hiding in your cupboard. They were last seen hanging around your cupboards and pantry.

Reward: Feel good about helping others in need. However, any and all food items are appreciated.

Barb Kehoss



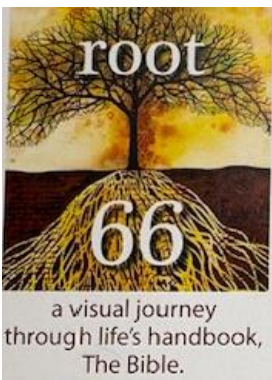
SENIOR + CONNECTION

Senior Connection team is excited to have

Christian artist, Linda Gerard Dzik,

join us on April 14th at 11:30 am

for a potluck lunch (dessert provided)



Presentation by Linda following lunch. She is bringing some of her originals and prints will be available to purchase.

Council update

On February 16th, your Council met. Council liaisons for the Gather, Grow, and Go were determined. Mary Ann Sindelar & Lou Hernandez are point persons for the Gather Teams.

Susan Cyr & Dave Hojnacki will be contact persons for all Grow Teams, and Sharon Collins & Laura Goralski will be the Council connection for the Go Teams.

On February 21st, there was a Council retreat at church. On the third Sunday in each month, two of the council members will be seated at the far end of Fellowship Hall.

They will be there to hear concerns and try to answer questions, as best that they can. Feel free to join them with a cup of coffee and treat.

At our March meeting, we hope to choose the MET and Call teams.

And on March 10th, we will be Zooming with Pastor Kristin Nielsen to discuss our next steps toward calling an interim deacon or pastor.

For detailed minutes of the meeting as well as Pastor, Deacon, Treasurer, and Property reports, please check the bulletin board in fellowship hall.

Deb Gerner, Council President



Ruth Circle

We will meet on March 18th in Fellowship Hall at 1:00 pm. We will discuss chapter 16 in our book.



In April, we meet on the 15th. Please let Mavis know if you are coming.



Cast all your cares on Him because He cares for you.
1 Peter 5:7

If you are in need of support and comfort for what is happening in your life, join this group for a morning. We offer comfort, God's word, music, inspiration and sharing. YOU will be welcomed and encouraged.

Great cookies too!

We gather the second Thursday of each month in the upstairs lounge and would be happy to see you.

Our Next Gatherings are at 10:00 am
Thursday, March 12th
Thursday, April 9th

Anne Link 414-379-4619

ALL ARE WELCOME



From Deacon Marcia Marquardt

"And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love." Romans 8:38a

Dear St. Mark's Family and Friends,

I discovered my prayer journals from years ago as I was cleaning up. I paged through the notebooks and read bits and pieces of my heart being poured out to God over the years. Some joys and victories. Some anguish and worries. Some struggles that repeated over and over. All of it is a true reflection of my heart. All of it gently and lovingly received by God. I was touched once again by the amazing love of God to receive me just as I am. That great love that continues to listen to me and respond to my needs—even at my worst moments. Through every page and heartache. Through every moment and challenge. God has been there.

As I have been thinking of my upcoming retirement and what I wanted to say to you in my final devotional letter in the Lookout, I landed right here in God's love. I want to tell you one more time that God loves you. Just as you are. Through every challenge and heartache. Through your ups and downs. You can count on God's love to never waver or fail for you. Isn't that something?! We might feel unworthy. We might carry messages from ourselves and/or others that tear us down. We might question or doubt God. But God's love for us is always there. As we make our way to the Cross and then to the Empty Tomb again this Spring, we see the love of God at work to rescue us through Jesus. That's a love that will never give up. God loves you!

God, soak us and refresh us with your love. Amen.

In God's Love and Grace,
Marcia



Bible Study on Wednesdays and Thursdays

Begin a new journey of getting to know God through his Word! All are welcome! No Bible experience needed. We study the worship Scriptures for the coming Sunday and apply it to our lives.

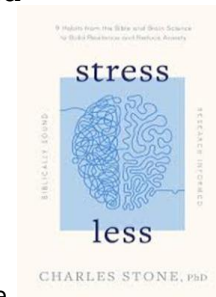
The study meets on Wednesdays at 3:45-5:15 pm on Zoom only and on Thursdays at 10:00-11:30 am on Zoom AND In-Person in the fellowship hall.

The **Wednesday study will NOT** meet during Lent (February 18th-April 1st). The **Thursday study will NOT** meet during Holy Week (April 2nd).

Zoom meeting ID number: 817 7030 6574 Contact Marcia for the passcode.

A Conversation about Stress Less on Mondays, March 2nd and April 6th

Gather with others to read and discuss the book, *Stress Less* by Charles Stone. From his PhD research, Pastor Charles Stone presents nine actionable insights for those battling stress or who have friends or family with fear and anxiety. While we can't eliminate the stressors of life, we can learn to navigate them with courage and grace.



The Conversation about *Stress Less* meets on the first available Monday of the month at 3:30-5:00pm on Zoom. We will meet on **March 2nd and April 6th**. There is no homework. We read a chapter from the book together in the Conversation each month. The group will continue to meet on May 4th and June 1st to complete the final chapters in the book.

Marcia Marquardt leads the discussion. The group meets on Zoom: 817 7030 6574. Contact Marcia for the passcode.

Lenten Midweek Worship Wednesdays in March at Noon

Our Lenten midweek worship on Wednesdays at noon in person and on Facebook/YouTube. It is based on the centuries-old Sarum Prayer:

God be in my head and in my understanding.
 God be in my eyes and in my looking.
 God be in my mouth and in my speaking.
 God be in my heart and in my thinking.
 God be in my end and in my departing.



Matt Frost (February 25th), Marcia Marquardt (March 4th), Holly Wolfe (March 11th), Anna Miller (March 18th), and Karen Handford (March 25th) will share a devotional message relating to a portion of the Sarum Prayer each week. Please join us for this Lenten journey.

Join us for

HOLY WEEK AT ST. MARK'S

Palm Sunday
9:30 am
March 29th

Maundy Thursday
6:30 pm
April 2nd

Good Friday
12:00 pm
April 3rd

Easter Sunday
9:30 am
April 5th



ST. MARK'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

Easter Garden

It is time to order flowers for our Easter Garden. Pink envelopes will be available at the Flower sign up in the Narthex.

DEADLINE TO ORDER is March 15, 2026

Easter Lily - \$24 Hydrangea - \$58
 Mum - \$24 Azalea - \$54
 Kalanchoe - \$14 Calandiva - \$14



Flowers can be picked up after the service on Easter Sunday. They will be labeled. Any questions...contact Barb Helling 414-378-8435

PALM PLANTS for PALM SUNDAY/EASTER

If you are interested in donating a palm plant which you can take home after Easter Sunday.... you can do that! The cost is TBD (approximately between \$20 and \$30).

Please contact Barb Helling (414-378-8435) if you are interested.

Special Lenten Offering: Water For Life

Our Stewardship Team invites you to give a special offering during Lent to provide safe water access for a community in the world. A simple water well or other water point can help as many as 500 families gain access to clean, safe water and remove a barrier to their overcoming poverty. Our goal is to donate \$2500 or more to purchase a simple water well through ELCA Good Gifts. You can contribute by writing a check to St Mark's Lutheran Church with "Lenten Offering" on the memo line. You can contribute online at St Mark's website. Simply select "Lenten Offering 2026 Water for Life" on the giving tab. Nearly 90% of your gift directly supports this program. Thanks for sharing God's love through this special offering.



Serving at the Hope Center

On Friday, March 27th from 5:00-7:00

Might you be interested in serving a meal at the Hope Center on Friday, March 27th from 5:00-7:00pm? The Hope Center provides and prepares the meal. Our team serves, cleans up, and provides milk and cookies. It's a wonderful way to share our time and God's love to those in need in our community. Contact Mary Ann Sindelar for further information.

MaryJo and Chris Christensen, Mary and Bob Johnson, Kathy Faber and Ann Gorman served a hot meal of tomato soup and grilled cheese to many at the Hope Center on a cold January night. Our hearts were filled with their thanks and gratitude.

"This Is My Story. This Is My Song."

How has God used St Mark's to influence your faith and help you? Here are some of our members responses:



"I came to St Mark's to find my place, to have the feeling of belonging. I am blessed to be here with all these godly people."

"I see God's love and grace overflowing here! Thanks, St Mark's!"

"It was 1978...the night after my consecration as a Lay Minister. 'Here I Am, Lord...if you lead me' rang in my ears all night. The words in that song gave me the courage and ability to serve...and continue to love and serve the Lord and my church."

"The amazing generosity of the people of St Mark's has led me to be more generous with my time, my money, and my gifts."

"I have been getting stronger by attending Bible Study, being in a Huddle, Ruth Circle, serving at Hope Center, participating in serving Communion, attending church regularly, and listening to the BEST sermons."

"St Mark's is the closest knit and most generous congregation I've ever been a part of. Truly, "you will know they are Christians by their love" could have been written about this congregation. So many members inspire me! Thanks be to God for St Mark's!"

2026 Scholarships

Pastor James and Nadine Wilch Scholarship Fund Scholarships and Grants Available

Applications through wilchscholarshipfund@gmail.com

1. Any member of St. Mark's or past recipient of the Wilch (St. Mark's) Scholarship fund is eligible to receive up to 4 scholarships in their lifetime for any educational opportunities i.e. professional expenses, undergrad and advanced degrees, technical school, and career. It does not need to be consecutive years.

2. Applicants need to let us know of their interest by March 15th, at the website address above. Then, interested applicants will be directed to the Waukesha Community Foundation to fill out the official applications.

3. A high school diploma is all that is needed to apply, all ages are invited. Questions may be directed to wilchscholarshipfund@gmail.com

Members of the Wilch Scholarship Fund Lynn Delzer, Sara Cortichiato, Tarah Gerner, Kelly Colgrove, Christine Fenner, Tom Bluma



Property Team Update – February

Waukesha Lawn Service has been doing a great job clearing and salting the parking lot and sidewalks after snow events.

Due to sewer drain back-ups in November and December, **Ingrilli Plumbing** came in January and used a camera in the lower-level drains all the way out to the street. A clog in the pipes under the restrooms was found and it was cleared. No other issues were reported.

The **Water Utility's** reading for December shows that our water usage is back to normal. The spike in water usage in November correlates to the weekend of a funeral, so someone may have left water or a toilet running.

Please help us by remembering to turn off all faucets when using.

Welcome Team Guidelines were updated to show members where the **new Fire Suppression Blanket** is located (*under the pulpit*), and where supplies are located in the Welcome Center cabinet for anyone becoming ill or for vomit clean-up.

A second **vacuum** has been purchased. It uses bags to filter out the dust, and it has attachments, so that we can vacuum the pew seats and get into corners.

EZ Window Cleaning has been scheduled for March 31st for the annual pre-Easter window cleaning in the Sanctuary and in Fellowship Hall.

Thank you to: Larry S. for repairing the old boom microphone, and to **Bob J.** for repairing ceiling lights that needed new ballasts.

Respectfully submitted, Christine Fenner, Property Chair

Funerals

The comfort of Jesus is shared with our members and their families who have lost loved ones:

Kyle Thomas Handford, son of Karen Handford, died on December 22, 2025. Memorial service was held at St. Mark's Lutheran Church on January 10, 2026.



On January 10th, 26 members braved the cold to attend the soup and grilled cheese lunch at **Senior Connection**. Brownie sundaes and rousing games of BINGO were enjoyed by all. Fun conversations and fellowship added to make it a great afternoon.



On February 17th, the **Mardi Gras** celebration was enjoyed by 33 members and friends. Thank you to: Bob and Gene for flipping pancakes. MaryJo had gift bags of her homemade fudge for each to take home. The quilters gave 3 St. Patrick's quilts for prizes. Special thanks to Terry Inman for donating 4 sets of tickets to the Rotary Pancake breakfast. Special thanks to Barb and Gene for making the beautiful and delicious King Cakes. Sue Remfrey found the baby (see you next year!)



Moving Mountains

Marcia joined us at St. Mark's Church in September 2014 and brought us Bible Studies, Discipleship Huddles, Blue Christmas, Prayer vigils, Women's Retreats, Mission Trips, Conversations Group, sermons, smiles, hugs and so much more! Join us in celebrating Marcia's retirement on Sunday, May 3rd.



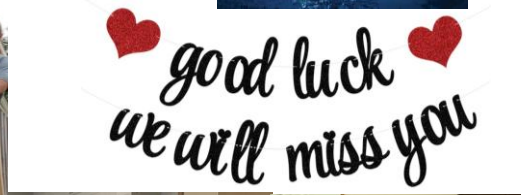
Blue Christmas
a Service of Hope for the Holidays



Bon Voyage



Magnificent
Mystery
Mission Tour



Rooted

**Women's
Retreat**



Moments with Marcia

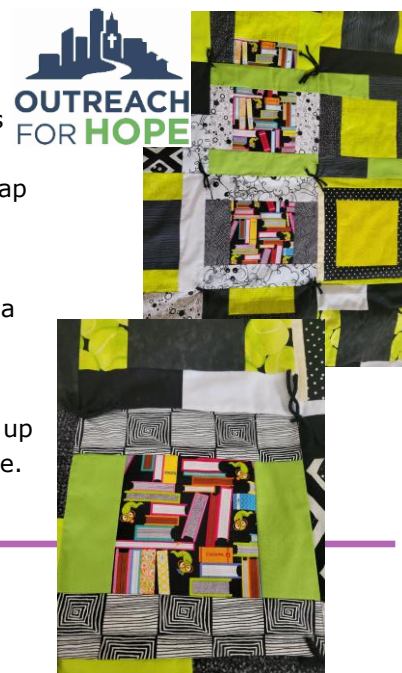
Quilters

Quilters have been busy in the last two months. Fifteen quilts were donated to Outreach for Hope in Milwaukee. We are happy to help Outreach for Hope in their mission to serve low income communities across the Greater Milwaukee Synod. These ministries meet daily needs and, even more, stand as centers of transformation and hope in their neighborhoods. Last week a dozen children's quilts were delivered to Family Promise in Waukesha, and fourteen lap robes were delivered to Tricia's Troops in Delafield.

Thanks to Jennine's creativity we were able to donate a "Bookworm Quilt" (see photo) to the Friends of the Waukesha Public Library. Staff members at the library were thrilled to receive a quilt to auction off to raise funds for the library.

Drop by on Monday morning to see the quilting mission in action. If anyone knows of a need anywhere in the community, please let us know. We can make arrangements for a quilt pick up or delivery. Please contact the church office at 262-547-8213 and be sure to leave a message.

Vickie Friedeck and Cathy Hernandez



2025 Financial Summary

2025 ended on a positive financial note for St. Mark's, even though we ended with a deficit.

The 2025 budget called for a deficit exceeding \$36K. Thanks to an increase in our envelopes and QCD's received (\$274,934 vs. \$248,771 in '24) and other factors, our end of year net income was approximately -\$7,800. This figure includes our principal payments of over \$7500 on the mortgage. Some accounting systems do not regard principal payments as an expense, but we do.

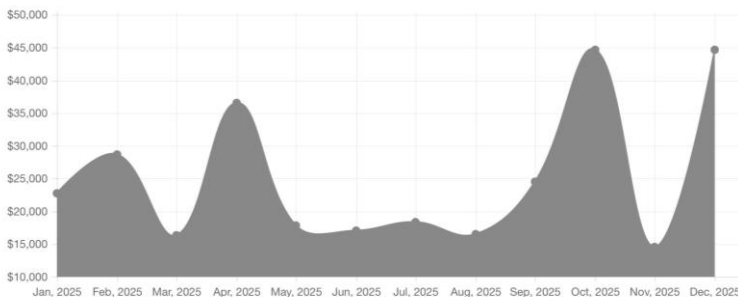
As of the end of January, St. Mark's mortgage balance is approximately \$140K.

On behalf of the Congregational Council, I would like to express my deep appreciation to the members and guests of St. Mark's for the generous financial gifts this past year.

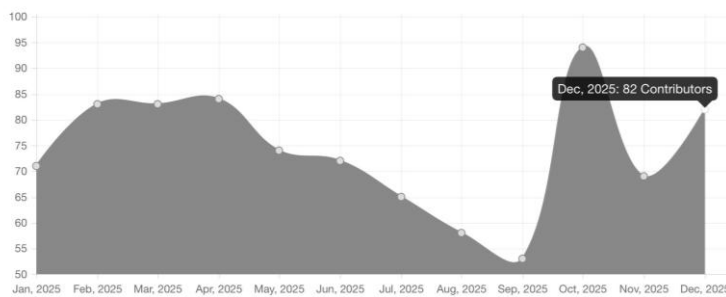
Below are two graphs that our Breeze system generated that show some interesting, but not surprising patterns of giving in 2025. You will note that the summer months are the low point in giving in 2025, as they are most years.

Frank Remfrey, Treasurer

Giving over Time



Number of Givers



Getting it Right: A Call to End Homelessness

SOPHIA Housing Justice Task Force will be hosting author and homeless services advocate, Kevin Nye, at 10:00 AM on Saturday, March 28, at the Waukesha Public Library. Kevin demystifies homelessness by addressing complex issues and advocating for more effective, humane responses to the housing crisis. Kevin's recently-released book, *Hope for the Mission: Getting it Right in the Call to End Homelessness* will be available for purchase.



Earth Day Celebration

Sunday April 19th - 11:30 AM
North of the Sunset Petco/Target in Waukesha
Petco Address: 1240 W Sunset Dr #102,
Waukesha, WI 53189



Rain or shine, let us celebrate Earth Day together! We will gather to talk about what Earth Day means and what we can do in our own lives to make a difference. Snacks will be provided, but please bring your own water. After a 15-20 minute conversation, we will enjoy the Fox River trail and boardwalk at your leisure. Please reach out to Jeremy Bjerke at: jerbjer@gmail.com with any questions.

Get THE LOOKOUT via Email!

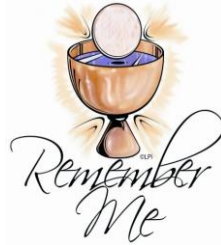
The Lookout is a bi-monthly Newsletter.

You can receive the newsletter by email or pick up a black/white version at the welcome desk in church or in the Blessings/Little Library Boxes outside the church. If you would like to be added to the email list, please send your name and email address to: stmarkslookout@gmail.com. Thank you! If you have questions, contact Rene Bjerke at the above email address.



Communion At Home

Do you have difficulty coming in person to Sunday Worship? We have Home Communion Visitors who bring communion and conversation to members in their homes about once a month. One of our Visitors would love to connect with you. Contact Marcia or Pastor Laura for more information.



Hospital Visits

If you find yourself in the hospital or a rehab facility for a few days or weeks and would like a visit from Pastor Laura or Deacon Marcia, let us know! Sometimes people are in the hospital and we don't learn about it until the hospital stay is over. You can also request a visit over the phone instead, if you don't want Pastor Laura to see you in a hospital gown! If you know in advance you'll be in the hospital or your stay is an extended one, you can reach out to the church office to request a visit (262-547-8213). If it's urgent, you can call or text Pastor Laura directly (608-424-8738).



PRAYER CHAIN

Do you have a Prayer Chain request? Others will pray for you! Please Contact **Lana DeCoto** at: lrdcoto@gmail.com.

Weekly Email Blast

Stay current with Happenings at St. Mark's by receiving the weekly email blast. Contact Courtney Saffran at welcome2stmarks@gmail.com to get signed up.



The Blessings Box

Please **NO Canned Goods or FRESH Foods** in the Blessings Box. Thank you for sharing God's love with our neighbors by placing dry goods in the Blessings Box located near the sidewalk at the main entrance. Please **DO NOT** place canned foods that might be damaged by heat in the summer and freezing temperatures in the winter. Please **DO NOT** place fresh foods in or near the Blessings Box. Fresh food spoils quickly and attracts critters. Thank you for helping the community.



Reducing Waste at Coffee Hour

The Council invites you to take a small step to reduce waste by bringing your own coffee cup with lid for filling at Coffee Hour each Sunday. Disposable cups will always be available. **Please do not bring coffee or tea into the sanctuary to keep the carpeting clean and stain-free.**



Devotional Booklets for April-June 2026 will be available in March



Looking for a way to connect with God daily? Try **The Word in Season** devotional booklets. They are a **FREE** quarterly resource that provides a brief Scripture reading, message and prayer for each day. Their small size makes it easy to place in a pocket or purse. They are available at the entry stations and in the Blessing Box and Little Library at the church.

Zoom Meeting Numbers

We will be using the church's Zoom account for online meetings and small group gatherings in the future. Here are the numbers:

Faith Formation Gatherings, including Bible Study

Zoom: 817 7030 6574 Password: 945456

Church Meetings

Zoom: 823 2326 4353 Password: 830997

