St. Mark's Evangelical Lutheran Church

The Lookout

September-October 2026

Invitation: To love our neighbor as ourselves

"*You shall love your neighbor as yourself.*" Matthew 22:39,
quoting from Leviticus 19:18

Each week, at the conclusion of each Bible reading, the congregation responds to what we have just heard: "Praise to you, O Christ," or "Thanks be to God." Well, some of the readings coming up in the gospel according to Matthew might be a little harder than normal to give thanks for.

In the coming weeks, Jesus is about to tell us a bunch of harsh parables and teach us some hard lessons. If our sibling sins against us, forgiving them once isn't enough. We're to forgive them 77 times (some translations say seven times seventy times!) (September 13). The landowner doesn't dole out wages based on his workers' long hours under the hot sun but pays everyone equally out of sheer grace (September 20). We might feel like there's an accusatory finger pointing at us when we hear that obedience is more about what we do than about what we agree to (September 27), that it's all too easy to put our own affairs ahead of God's invitations (October 11), or that all that we have belongs to God – not to us (October 18).

Yet Jesus' words to us aren't really a sharp scolding, but a demonstration of how we might live out the words of God's Torah: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." (September 6). Loving our neighbor as ourselves does require seemingly infinite patience and infinite forgiveness. It involves pouring out God's eternal grace on those we deem "deserving" and those we don't. It involves following in Christ's footsteps in deed and not merely in word. It involves setting aside our own interests and relinquishing our control.

This list might sound impossible for us to achieve! But luckily for *us*, it also means that God forgives *us* with infinite patience. God rewards *us* far more lavishly than what might be "fair." God accompanies *us* in action, and never empty promises. And God invites *us* to step away from our day-to-day affairs to celebrate God's joyful reign.

As we enter this busy fall season, I invite us to a season of recognizing how much we have received in God's abundant grace, forgiveness, compassion, and mercy, and to extend that same grace and mercy to one another.
Let's practice (and it is always a *practice!*)
loving our neighbor as ourselves.

Peace,
Pastor Laura

Stone Soup celebratory potluck luncheon - September 13th
Outreach for Hope Ride Run Walk – Sept 26th
Healing Service - Oct 18th
Commitment Sunday - Oct 18th
Reformation Sunday - Oct 25th
All Saints Day - Nov 1st
Inasmuch Day - Nov 7th
Quilt Sunday - Nov 8th

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

Contact Info

Pastor Laura Frost
[redacted]

Deacon Jen Elsenbroek
gmsdeaconjen2026@gmail.com
906-202-2657

Deb Gerner
Council President
msgerner@yahoo.com
262-352-3494

Lou Hernandez
Council Vice-President
stewlou@hotmail.com
262-719-6910

Lookout Editor
Rene Bjerke
stmarkslookout@gmail.com

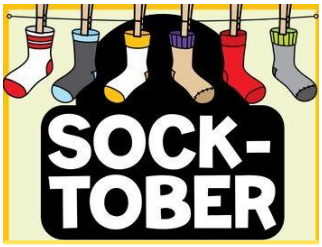
Website
welcome2stmarks.com

FOODPantry OF WAUKESHA COUNTY

THE SALVATION ARMY

September-October

For September, let's SOCK-tober-- Kids are back to school. Let's sock it to hunger in September. Please include a pair of socks with any healthy after school treat for a snack attack- raisins, trail mix, granola bars, or peanut butter and jelly. Whatever you can think of is welcomed.



In October for Halloween, we can treat our community to comfort food that will warm their stomachs such as Hamburger Helper, canned stew or chili, Chow Mein chopped suey, or anything that warms your soul. Remember, all food is appreciated.

{cup of comfort}
this is where the healing begins

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, September 10th
Thursday, October 8th

Anne Link 414-379-4619

ALL ARE WELCOME

What Is Ruth Circle?

Ruth Circle is a welcoming group of women who meet on the **third Wednesday of each month at 1:00 p.m.** in Fellowship Hall.
Each meeting includes: A devotion, prayer with and for one another, discussion of a faith-based book and the Bible. And, of course, dessert!
Ruth Circle also enjoys serving our community. Each year, we sponsor a **Diaper Drive**. Last year, we donated **3,586 diapers** and **7,998 baby wipes** to Hebron House and the Food Pantry, helping support local families in need. Please consider this your personal invitation to join us. Whether you've attended before or are looking for a place to connect, we would love to welcome you. Please let Mavis know if you are coming.
Our next meetings are Wednesday, September 16th and October 21st at 1:00 p.m. in Fellowship Hall. We hope to see you there!

SENIOR + CONNECTION

September 8th, 2026
11:30 am - Fellowship Hall
12:00 pm lunch
$5.00 per person at the door
Come and enjoy conversation, food and hear about the exciting plans we have for this upcoming year. We can't wait to spend this time with you!

Senior connection planning team: Marilyn, Sue C., Betty, Ann G., Mary Ann, Mary Jo, Nancy, Anne

October 13th, 2026

11:30 am - Fellowship Hall
12:00 pm lunch
$5.00 per person at the door
First in our series of St. Mark's members sharing their knowledge; member: Susan Cyr
Susan will be sharing her knowledge based on her career with Medicare issues. This is a perfect time for this message of understanding Medicare and any changes that might occur before December.
Bring your questions for Sue!

Looking forward to seeing you! Guests are welcome.

Dear Church,

I am thrilled to be your transition deacon. I have found getting to know all of you to be both enjoyable and fulfilling! The installation service was extremely meaningful to me, as well!

I am especially grateful to the council and Pastor Laura for allowing me to embark on a long-awaited anniversary trip to Europe so soon after I began working. I would like St. Mark's to know that I landed at 5:00 am on Sunday July 26 and found a Lutheran church to attend that morning! St. Finian's Lutheran Church (Irish equivalent of an ELCA) was a delightful church to attend. Not only did they use similar liturgy, they also were very welcoming! Pastor Martin was thrilled to hear about St. Mark's as well. Perhaps there will be a way to make a connection in the future. Our vast world gets smaller all the time.

Aside from going on vacation, I have been enjoying all the ways I have gotten to know about all the ministries at St. Mark's. I have enjoyed the many discussions that occur in Bible Study and in committee meetings as we grow together. I have also enjoyed preparing and giving sermons as we gather and grow. I enjoy going out to share the good news with others in our community and within the wider community.

Because my family has always worked in education, Fall has always felt like it's a new year. I am looking forward to Sunday School and Confirmation. I am also looking forward to making a connection between St. Mark's and the local schools.

My hours in the office have been more sporadic than I had initially planned; however, with the start of school I think they will be more consistent. I will be in the office from 9-1 Monday-Thursday. Please be sure to let me know if you need some extra time to talk because I am available.

Peace be with you~ Deacon Jen

Bible Study on Thursdays

All are welcome! No Bible experience needed. We study the worship scriptures for the coming Sunday and apply it to our lives. Deacon Jen will be leading the Bible Study.

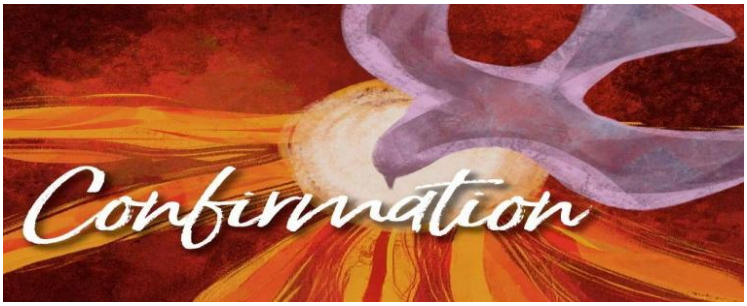
The study meets on Thursdays at 10:00-11:30am on Zoom AND In-Person in the fellowship hall.
Zoom meeting ID number: 817 7030 6574
Password: 945456

Funeral

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

David Stearns, husband of Connie and father of Craig, passed away peacefully on July 3, 2026, surrounded by the love of his family.

A visitation and funeral for David was held on Monday July 13th, 2026, at St. Mark's Lutheran Church.



Registration for Youth Confirmation

If your child is entering grades 6-8, registration for the 2026-27 school year is at tinyurl.com/4yx23jpv. Confirmation classes will allow your child to ask (and get answers to) big questions like "Who is God?" "What is Lutheranism about?" "What do I believe?" and much more, as they prepare for the rite of Affirmation of Baptism. Questions? Reach out to Pastor Laura.

Change in Communion Service

We have a few changes in our communion service. We now have a new credence table behind the altar on which all communion items will be placed. At the time of Holy Communion, Pastor Laura and the assisting minister will set the table. St. Mark's had a credence table for many years and stopped using it when the chancel wall was redone because it no longer fit the space. Communion trays will also be changed a little. **The first tray will hold white grape juice in the center and red wine around it. The second tray will be empty and you may place your empty cup in it. We will no longer use the wooden bowels on stands for empty cups.**

There will be reserve wine and grape juice so we won't run out. We hope this will be a pleasant experience for everyone. Thank you.

Council update

On August 17th, your Council met. As a nod to the successful Stone Soup Campaign, it was decided that we will have a potluck soup lunch on September 13th after church. There will be a sign up for soups, bread, and crackers. Additionally, there will be a freewill "noisy offering" (coins and bills can be dropped into our soup pot) The collected cash will go to The Soup Project of Waukesha that feeds those in need. Please feel free to check out their website: https://donorbox.org/the-stone-soup-project?utm_medium=qrcode&utm_source=qrcode

We are starting to prepare for our annual meeting on December 6th. Those who lead a team or group, please submit a written review of your efforts and happenings this year. Those reports will be due October 26th. In addition to voting on our 2027 budget, we will vote on new Council members, a gift policy, a revised version of our Legacy Fund document, our revised Building Use Document, and revised Constitutional language as encouraged by our Synod. Thank you to those who have worked on these documents. It is work behind the scenes that can easily go unappreciated or noticed. Thank you for what you have done on behalf of the rest of the church.
Deb Gerner, Council President

Sunday School Begins on Sunday, September 13th

Sunday School will resume in September. During the school year, Sunday School is held on the 2nd & 4th Sundays of the month. Children will be excused for the class with teacher Suzanne Lorenz after the Children's Message and return to worship in time for Holy Communion.

Contact Suzanne Lorenz for more information (sfl3993@gmail.com or 262-510-8849).

Blessing of the Backpacks

Join us during the Children's Message on September 6th as we ask for God's blessings on students, teachers, and the academic year. Students and teachers of all ages and learning levels are invited to bring their backpacks, satchels, briefcases, etc. to worship for this special day.

Property Team Update – August

Thanks to all our generous members, who donated to our "Stone Soup" campaign, the new boilers will be installed the week of August 24th!

Inspections completed:
Otis – did the quarterly servicing of the elevator on June 25th. Everything passed.
1st Choice – did the servicing of the two rooftop AC units on July 10th. Refrigerant was needed in both units at a cost of $860.00.
Annual City Fire Inspection was completed Monday, July 20th. One violation was remedied – one of the exit lights in Fellowship Hall needed to be replaced.
Water meter was replaced on August 10th. (The meter is replaced every five years at no charge).

Two new First Aid Kits (and extra band aids for the Quilters), have been purchased. One kit is in the kitchen on top of the refrigerator, and one kit is in Courtney's office.

Many thanks to everyone who contributes their time and talents, to help keep our church building and grounds in excellent condition!

Respectfully submitted, Christine Fenner, Property Chair

Jennifer Manvilla's 20th anniversary with St. Mark's!

On Sunday, August 2nd, St. Mark's celebrated Jennifer for her 20 faithful years of service to St. Mark's Church. A basket full of cards and well wishes was given to Jennifer to thank her for her years of music and talents here.

Installation of Deacon Jen as St. Mark's Transition Minister

On Sunday, August 16th, Pastor Afi Dobbins-Mays installed Deacon Jen as our Transition Deacon. Thank you to Pastor Afi for her message that morning.

Excitement is building for the 2026 Outreach for Hope Ride, Run, Walk!

In July, the Rollers and Strollers Team of St. Mark's held a fundraiser at Panera on Sunset, attended by members of St. Mark's, Galilee and Ascension Lutheran churches. We are grateful for all who came out! Our team for the Ride, Run, Walk is still growing. You can be a part of the fun on September 26th! Register to ride a road or trail route, take part in the 5K fun run, join in the 2-mile walk, volunteer to help, or just to stop by and join us for a free lunch. Register at **www.OFHRRW.org.** Check out the table in the Narthex at St. Mark's for more information. Feel free to talk to Gene Geiger (262) 510-9002 if you have any questions.

Welcome to our Fall Stewardship Appeal

Each year we take time to reflect on what God has been doing in and through St. Mark's which helps us to prepare our hearts to invest in God's mission. Thank you for your valued investment which supports our positive impact as we Gather, Grow, and Go out to serve the Lord.

On Sunday, September 20th, our Fall Stewardship Appeal will be announced during the Mission Moment. Our theme this year is John 15:5 "I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit". God, our gardener, provides what we as seeds need to grow, tend, and care for his harvest of generosity.

There will be weekly faith stories shared during Sunday worship reflecting how God has used St. Mark's to grow, shape, and support faith journeys. As part of our theme this year we will be singing the hymn "For the Fruit(s) of all Creation" during our worship services.

Please join us on Commitment Sunday, October 18th when we can present our "2027 Estimate of Giving Cards" to the Lord during worship. Following worship, all are welcome to enjoy our pot-luck luncheon where we all enjoy your favorite dish to share.

Watch for the sign-up list. All are welcome, and All means All.

More details will be in our upcoming weekly email blasts and bulletins that will have information regarding our postcard, brochure, estimate of giving card and letter.

Quilters

Like a pebble dropped into a pond, our St. Mark's quilts send out ripples of care and comfort into the community. We were contacted by someone who received a lap robe from Tricia's Troops. She was so moved by the gift of a lap robe from St. Mark's to help her get through her cancer treatment that she decided to donate a stash of her quilting material to St. Mark's. The quilters were very excited to get 4 boxes of beautiful material to create more quilts. The ripples of care and comfort will continue with a new batch of St. Mark's quilts.

Be sure to mark your calendars for Quilt Sunday on November 8th.

Our schedule will be every other Monday until September 14th. Feel free to join us but be sure to check the church calendar for quilting dates. 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

Tower Hill Picnic on July 25th

Sue is discussing Waukesha's parks with a representative from the City's Park and Recreation Department.

AV Team

Have you ever watched our service online or been part of seeing worship projected up front? It is our wonderful A/V team that makes that happen. These outstanding people are looking for a few additional helping hands to expand their current team of 4. Our worship service is regularly viewed and enjoyed by members and non-members alike.

An A/V team member shared, "running the A/V is not as hard as people think". A team member will orient and guide you through the steps of the A/V process. They will also show you how to sign up for weeks you are available. To be fully prepared for worship, the A/V person generally arrives about 9:00am. Being a St. Mark's volunteer helps build and support our church community; our A/V team reaches St. Mark's members at home and beyond.

If you are interested or have any questions, please speak with the A/V person on any Sunday. They will likely offer you to shadow them so you can see what it entails.

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 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, 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 that you will 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: lrdecoto@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 to get signed up.

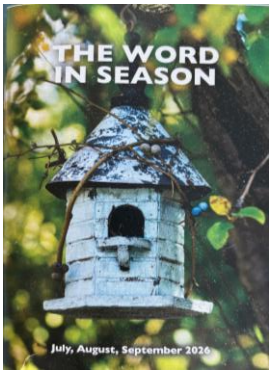
The Blessings Box

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 carpet clean and stain-free.**

Devotional Booklets for July-September 2026 are available now
October-December available in September



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