

Proclaiming Christ's Abundant Love

St. Mark's Lutheran Church

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Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

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

We're on the web!
www.stmarksaurora.net
www.facebook.com/stmarksaurora

PASTORAL ACTS

Planning a Baptism?

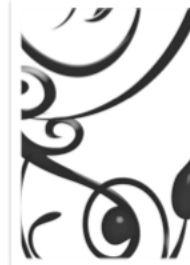
Visit the Welcome Center for a
Planning for a Baptism at St. Mark's brochure.

Planning a Wedding?

Visit the Welcome Center for a
Planning for a Wedding at St. Mark's brochure.

HOSPITAL STAYS

Under the federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA), hospitals are greatly restricted in their ability to disclose patient information. Consequently, the pastor or church office may not be notified that a parishioner has been admitted to the hospital. In the event you are hospitalized or ill and you would like the pastor to know, we please ask that you or a family member inform the church office directly. We care about you! 630-897-6891



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I am the vine, you are the branches. (John 15:5)



The Vineyard Press

January 2015

Volume 15, Issue 1

Annual Meeting Sunday, January 25th at 11:45 am



St. Mark's will hold its Annual Meeting for all confirmed, communing, and contributing members on Sunday, January 26th following the 10:30am worship service. **Your family is welcome to join us for a pizza lunch and**

then we will provide child care while we conduct the business meeting.

Our agenda includes: distribution of the annual report, election of new church council members, approval of the 2015 budget, and the year in review video!

The Annual Meeting is important because it is a time for all members to celebrate what has already been done and support our ministries for our future together. Please plan to attend this meeting and become part of this important process.

Year End Giving

During the Season of Advent we consider again the gift of God's own self in the person of Jesus of Nazareth – his challenging words, healing work, and transforming ministry. **As the church, we are this gift of Jesus in our world today.** The Incarnate One continues to live through us: our words and our work, at home, at our places of employment, at school, in the community, in the world, and through the church.

The end of 2014 and the beginning of 2015 is upon us. **Please consider "catching up" in your financial support or giving an additional gift to our ministry, if you are able. This giving enables us to meet the goals we establish together.**

As we celebrate The Gift, we become The Gift. When we work together we can accomplish more in our ongoing effort to mend the world, - tikkun olam.

Thank you for your partnership in the Gospel.



Adult Study - Community Bible Experience

Join us for a new eight week study on **Tuesdays, starting January 6th at 10:00am**. When it comes to spiritual growth, nothing has more impact than the Bible. However we all need help getting into the Scriptures. Community Bible Experience offers a new model for reading the Bible, equipping whole churches to experience God's Word together. The plan takes us through the entire New Testament. Each week, we will meet to discuss five simple questions around the Bible reading. But this isn't just another Bible study; anyone can join, no matter where they are in their spiritual journey. Pastor Brian Wise will facilitate this study.

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OUTREACH

During the month of January, Outreach is highlighting St. Mark’s commitment to **PADS**.

Beginning in January, St. Mark’s hosts **PADS** on the **2nd Saturday** of every other month. Each time we need your help to prepare dinner for about 200 men, women, and children.

As we have for the last several years, we would like to collect enough nonperishable items to take us through all of 2015. That’s six months of dinners. Please help us collect the items listed below which can be purchased at Sam’s Club, Gordon Food Service (GFS), and Costco. **If you prefer, you may make a money donation and we will purchase the item for you.**

PADS 2015 Dates

January 10
March 14
May 9
July 11
September 12
November 14

Join Us!
Sign up at the Welcome Center.

Cold Weather Menu

Cranberry Chicken

- Minute Rice
5 – 72 oz. boxes
- Canned Fruit
6 cans (6-7 ib.)
- Mixed Greens
5 cans (6-7 lb.)
- Vegetables
4 cans (6-7 lb.)
corn, green beans
- **Decaf** coffee
3 lb. can



www.hesedhouse.org

Warmer Weather Menu

Sloppy Joe’s

- 3 Bean Salad
6 cans (6-7 lb.)
- Canned Fruit
6 cans (6-7 ib.)
- Baked Beans
6 cans (6-7 ib.)
- **Decaf** coffee
3 lb. can
- 1 Lrg. liquid laundry Detergent each time we serve.

How Can I Support PADS

- Be a volunteer at PADS
- Give to our January food drive
- Donate on Souper Bowl Sunday
- Donate year around:
 - › Hotel size toiletries
 - › Wash cloths & bath towels
 - › Twin size bed sheets
- Check PADS web site wish list at **www.hesedhouse.org**

Thank you!

Thanks to all our great PADS volunteers this year: Jim & Linda McArdle & family, Scott & Janet Mayhew & family, Pastor Al Bergh, Mark & Rebecca Walker & family, Tom & Jack O’Reilly, Adele Buss, and Brett Deiter. Please join us in 2015.

SERVERS FOR WORSHIP

January 3 & 4	Saturday, 5:00pm	Sunday, 9:00am	Sunday, 10:30am
Acolytes	David Hunger	Giovanni Sally	Bradley Regh, Nicholas Wan
Adult Worship Assistants	TBA	TBA	TBA
A/V Desk	Kasey M.	TBA	TBA
Altar Care	Don Bryant	Team A	Team A
Bread Baker	Pam Krasinski	Pam Krasinski	Pam Krasinski
Hospitality Team	Bryant, Jaraz, Jensen, Deiter	Team A	Team A
Reader	Kathy Walz	Team A	Team A
Welcome Center Hosts	Virgil Ostreng	Team A	Team A
January 10 & 11			
Acolytes	TBA	Zac Uhm	Sam Walker, Sophia Bartell
Adult Worship Assistants	TBA	TBA	TBA
A/V Desk	Kathy W.	TBA	TBA
Altar Care	Sheila Johnson	Team B	Team B
Bread Baker	Matt Greising	Matt Greising	Matt Greising
Hospitality Team	Tomlin, Toynton	Team B	Team B
Reader	Clare Toynton	Team B	Team B
Welcome Center Hosts	Martha Egeland	Team B	Team B
January 17 & 18			
Acolytes	TBA	TBA	Alyssa Mayhew, Eva Peterson
Adult Worship Assistants	TBA	TBA	TBA
A/V Desk	Nancy C.	TBA	TBA
Altar Care	Al Lettow	Team C	Team C
Bread Baker	Susan Manning	Susan Manning	Susan Manning
Hospitality Team	Lettow, Ostreng, Shadle	Team C	Team C
Reader	Kasey Minard	Team C	Team C
Welcome Center Hosts	Dick & Aggie Shadle	Team C	Team C
January 24 & 25			
Acolytes	TBA	Hailey Jansen	TBA
Adult Worship Assistants	TBA	TBA	TBA
A/V Desk	Sheila J.	TBA	TBA
Altar Care	Erik Egeland	Team D	Team D
Bread Baker	Jens Jensen	Jens Jensen	Jens Jensen
Hospitality Team	O’Connell, Minard, Walz	Team D	Team D
Reader	Erik Egeland	Team D	Team D
Welcome Center Hosts	Virgil Ostreng	Team D	Team D

THRIVENT CHOICE DONATIONS

We are pleased to let you know that a deposit of **\$158.00** was made in St. Mark’s account on behalf of Thrivent Financial for Lutherans’ Thrivent Choice Program. Thrivent Choice lets its members help choose where Thrivent Financial gives back. Members eligible for “Choice Dollars” can help direct Thrivent Financials charitable dollars to thousands of Lutheran nonprofit organizations and congregations enrolled in the program.

Thank you to:
Sharon Vega, Frank Zieche, and Susan Zieche



Go to Thrivent.com/thriventchoice or Call (800) 847-4836 if you would like to make St. Mark’s Lutheran Church your “Thrivent Choice” in 2015!

ST. MARK’S STAFF

Pastor Patricia Geiseman , Pastor	Ext. 15 pgeiseman@stmarksaurora.net
Pastor Brian Wise , Pastor	Ext. 13 bwise@stmarksaurora.net
Kristin Young , Director of Worship & The Arts	Ext. 16 kyoung@stmarksaurora.net
Kari Reiseck , Director of Children’s Ministry	Ext. 22 kreiseck@stmarksaurora.net
Sue Hilderbrand , Director of Bell Choir	Ext. 24 shilder@aglresources.com
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John Themanson , Finance Administrator	Ext. 19 jthemanson@stmarksaurora.net
TBA , Facility Manager	
Jean Clementz , Faith Community Nurse	Ext. 23 jean.clementz@presencehealth.org
Merrilee Parkhurst , Director, Child Development Center	(630) 897-6063 stmarksdir@att.net
Terese Ruppel , Nursery Coordinator	(630) 466-1036 ter60554@gmail.com

COUNCIL MEMBERS

Rebecca Mueller Council President	(630) 907-9987 terry-becky@comcast.net
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Alan Jacobs Small Groups	alanlejacobs@gmail.com
Don Friend Worship	friend@fnal.gov

OUTREACH

Abundant Joy, Overflowing Generosity

Listen, God is calling. The New Year is always a time of new beginnings, it can be a time to live a new season of Abundant Joy, Overflowing Generosity. In the fall we explored how to give our time to God in prayer and Worship. We considered our talents and how they can be shared to bless others. We renewed our understanding that God calls us to be faithful caretakers of the blessings He gives us; He asks that a percentage be returned to the church and people in need.

As you consider your New Year’s Resolutions why not try something different this year? Resolve to connect and commit more to St. Mark’s in the coming year.

- Share your time by joining the Hospitality Team or bring a new outreach event to St. Mark’s.
- Share your talents and abilities by joining the choir, shoveling snow, or helping out with our Children’s Ministry programs.
- Share your resources by making/renewing a financial commitment to St. Mark’s in 2015. Blue cards are available in the pew racks; envelopes and cards are also at the Welcome Center.

Try something once and see how it goes; no long term commitment is required. Not sure where to start? Call Deb Arcilla in the Church Office and she will guide you to the right contact, (630) 897-6891.

When you answer God’s call to be a faithful steward, the blessings you share will be returned to you and your family in immeasurable ways.



Outreach Thank You



To all of the wonderful people of the Bread Wrapping Team. Some pick up donations from several Panera Breads and Jake’s Bagels on Tuesday at closing time and get it to church by 9:30am on Wednesdays. Others meet on those Wednesdays mornings to sort, wrap, and pack up the bread. We also have the group that delivers the bread to L.S.S.I Senior Housing and to Constitution House. Thank you to everyone in this very important ministry.

St. Mark’s Angel Tree

Many Aurora Children and Adults will have a very nice Christmas, thanks to the generous members of St. Marks. Each year Naomi Circle is very grateful for the continued support of our Christmas Angel Tree project. It is a great Outreach program for our local community. The need is always there and we are thankful that as a congregation we can provide for some of the less fortunate in Aurora, IL.

Blessings to each and every one of you!



THANK YOU

Thank You

The Shanks family would like to thank our church family for all the prayers, cards, and visits during Bill's illness. We felt your concerns. Thanks to Pastor Brian and Deacon Brett Deiter for communion visits and for the time of shared conversations. Also, thank you to the ladies who so graciously served the lunch after the services. God Bless all of you.

Sincerely, Charlotte, Brad, Lori, and Family

Gregg's Retirement Thank You

I want to thank the Pastors and fellow members of St. Mark's for your kind words, warm wishes, cards, and prayers as I begin my retirement. It has meant a great deal to me to feel so appreciated. The next chapter of my life will be a big adjustment and missing all of you will be a part of that.

God's blessing to all of you! Gregg Kobliska

Hesed House Thank You

On behalf of Annmarie and Kaley Martens, Lucy and I wish to thank St. Mark Lutheran Church for your continued support for our joint mission project at Hesed House. Our joint effort in staffing and providing meals and food supplies meet an important demand by the less fortunate in Aurora. We understand that both St. Mark Lutheran Church and Rejoice has continued to work to supply food items and with both our efforts to attract service volunteers, we look forward to a successful year in 2015.

Please convey to St. Mark's and the Hesed House volunteers our appreciation of the your combined efforts in supporting this important work. Wishing you, your family, and all of the members of St. Mark Lutheran Church a Blessed Christmas.

In God's Grace, Rejoice Lutheran Church, Hesed House Mission Project Team ~ Annmarie and Kaley Martens & Bill and Lucy Gain

FELLOWSHIP & MINISTRY

Newsletter Submission Information

Submissions for the **weekly Courier** are due each **Wednesday by noon** for that weekend's publication. Submissions for the **February Vineyard** are due **by noon on Wednesday, January 14th**. Submissions will be added in the order in which they are received. Early entry of your submissions is welcomed!

Please email articles for the Vineyard and Courier to Nicole Ferrier at: nferrier@stmarksaurora.net or place handwritten articles in her mailbox. If you have any questions please email or call Nicole at: (630) 897-6891 ext. 27.



Adult Fellowship Meeting

If you are interested in doing something new, please consider attending an adult fellowship event. We meet once a month to attend an event or visit a new location. Any adult is welcome to attend.

St. Mark's Adult Fellowship will hold their annual planning meeting on **January 22, 2015 at 10:30 a.m. at St. Mark's**. The group will go out to lunch afterwards at Mother's Restaurant at 2290 W Galena, Aurora. Please sign up at the Welcome Center.

Annual Report Due Date

As a reminder, **all articles and updates for the 2014 Annual Report are due no later than Wednesday, January 14th**. Any submissions after this date cannot be guaranteed entry into the report. Early submissions are greatly encouraged! If you have any questions please contact **Nicole Ferrier at: nferrier@stmarksaurora.net or (630) 364-9459**.

December 2014 Photos Needed!

If you have **2014 photos from any St. Mark's ministry or event** that you would like included in our publications, website, or at next year's "Year in Review", please email them to: **smyearinreview@gmail.com**. We are **hoping to collect photos monthly to keep our publications up to date and the photos organized for the Year in Review**. Please contact Pr. Brian or Nicole Ferrier if you have any questions.



WORSHIP & THE ARTS

St. Mark's Festival Choir Tour 2015

Next summer the St. Mark's Festival Choir will Tour Munich, Salzburg, Prague, and Vienna. During that time we will be a part of the Cantus Salzburgensis and perform Mozart's Missa Solemna with orchestras and other choirs from around the world at the Salzburg Cathedral under the direction of Professor Janos Czifra. We will also be a part of the Salzburg Folk Festival and present a 12 minute concert of American folk songs at the Great Hall Mozarteum.

Along the way we will: tour Munich, eat at the famous Hofbrauhaus, tour the Herrenchiemsee Palace approachable by boat only, Tour Salzburg, visit Mozart sites, Sound of Music sites, present a concert at Golling Medieval Fortress, partake in an authentic Austrian dinner with dancing, lunch along the Vitava River in the ancient town of Cesky Krumlov, tour Prague, present a concert at St. Nicholas Church, have an authentic Czech dinner with entertainment, tour Vienna and Schonbrunn Palace, and give a concert at St. Stephen's.



You are welcome to join us for the singing, for the fun, or just for an amazing trip. You don't have to sing to join us. Fliers and Enrollment forms are at the church Welcome Center. For more information contact Director of Worship and the Arts, Kristin Young.

NEW MEMBERS

Welcoming New Members

After completing St. Mark's New Member Sessions, the following have decided to join the St. Mark's family. Pastor Pat, Pastor Brian, and all of St. Mark's would like to warmly welcome the following new members into our congregation:



- | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| • Nancy & James Baxter | • Melissa & Kyle Lubash |
| • Maxine Dilworth | • * Emery & Adelyn |
| • Kevin Doyle | • Clint Meyer |
| • Amy & Aaron Eissens | • Cindy & Dave Peterson |
| • * Emily & Jacob | • Dianne Ries |
| • Mia Hicks | • Leslie & Mark Williams |
| • Taryn & Brett Hobson | • * Whitney |
| • * Aiden, Makenzy, Ashton, & Mia | |

NURSING THE SPIRIT

Make Health Your Resolution!

6 Ways to Get and Stay Healthy This Year

Make healthy food choices:

- Grab a healthy snack on the go.
- Eat more fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins every day.
- Limit foods and drinks high in calories, sugar, salt, fat, and alcohol.
- Start the day by eating breakfast.

Be more active:

- Take the stairs instead of the elevator.
- Park farther away and walk.
- Just move!
- Physical activity helps to:
 - Maintain weight
 - Reduce high blood pressure
 - Reduce risk for type 2 diabetes, heart attack, stroke, and several forms of cancer
 - Reduce arthritis pain and associated disability
 - Reduce risk for osteoporosis and falls
 - Reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety
 - Reduce arthritis pain and associated disability
 - Reduce risk for osteoporosis and falls
 - Reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety

Quit smoking:

- Call 1-800-QUIT-NOW for free counseling on how to quit smoking for good.

Protect yourself from injury and disease:

- Put on a helmet, sunscreen, or insect repellent.
- Wash your hands with soap for 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer.
- Cover your cough and/or sneeze.

Manage stress:

- Don't overschedule or overcommit.
- Take short breaks throughout the day.
- Build safe and healthy relationships with family and friends.
- Make time for prayer and/or meditation
- Balance work, home, and play.
- Stay positive, be grateful.
- Take time to relax.
- Get 7-9 hours of sleep each night.
- Get help or counseling if needed.
- Be ready for emergencies: gather emergency supplies, make a plan, and be informed.

Make an appointment for a check-up, vaccination, and/or screening:

- Get established with a health care provider if you don't already have one.
- Know your numbers: blood pressure, blood sugar, weight, and cholesterol.

Have a Healthy 2015!

Source: CDC Tips for a Safe and Healthy Life

“For I will restore health to you, and your wounds I will heal, says the Lord.” Jeremiah 30:17

I’m grateful for the opportunity to work with you and serve St. Mark’s faith community. If I can be of assistance to you or someone you know, please call me at (630) 897-6891, ext. 23.

Jean Clementz, RN
Presence Mercy Medical Center
Faith Community Nurse at St. Mark’s Lutheran Church



PRAYER CORNER

“Another Year Over and a New One Just Begun”



How do you measure a year? Is it big celebrations like: births and baptisms, confirmations and graduations, engagements and weddings, broken relationships and funerals? Or is it perhaps 10,000 little moments of grace? A smile from a friend or a stranger, a pat on the back, a hug, holding the hand of a dear friend, a heart to heart conversation, a baby’s laugh, or a parent’s sigh.

This is prime Resolution time; big, bold gestures for change. According to Paul Tripp, “Christianity...simply does not rest it’s hope in big dramatic moments of change.” Tripp suggests that transforming grace takes place in the everyday where you and I live. Change takes place in the routine, in the mundane, and in the ordinary day to day of life.

I’m not saying don’t make resolutions in the New Year. Big, bold gestures of change have their place. Rather think about your prayer life. **Prayer transforms us.** You don’t have to pray all the time but prayer doesn’t need to be confined to Saturday night or Sunday morning. Practice prayer every day and many times a day. I like what Marcus Borg says about prayer, “For me, prayer – addressing God paying attention to my relationship with God – is about reminding me of the reality and presence of God in the course of my day and days. It is about centering more deeply in God and about “opening” to God. It helps me be more centered, more present, more appreciative. I am convinced that prayer changes – that it transforms those who pray.”

So as 2015 begins, let’s practice prayer. It doesn’t have to be big, bold, beautiful prayers just simple prayers like, “Help me” and “Thank you”. Pray for help and health and protection for family, friends, and the world. Offer 10,000 little moments of grace every day.

~Sue Hilderbrand

TRACY McCLURE

To the Congregation of St. Mark’s,

It is hard for me to believe that my internship here is almost over. I feel like it was just yesterday that I was being introduced to all of you and excitedly anticipated our journey. I suppose the old saying is true: time sure flies when you’re having fun!

This year has taught me so much, both about Christian Education and about myself. I have learned from this congregation what it means to serve in ministry, as well as how to be a leader to students of all ages. Each of you has embraced my exploration with various projects and endeavors, and that support truly means the world to me. I have also grown in my faith from my time worshipping and learning here. I have truly loved singing, praying, and being in fellowship with everyone. The warmth that I have experienced in those moments I know I will cherish always.

“Thank you” doesn’t even begin to cover the gratitude I have for my time here. However, from the bottom of my heart, I say “thank you” for welcoming me, for honing my skills, teaching me countless lessons, for helping me grow in my ministry and faith, but above all, thank you for allowing me to be a part of this special congregation for the past year. I feel truly blessed to have spent my internship time here.

God’s Peace,
Tracy McClure



January Calendar

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 NEW YEAR'S DAY OFFICE CLOSED	2 6:30p Al-Anon	3 COFFEE SALES 5:00p Worship
4 COFFEE SALES DOUGHNUT & COFFEE CONNECTION 9:00a Worship 9:00a Sunday School 10:30a Worship 10:30a Come Together	5 7:00p Naomi Circle - Barb Price	6 10:00a Adult Study - Community Bible Experience 1:00p Staff Meeting 7:00p Glory Ringers	7 10:00a Bread Wrappers 1:00p Office Volunteers 5:00p Roaring Ringers 5:30p FDL, Confirmation, High School 5:30p Joyous Praise Bells 5:30p Learning Circle 7:30p Academy Singers	8 7:00p Lion's Voice Choir	9 6:30p Al-Anon	10 1:00p Nielsen Piano Recital 4:15p Blood Pressure Screening 5:00p Worship
11 9:00a Worship 9:00a Sunday School 9:30a Blood Pressure Screening 10:30a Worship 10:30a Come Together 11:45a Council Meeting	12 9:00a Spiritual Journaling 9:30a Faith Circle 6:00p Sanctuary Arts & Banner Team 7:00p Hannah Circle	13 10:00a Adult Study - Community Bible Experience 1:00p Staff Meeting 7:00p Glory Ringers	14 9:00a WVMTA Meeting 10:00a Bread Wrappers 1:00p Office Volunteers 5:00p Roaring Ringers 5:30p FDL, Confirmation, High School 5:30p Joyous Praise Bells 5:30p Learning Circle 7:30p Academy Singers	15 7:00p Lion's Voice Choir	16 6:30p Al-Anon	17 5:00p Worship 6:30p Brent Birthday / Farewell Party
18 COFFEE SALES DOUGHNUT & COFFEE CONNECTION 9:00a Worship 9:00a Sunday School 10:30a Worship 10:30a Come Together	19 9:00a Ruth Circle 5:30p Herbie's Friends	20 10:00a Adult Study - Community Bible Experience 1:00p Staff Meeting 2:00p Thrivent Retirement Seminar 7:00p Glory Ringers	21 9:00a WVMTA Meeting 10:00a Bread Wrappers 1:00p Office Volunteers 5:00p Roaring Ringers 5:30p FDL, Confirmation, High School 5:30p Joyous Praise Bells 5:30p Learning Circle 7:30p Academy Singers	22 7:00p Lion's Voice Choir	23 7:00p Dreyer Meeting 6:00p Willyard / Gutierrez Wedding Rehearsal 6:30p Al-Anon	24 2:00p Willyard / Gutierrez Wedding 5:00p Worship
25 9:00a Worship 9:00a Sunday School 10:30a Worship 10:30a Come Together 11:45a Annual Meeting	26 9:00a Lydia's Piecemakers & Knit Pickers 5:30p Herbie's Friends	27 10:00a Adult Study - Community Bible Experience 1:00p Staff Meeting 7:00p Glory Ringers	28 10:00a Bread Wrappers 1:00p Office Volunteers 5:00p Roaring Ringers 5:30p FDL, Confirmation, High School 5:30p Joyous Praise Bells 5:30p Learning Circle 7:00p Hope Circle 7:30p Academy Singers	29 7:00p Lion's Voice Choir	30 ALUMINUM CAN COLLECTION 6:30p Al-Anon 8:00p Dreyer Nursing Training	31 5:00p Worship