



St. Mark Lutheran Church
3307 State Street
Eau Claire, WI 54701

April 2024

I was glad when they said to me:
“Let us go to the house
of the Lord.” – Psalm 122:1

Worship opportunities...

Sundays @ 8:00 a.m. (Livestream via Facebook or at www.stmark-wels.org, under “Watch Sermons Online.”)
Sundays @ 10:30 am
Mondays @ 6:30 pm

**Christ is Risen!
He is Risen Indeed!!**

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ST. MARK LUTHERAN CHURCH MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

April
2024

AT A GLANCE

- 2—Board Meetings
- 6—Altoona Mission Bible Study
- 7—Groundbreaking
- 9—Pastors Circuit Meeting
- 9 —Council
- 12—Power Hour
- 30—Confirmation Questioning rehearsal
- 3, 10, 17, 24—Afternoon Confirmation Classes
- 3, 10, 17, 24—Choir
- 4, 11, 18, 25—Campus Ministry
- 4, 11, 18, 25—Lion Hearts
- 4, 11, 18, 25—BIC
- 5, 12, 19, 26—Men’s Bible Study
- 5, 12, 19, 26—Morning Moms

Easter Waves, not Easter Bottles

Over the past month and a half, we have walked the Lenten path with our Lord in scripture and in song. We have seen Jesus our Lord as the perfect one on our behalf, following every command of God without fault and successfully battling every temptation of Satan. We have seen him raised upon the cross as the sacrificial lamb who has taken away our sins. Empowered by this gospel of forgiveness, we have followed our Lord’s Lenten call and have taken up our own crosses in life with a renewed zeal to battle against sin and temptation.

And we do these things with thankful hearts! Thankful that the word of God this Lenten season has shown us Christ in his glorious suffering and death for our salvation.

... Yet we also solemnly and reverently *waited* for Easter. We waited to hear the heart-warming gospel accounts, sing the hymns of victory, and greet friends with “Christ is risen!” We waited for the fragrance of lilies and the gold and white banners, both of which bring to mind—albeit indirectly—our risen Lord’s power over death.

Yes, we waited for Easter ... and Easter came ... and it went.

It is now the Easter season, in which we unfold all the powerful implications of Jesus’ physical and historical resurrection for our lives now and eternally. Jesus has broken the chains of death for himself and for all believers—for you and for me. He has proven that he is the Son of God, that every word he says is true, and that we too will gloriously live forever with him—soul *and* body. Yes, as he lives, we also will live.

Yet even as I look ahead to an entire season of Easter truths, in the past few days I have (in an almost melancholy way) pondered the idea of “bottling up” the warmth, confidence, and joy of Easter Day itself. I asked myself the familiar questions: “Why can’t every day be like this?” “Why can’t I just ‘bottle up’ this Easter Day joy and carry it with me throughout life, to make every sad or bad day *be* like this or *feel* like this?”

We must address two things in this misguided wish: First, we are still carrying our Lenten crosses. Our Lord’s call to deny ourselves and follow him always applies to us. Never will a day pass without direct or indirect assault from the devil, the world, and our sinful flesh. We will still be tempted. We will prostrate ourselves in prayer over doubts and fears. We will see physical death around us, and we, too, will physically die one day (if our Lord will not have yet returned in glory).

Of course, this isn’t news to us. We already know not every day will be “happy,” warm, or confidence-filled. [continued on page 3]



We welcome new members!

Kosmena & Joe Brunner & family
The Brunners started attending St. Mark prior to the pandemic, as they were seeking a school for their children, Evie (age 10) and Rhett (age 8). After watching services online during covid, they completed Bible Information Classes. Both Kosmena and Joe work in Eau Claire. They live close to Rock Falls. Joe loves to hunt and the outdoors. Kosmena enjoys reading, baking, homemaking, being a mom, running and various other activities.

Welcome to the St. Mark family!

Coming this weekend!!!

St Mark will be hosting a **ground breaking ceremony and fundraising kick off** on this Sunday, April 7, at 12:00pm. All members are encouraged to join in the festivities that day. God has been so good to us!

Ministry Expansion Update!

You will notice that construction for the Phase .5 classroom addition began the week of April 1. This is the first step towards realizing our Phase 1.0 plan which includes a new sanctuary, classrooms, administrative spaces, improved entrance / parking, multi-purpose rooms, and much more! The timing of this project is ideal since we will be holding the Ground-breaking Rite and Campaign Kick-Off event on Sunday, April 7, after the second service. Besides witnessing the ground-breaking rite, members are also invited to attend a picnic lunch in the Shaker Center afterwards to learn more about our ministry needs, plans, and campaign goals. A brochure containing information about the campaign will be distributed, along with a response card to turn in later on Commitment Weekend - May 19. Please take the time to read through the information, acknowledge the blessings you have through our ministry at St. Mark, and prayerfully consider how you might be able to support the campaign!



The footings have been laid!

St. Mark Ministry Highlights

Public Use of the Means of Grace:

Worship: We averaged 335 worshipers per weekend in March. The Lord's Supper was administered to 991 in March. Membership stands at 788 souls and 621 communicants.

Official Acts:

Baptized

Benjamin Mark Fictum 3/3/2024

Lucas Lee Weiss 3/10/2024

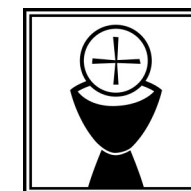
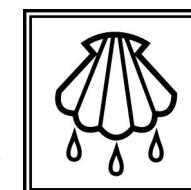
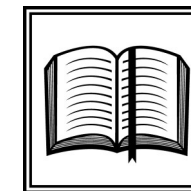
We say farewell to —

Candita Rank & children Grace,

William, Lydia & Sophia

And Matt & Debbie Krenz

to their own spiritual care



Important Info

If you are interested in joining the St Mark Church Facebook group, please use this link:



In fact, to pray for every day to be outwardly “good” or “happy” as the world would define is really a prayer against God’s will. Jesus himself promised believers that “in this world you will have trouble” (John 16:33). We cannot—nor should we ever—pray to wish away this will of God.

Second, there is also a problem with the wish itself—to “bottle up” Easter Day and “uncork” it when we want to get rid of the “sad or bad” in life. Why? That characterization is not in line with the Scriptures’ description of resurrection power and joy.

On the other hand, Easter is more akin to a large wave of water! As we grow weary from the attacks of the devil, the world, and our sinful flesh, the powerful wave of Christ’s resurrection crashes in destroys the accusations and power of these enemies. Why? Because Christ was raised from death “on account of our justification!” (Romans 4:25) Dear *Christian* sinner, because of Easter, you can be certain that you are not guilty in God’s eyes! Christ, your Savior, carried all of your sin, and he died with that sin on the cross. Now he lives in glory, proving that your sin is *still* nailed to that tree! So says Colossians 2:14: “[God] took away [the record of our debt] by nailing it to the cross.” When God’s law has done its work by striking your heart with guilt, this powerful Easter wave washes over you—reassuring you that you are forgiven, for Jesus lives forever and ever!

Yet this wave has not only a bearing on our conscience and hope of eternal life, it also crashes through into your daily life, affecting every facet of your Christian love and service to everyone around you. How so? Christ’s victory over death and sin in his resurrection means you also have been raised to a new life through baptism. (See Romans 6:3,4). Easter power isn’t something trite to be “uncorked” and “used on occasion” when the going gets tough. No, it is an all-encompassing power for loving service to God and neighbor. Our Heavenly Father daily places people to love and care for, right in front of us; and in the Holy Spirit’s baptismal gift of new life within—new life completely dependent on Christ’s resurrection—we gladly and willingly love.

Talk about an all-encompassing, always-present, wave of resurrection power! Don’t even try to “bottle it up” because it is already washing over you and filling your life.

So, face the future “bad and sad,” confident that your Savior’s resurrection supports you in weakness, comforts you in dark times, and surely delivers you unto eternal life.

-- Pastor Hollmann