



# THE LION'S VOICE

## Preparing the Way for the Lord

SAINT MARK LUTHERAN CHURCH ■ MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

### this month AT A GLANCE

2<sup>nd</sup> – New BIC – 6:30

4<sup>th</sup> – Evangelism mtg  
10:00

6<sup>th</sup> – Education – 5:00

7<sup>th</sup> – Elders – 7:00

11<sup>th</sup> – Schl of Outreach  
8:30 – 3:00 here

14<sup>th</sup> – Pastor's Conf –  
Ridgeland

16-17 – no school –  
WELS Tchrs Conf  
at West Salem

17<sup>th</sup> – Blood Drive –  
1:00 to 6:00

21<sup>st</sup> – Council – 6:00

22<sup>nd</sup> – Ash Wednesday  
w/Communion  
11:00 & 6:30

**Jesus went throughout Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. ...  
Repent and believe the good news! - Mk 1**

### **BELIEVE THE GOSPEL; THEN LIVE THE LAW**

There's news, and then there's good news. Ever since the Fall into sin in the Garden of Eden, our disobedient and sin-corrupted souls have yearned for good news. And somewhere in our sin-tainted thinking the human race has developed the notion that if you obey as many of God's laws as you can, that's good enough to merit his favor and a place in his heaven. That is, however, "not-good-enough" news.

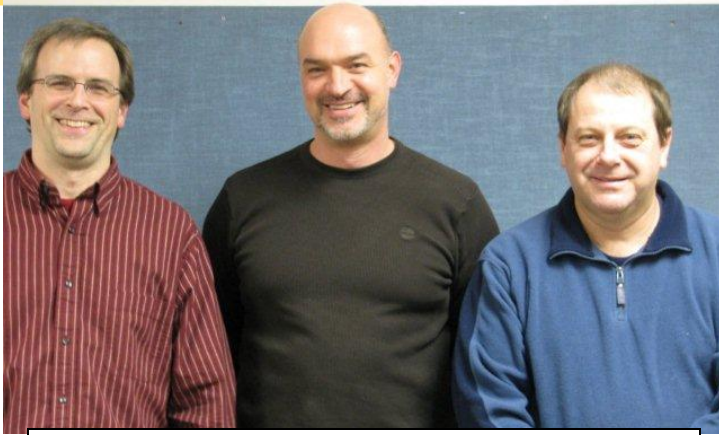
The good news Jesus proclaims is truly good news! His good news is that eternal life is a gift from God that he earned for us through his holy life and sacrifice into death. Jesus' good news simply calls us to trust him – to believe him when he declares himself to be our Savior. Heaven is for the believing, not through behaving. And we don't want to confuse the two.

Allow me to quote from a recent book that I'm reading. Entitled "*Christless Christianity: the Alternative Gospel of the American Church*" the author writes ...

*The question for us all is whether we believe the church is the place where the gospel is regularly proclaimed and ratified to Christians as well as non-Christians. Like many Emergent Church leaders, Kimball invokes a famous line from Francis of Assisi that I also heard growing up in conservative evangelicalism: "Preach the gospel at all times. If necessary, use words." Kimball goes on to say, "Our lives will preach better than anything we can say." ... If this is so, then this is just more bad news, not only because of the statistics we have already seen, which evidence no real difference between Christians and non-Christians, but because despite my best intentions, I am not an exemplary creature. The best examples and instructions – even the best doctrines – will not relieve me of the battle with indwelling sin until I draw my last breath. Find me on my best day – especially if you have access to my hidden motives, thoughts and attitudes – and I will always provide fodder for the hypocrisy charge and will let down those who would become Christians because they think I and my fellow Christians are the gospel. I am a Christian not because I think that I can walk in Jesus' footsteps but because he is the only one who can carry me. I am not the gospel; Jesus Christ alone is the gospel. His story saves me, not only by bringing me justification but by baptizing me into his resurrection life. ... That my life is not the gospel is good news both for me and my neighbors. Because Christ is the Good News, Christians as well as non-Christians can be saved after all. (pg 117-118)*

As Lutheran Christians we have always put a heavy emphasis on teaching the good news of Christ. Not only does the gospel create a saving link with Christ and his merits, but it also empowers us to freely live his commands to his glory. God bless your hearing of the good news of Christ!

- Pastor Prah



Mike Roberts, Eric Fischer & Charlie Betz

YIKES! Did that computer mouse just nibble away at my report? Or is my report floating around in the cyber clouds? Possibly you recently acquired a new tech gadget and are attempting to master its capabilities. Technology becomes more a part of our everyday lives. Consequently, we must learn new skills and often run into roadblocks that many of us are not capable of fixing or using on our own.

St. Mark church and school also are acquiring and making use of more technology; however, they too were finding difficulty in coordinating everything.

As a result, Charlie Betz explains that a special board (Board of Technology) was formed in July of 2010. The three members elected that first year were Randy Krass to a one year term; Eric Fischer to a two year term and Charlie Betz to a three year term. After the initial formation of the board, all newly elected members will serve three years, with the longest tenured person on the board serving as board chairman.

Eric Fischer is the present chairman along with Charlie and the newest member, Michael Roberts. Eric stated some existing goals are to document the board's procedures and maintenance duties, stabilize laptops for student and classroom use, prioritize budget for technology and present a plan to council and congregation. Going into the second year of existence, they continue to become more organized and focusing on issues that the St. Mark staff presents. Eric added that there are many volunteers but a lack of budget hampers the goals.

The board also is looking at the following (in no particular order):

- + video capabilities within worship service,
- + daily IT maintenance and maintaining someone whom the staff of St. Mark can contact for IT-related issues,
- + live web video/sound broadcasting,
- + service formats on web page: Apple formats (ipod/podcasts), MP3 downloads, service streaming
- + increasing communication to congregation—Shepherd's Staff or cloud-based access software specific for congregational and web page communication,
- + providing reliable network access to parsonage and teacherage.

It is clear that there are numerous opportunities to prepare students in tech skills and various tools to share the Gospel. May the Lord guide the work of this board as they volunteer their skills and knowledge in making wise use of these various tools.

Have you wondered what is happening with the "Build For Christ" fund? Have you wondered "What's happening with my debt retirement contributions?" At the voters' meeting held January 23<sup>rd</sup>, action was taken on all of those funds collected to date. It was decided that all "Build For Christ" funds collected through 2011 and all current and future debt retirement funds would be used to pay off our existing mortgage in May. Further decisions concerning the next eighteen months (1/2 of the length of the campaign) of "Build For Christ" funds will be made in July 2013. In the interest of good communication, the Stewardship Board plans to hold an informational meeting on Feb. 5<sup>th</sup> between services to help the congregation understand just what opportunities lie ahead.

Jere Schroeder  
Board of Stewardship

## St Mark News & Notes

**Special Open Forum** At the voters meeting a plan was adopted that in particular addresses a strategy for the refinancing of our capital debt (the loan agreement comes due in May of this year). The Stewardship Board will be explaining this plan and answering your questions in an Open Forum between services on Sunday, Feb 5<sup>th</sup> in the gym (in place of a Bible class topic). You are encouraged to attend.

**Sharing Christ With Others** Our elders, council members and those interested in a second WELS church in Eau Claire will come together this coming Saturday, Feb 4<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 to build on the discussion with members of our District Mission Board held on Jan 21<sup>st</sup>.

**School of Outreach 2** The second session of our district's School of Outreach will be held here in our facilities on **Sat, Feb 11<sup>th</sup>** beginning at 8:30am. There will be four presentations on the practical side of reaching out to the unchurched as well as sharing the gospel with others. There are also breakout groups for each participating congregation to figure out ways to follow through on the ideas they hear.

Want to get involved? Come Sat, Feb 11<sup>th</sup>. To help with planning, please signup in the entry or call the church office and leave a message.

**Blood Drive** We are again hosting a Red Cross blood drive in our gym on Friday, Feb 17, from 1:00 to 6:00. There are three ways to help: a) donate blood, b) donate food, c) volunteer to assist in various ways. See the signups in the church entry.

**Lent** is that holy and special season in which we focus on the deep love for sinners that motivated Christ to offer himself in our place under the holy

justice of God, that we might be forgiven and live eternally.

The season begins with Ash Wednesday Communion worship on Feb 22 at 11:00 and 6:30.

This year's midweek theme is **"SEE HIS CROSS! Surprising Words From Our Savior's Passion."**

Enclosed is a handy reference for times of service during Lent and Holy Week. Attach it to your refrigerator for a ready reminder.

**Council / Voters HiLites** Our treasurer noted that the issue with the IRS has been resolved; all our money has been returned, with interest. . . . The old round tables have been replaced with new ones of hard plastic. They are only half the weight and were funded through private gifts and a memorial gift. . . . the bylaws amendment that grants the council more flexibility to make decisions and take action on projects already approved and that do not require congregational funds was approved. . . . a proposal to offer the Kwik Trip Scrip program to those who want to have their rebates returned to St Mark was adopted. Watch for details.

**Memberships** We transfer Jason and Bethany Milligan and four children to Our Hope, Chippewa Falls.

Released from membership were Kathryn Hauge and Nicholas Jackson.

As of January 1 our congregation numbers 757 baptized souls.

**A New BIC** begins Thursday, Feb 2<sup>nd</sup> at 6:30. These 12 sessions are a thorough review of the doctrines of the Bible; beneficial for members as well as the inquirer.

Act now. Sign up at church or call either of the pastors.

## the bigger PICTURE

### Pastor Calls in the District

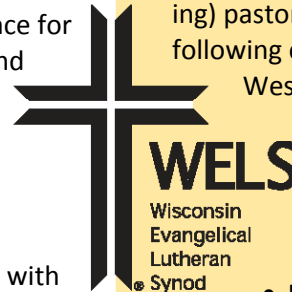
Currently there are (or impending) pastoral vacancies at the following congregations in our

Western Wisconsin District:

- Grace, Prairie du Chien,
- St John, Jefferson (school & family),
- Immanuel, Mosinee,
- Our Redeemer, Madison,
- Our Savior, Freeport, IL,
- Star of Bethlehem, Savoy, IL,
- Good Shepherd, Beaver Dam.

**Vicars in Short Supply** The past several years our seminary has supplied vicar classes averaging in the mid-30s in number. This coming May we anticipate there will only be 22 vicars available for assignment. The seminary, the Board for Home Missions and the Conference of Presidents are working together to prioritize the requests. Vicars are assigned on May 22<sup>nd</sup> in Mequon.

**Synod Admin Bldg** The current building at 2929 N Mayfair in Milwaukee is in need of serious upgrades/renovations. With that in mind it was offered for sale. At the same time a short-sale property (newer building, better sized for our needs) became available and was purchased. Then the Mayfair property potential buyer backed out at the last moment. So currently we own both buildings. An aggressive effort is being made to sell one or the other property. At present the cost of maintaining both properties is minimal.





ST. MARK LUTHERAN CHURCH  
3307 State Street | Eau Claire, WI 54701

PRESRT STD  
US POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
EAU CLAIRE, WI  
PERMINT NO. 1537

## THE LION'S VOICE

SAINT MARK LUTHERAN CHURCH

### **Worship and Bible Study Opportunities for you each week**

Saturdays: we gather to worship at **5:30 pm**

Sundays: we gather to worship  
at **8:00** and **10:30 am**

Mondays: we gather to worship at **6:30 pm**

The holy season of Lent begins Feb 22<sup>nd</sup>.  
Ash Wednesday worship at 11:00 & 6:30.  
Midweek services continue through March:  
11:00 and 6:30 each week.

**SEE HIS CROSS !**

Come and worship the Triune God !

*I was glad when they said to me:  
"Let us go to the house of the Lord"*  
– Ps 122:1

### **CONTACT US**

Church: 834-2595, [www.stmark-wels.org](http://www.stmark-wels.org)

School: 834-5782 FAX: 834-7668

Secretary Barb Krass, [barb@stmark-wels.org](mailto:barb@stmark-wels.org)

Pastor Prah!l: 878-4297, [wwdpwels@aol.com](mailto:wwdpwels@aol.com)

Pastor Naumann: 214-7880, [joel@stmark-wels.org](mailto:joel@stmark-wels.org)

Prin. Micheel, [peter@stmark-wels.org](mailto:peter@stmark-wels.org)

Mr. Leonard: 563-0108, [dave@stmark-wels.org](mailto:dave@stmark-wels.org)

Mr. Gustafson: 379-7953, [phil@stmark-wels.org](mailto:phil@stmark-wels.org)

Ms. Gehlhar: 514-4312, [marie@stmark-wels.org](mailto:marie@stmark-wels.org)

Mrs. Pitt: 720-1099, [sharon@stmark-wels.org](mailto:sharon@stmark-wels.org)

Mrs. Prah!l: 878-4297, [char@stmark-wels.org](mailto:char@stmark-wels.org)

Mrs. Metcalf: 878-4285, [laurametalf5@yahoo.com](mailto:laurametalf5@yahoo.com)

Mrs. Carter: 287-3523, [jennifer@stmark-wels.org](mailto:jennifer@stmark-wels.org)

Mrs. Anason: 832-5469, [connie@stmark-wels.org](mailto:connie@stmark-wels.org)