

President's Report to our St Mark Congregation

June 2017

Below is another report on monthly council and board activities. I hope you find it useful in keeping you an informed member of our church.

Pastors are reporting that they are continuing their Bible information classes. To help out the classes, home visits are being made to hold classes. Thoughts are being turned to fall when Bible classes are starting up. Both pastors are open to ideas for Bible class topics as they plan the next year's activities.

Elders report that attendance is averaged 42% this month - down from 57% last month. NPH released a new Catechism, this summer, and the elders approved to start incorporating the ESV version with the incoming seventh graders. Please note that the Monday night service on July 3rd is cancelled (due to the July 4th holiday). Another item to note is that Elders are recommending to council that our Saturday services to be discontinued - starting next fall. There was much discussion about this recommendation. I wanted to take a little space here to provide you the reasoning discussed at council that supports this decision from our Elders team. For some history, the Saturday service was started back in 2007. It was started for several key reasons: Our attendance (mainly late service on Sunday) pushed the limits of our sanctuary and parking spaces. It was also thought that visitors may be discouraged to attend St Mark services due to the lack of parking and sanctuary space. For these reasons in 2007, it was decided to introduce another service - our Saturday services. We supported that additional service by hiring a part-time pastor (Pastor Mumm) once per month to alleviate the time stress and vocal strain on our two full time pastors. To fast-forward to today, we no longer see a space demand on our sanctuary or parking for any of our offered services. Also, we are no longer able to hire/find a part-time pastor to alleviate the strain on our pastoral staff. Thinking about Advent/Lent, there are six services per week that require pastoral staffing and organists. With Pastor Prahl moving to a part time role as pastor (announced last voter's meeting via ministry (budget) plan approval), we no longer have the need or the pastoral staffing to support this many services. In addition, the current four-service arrangement that we have unnecessarily segments the congregation into four separate groups. Fewer services would bring more of the members together. If our attendance increases (currently at 42% this past month) to where we require additional sanctuary space and parking, an additional service may again be required. Our Elders are open to that option. They are prepared to act when and if required to do so based on our members use of our services offered currently on Sunday morning and Monday evening. Because reduction of our Saturday service is a noteworthy topic, the plan is to ask for our voters to approve the action based on the above reasoning at our next voters meeting. Although a short summary, I wanted to give you all some background on why this decision is being made.

Stewardship wishes to report that the appeal to the members of our congregation will officially end at the end of this fiscal year: June 30. Currently, the members generated approximately \$43,000! Your support of our general fund has greatly helped our general operations reach safely to the end of June. Please also consider ways to continue your general fund support through our "lean" summer months. Electronic giving helps greatly in this regard to provide regular offerings to cover our regular bills - such as utilities and salaries.

Board of Education continues to target completion of their handbooks to ready for registration of our next school year. With the completed handbook voter approval now in place, they are well on their way

to be prepared and readied for registration. Also, the introduction of our cloud-based system, called TADS, will help in registration, billing, grading, and the like. Our school staff is currently learning and testing the registration procedures.

Our Principal, Peter Micheel, reports enrollment currently at 103. He also states that all of our school staff is enrolled in continuing education classes over the summer months and thanks them for their dedication to their profession. The STEM+ Camp is currently registered at 45 campers. The registration of 45 marks the point of the camp being self-funded. Donations and sponsors for the event are a continued welcomed opportunity for our members. Please see Peter for more information on helping. Vacation Bible School registration is currently at 65 children and should ramp to an expected 80 attendees. A date to note is our Church and School summer picnic at Carson Park - June 25 from 2-6PM. That event will be followed by an Eau Claire Express baseball game starting at 6:30PM that you're all welcomed to attend. Peter states that St Mark children will be opening the game with the singing of the National Anthem.

Buildings and Grounds are planning the summer cleaning. They are currently planning floor cleaning and waxing - which is a big effort. They are also looking into light conversion to LED-based lights which generated some excitement by offering significant utility savings to quickly cover the conversion costs. They continue to look at options of increasing ease-of-access to our buildings concerning the security system.

Technology is planning a work day on July 22. If possible, please offer your help as there is always much work to be done. They also report that a member donation will be used to update our smart board software and purchase a new projector for a smart board. This work will be done over the summer months in order to ready the classrooms for next year class sessions.

Our treasurer reports a continued ask of the city of Eau Claire to acknowledge our new corner house property as non-taxable from property tax. Because of the failure of the city to recognize our tax exempt status, St Mark is pursuing legal interaction with the city of Eau Claire in order to rectify the situation. This has been underway since our purchase of the property. The treasurer also reports that a general fund average has increased. If the trend continues, we will be able to support our newly passed ministry plan. Please consider continuing your offering support of St Mark and our mission efforts!

I'll include my standard closing statement with you: If you ever need more information on any of the work the boards are performing, let me know. I'll work to find the answer or raise a suggestion for discussion. Contact information for me: Email (fischerfull@gmail.com), Cell (715.497.5264) - feel free to give me a call if you want to discuss anything we're working on, if you have ideas, can help, or just want to chat. Your council values your ideas and support.

In God's service,
Eric Fischer, President

Please note: Upcoming quarterly voter's meeting date: 07/23 @ 06:30PM (Future meeting dates: 07/23 / 10/22)
<http://www.stmark-wels.org>