“But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. This is why it says: ‘When he ascended on high, he led captives in his train and gave gifts to men.’ (What does ‘he ascended’ mean except that the also descended to the lower, earthly regions? He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.) It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.” (Ephesians 4:7-13)

When a general would return from a victorious military campaign, he would have a parade for the city. The victorious hero himself would lead the procession through the streets of the city dispersing gifts and presenting all the spoils of war to the people as they rejoiced in their victorious general and his forces.

Christ’s ascension into heaven forty days after his resurrection is very much like that. God the Father sent God the Son down to earth to fight a ferocious military campaign against Satan and his forces of evil on our behalf. By his death on the cross he won that victory in a decisive manner, and by his resurrection he assured everyone of the victory. Then Jesus returned to heaven as a mighty and victorious general, bringing with him all the spoils of war, countless souls who trust in him for eternal life. Not only that, but he rules over all things in creation for the good of his Church still here on earth.

Right now our champion rules at the Father’s right hand, carefully conducting the course of human events so that all believers will be brought into the one, unified body of believers. Christ also continues to disperse gifts to his Church on earth to be used for the benefit of all believers. He gives precious gifts of called workers to proclaim the gospel, to administer the sacraments in order that all believers might be equipped for service in his kingdom for the common good. The goal: that everyone obtain unity in faith and become so mature in that faith that we have the full knowledge of the Son of God and attain the whole fullness of Christ. Too lofty a goal? Not for Christ and his victorious Church. He has high hopes and expectations for you, since you are to rule with him in eternity in heaven.

So where do you fit in? What gifts has he distributed to you for the common good? You surely have a role to play. Are you proficient in prayer for others? Do you enjoy music? Do you have a way with people that comforts and inspires? Are you friendly? Do you like to tinker, cook, visit, or design? Whatever gifts or talents you have, Christ has given you some of his spoils to use for building up your fellow believers. Thank him for those gifts, then put them to good use.

– Pastor Naumann
PAUL SZWEDO comes to St. Mark from Good Shepherd in Holmen. His job in Sales and Services with Verizon Wireless brought him to the area. Paul is headed towards management with the company. Time with family of three sisters, best friends, and his cat are important to him. Recently he was excited to see his dad stand for the first time with the prosthetic leg that replaced an amputated leg at mid-calf due to diabetes. During his three years of Junior High, the family lived in Frankfurt, Germany, where his stepfather was stationed. Paul attended Lutheran High School, LaCrosse and enjoys the arts. He plays second bass guitar and is anticipating becoming part of Worship Choir. You can meet him usually at early service.

Each work day MIKE JONES drives about 500 miles for Schmit Trucking which gives him abundant time to listen to music or talk shows and has quiet think time. Mike comes from the Fond du Lac area where he has six siblings and held various jobs. For 18 years he was a technical writer for a machine tool company and traveled extensively in the US, Canada, Mexico, Germany, and Britain to guide customers' use of the equipment. Mike also worked with Mercury Racing that fed his interest in high performance cars.

He moved to EC to be general manager of an auto restoration company; unfortunately, the economy eliminated that position. The LORD sustained Mike while he searched over a year for employment.

To relax, Mike tests his culinary skills from the basics to high-end cuisine, especially smoked meats. He finds that the members of St. Mark recognize him as being new and are quite friendly which he appreciates. Usually Mike is in late service; hopefully, many more people will welcome him to our church family.

Thank you to everyone who attended the Ministry Plan Open Forum Monday night. While we would like to have seen 100% participation, the Council was pleased with the turnout and discussion. Additionally, the Council was encouraged by the interest and time taken by the congregation. If anyone has more questions or comments please do not hesitate to contact any member of your St. Mark leadership. The final approval of the July 2012-June2013 ministry plan will be made during a Ministry Plan Special Voter's Meeting on Monday June 11 @ 7:45p.m.

No doubt St. Mark has been overspending the general fund on a monthly basis and we need to correct our path. But it's not all bad and it is certainly not a crisis. We need to take action with the July 2012-June 2013 ministry plan, but not panic. Pending approval at the April 30th meeting, we are changing banks from U.S. Bank to Charter Bank Eau Claire. The St. Mark mortgage will be refinanced May 25th. The new rate is 3.75% and the new principal is $430,000. Just five years ago the St. Mark mortgage was near $935,000 and the interest rate has been 6.75%. Additionally, St. Mark will incur no closing costs and there is no pre-pay penalty should we make above and beyond principal payments. THIS IS HUGE. 1) Look at the progress that has been made on principal. 2) This will lower the monthly mortgage payment by almost $4000. This gets us to within a comfortable distance of balancing the ministry plan without internal borrowing. I see this mortgage refinance as a monkey off our back, but I want to combine it with a balanced, comfortable ministry plan and turn it into an even greater opportunity for St. Mark.

Tentatively, the Council plans to submit three different ministry plan options with three different average weekly giving levels and three different corresponding spending levels or expenses. The theme with all three will be what we want to keep rather than what we want to compromise. Each one will have a different level of commitment when a person looks at the respective individual line items, different degree of contingency built in, and a different level of sacrifices. Regardless, the pastors and stewardship board will be keeping God pleasing offering principles in front of the congregation perhaps more regularly or more bluntly. The thought is that prior to final approval, the voters can do some "dial turning" if the consensus wants more or less in a particular line item. The bottom line, when presented, the Council wants to keep the ministry plan simple, compact, and create packages. There will be three packages to pick from. The ultimate question is to which weekly offering level is the congregation comfortable committing themselves.

St. Mark has been tremendously blessed. If you remember the Christmas letter, I listed in detail the countless ways St. Mark continues to be blessed. Sincerely, thank you. The St. Mark ministry is 24/7/365. Thank you for your interest, thank you for your time, thank you for your prayers, and thank you for appreciating the earnest work and passion. I love St. Mark dearly and I know you do too. Each one of you is a tremendous asset to St. Mark and I want you to know your leaders are listening. Each of us wants to serve faithfully and diligently.

All to God's glory.           -Justin
St Mark Hi-Lites

ASCENSION SERVICE
We will celebrate our Savior’s triumphant return into heaven with an Ascension festival worship service on Thursday, May 17 at 6:30pm. You are welcome to share this opportunity to rejoice in the victory you share in with Christ your King. – [The Lord] put everything under his feet. (Ps. 8:6)

PUBLIC USE OF THE MEANS OF GRACE
In the month of March we averaged 388 in weekend worship and had a total of 517 receive the Lord’s Supper. There were also two baptisms in April: Owen David Leonard on April 14 and Caleb Roger Dorn on April 29.

MEMBERSHIP
We released from membership Shawn, Tracey, Tess, Paige, and Carl William Newhouse to their own care.

SUMMER SCHEDULE
Please note that we switch to the summer schedule on Memorial Day weekend. We will not have Saturday evening worship starting on the 26th; Sunday worship will be 8:00 and 10:00am; and for Memorial Day the Monday night service will be moved to Tuesday night at 6:30.

BLOOD DRIVE – A preliminary notice that we host a blood drive June 26th from 2:00 – 7:00.

THE ST MARK LANDSCAPING COMMITTEE is starting preparations for this year’s maintenance of the landscape and continuing of the re-landscaping in the bell area. We welcome new faces to the committee! If you would like to help design, plan, work or whatever you would like to do, please contact Pat Culver 715-834-8680 or leave message in Gary Culver church mailbox with your email address. Look for the Landscape poster with information on the projects after Easter. We again ask for financial contributions to be able to go ahead with the projects. Donation envelopes are available on the table in the entry way.

PTP FENCE PROJECT PTP has developed a plan to address the run-down fence that runs along the south border of the playground area. The plan was approved by the voters last fall. The rusty, barbed wire fence has been removed, and a new commercial grade 5 ft. tall chain link fence will be installed in its place to create a safe boundary between the playground area and neighbors property. PTP has contributed a significant amount of money towards this project, but roughly $650 is still needed to cover the estimated costs. Would you consider a one-time donation to help fund this worthwhile project? Please direct your donations to Kim Nettell, PTP treasurer. Checks can be made out to St. Mark Lutheran School. - Thank you!

ACTS EVENTS – In order to help cover the cost of the WELS International Youth Rally, the teens are planning on putting on a garage sale in June. IF you have any items you would like to donate for the sale, you can bring them to Mrs. Pitt’s room at the end up the upper grade wing.

MINISTERIAL EDUCATION FIELD TRIP The 7th and 8th graders of St. Mark are going on a field trip May 10-12 to Watertown, Mequon, and Milwaukee to visit out two of our worker-training schools, Luther Preparatory School and Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. Among other activities, they will have the
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

Starting Memorial Day Weekend:
No Saturday worship
Sunday Worship at 8:00 and 10:00am
Mondays at 6:30pm (Memorial Day worship is moved to Tuesday the 29th at 6:30pm)

9:15 am Sunday School and Bible Class
6:30 pm Wednesday Choir Rehearsal
11:00 am Thursday Bible Class
6:30 pm Thursday Bible Information Class
6:30 am Friday Bible Class

Come and feed your faith with the Word!
I was glad when they said to me:
"Let us go to the house of the Lord"