



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



February 2023

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

**February worship opportunities...**

Sundays @ 8:00 a.m. (Livestream via Facebook or at [www.stmark-wels.org](http://www.stmark-wels.org), under “Watch Sermons Online.”)

Sundays @ 10:30 a.m.  
Mondays @ 6:30 p.m.

Ash Wednesday, Feb 22nd @  
11am & 6:30pm

**Contact Us**

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ST. MARK LUTHERAN CHURCH MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

# Preparing The Way

February  
2023

## AT A GLANCE

2—Campus Ministry  
Resumes

4—Foster Family  
Valentines Event

7— Board of Education  
Meeting

10—Power Hour

10—Evangelism Task  
Force Meeting

11—Cornerstone HS  
Winter Gala

12—Paulus Benefit

14—Council Meeting

17—Red Cross Blood  
Drive

7, 21, 28—Morning  
Moms

22—Ash Wednesday

## God’s People Wishing Evil? — The Imprecatory Psalms

*This devotion is part of a continuing series on the Psalms.*

“Daughter of Babylon, doomed to be destroyed, how blessed is the one who repays you with the same deeds you did against us. How blessed is the one who seizes your children and dashes them against the cliff.” — Psalm 137:8,9

“Pour your wrath out on the nations who do not acknowledge you.” — Psalm 79:6

“The righteous one will be glad when he sees vengeance. He will bathe his feet in the blood of the wicked.” — Psalm 58:10

The verses above are only a few of what are known as the “Imprecatory Psalms.” The word *imprecatory* (im-PRECK-uh-tory) comes from the Latin word, “*imprecari*,” meaning to “call down evil” upon someone. In short, these psalms are prayers and/or curses, asking God to punish the enemies of the psalmist. Psalms 55, 56, 58, 59, 69, 79, 83, 109, 137 and several others are placed into this “imprecatory” category.

Modern Christians can easily be caught scratching their heads in confusion over the imprecatory psalms. After all, can the same God who calls upon people to “love your neighbor as yourself” really talk about bathing in the blood of the wicked? Doesn’t God love all people? Or perhaps these psalms are no longer useful, simply remnants of an “older form” of religion? And wouldn’t Jesus’ call to love our enemies nullify these psalms of cursing?

First, we must remember that even these harsh psalms are the inspired words of God. And every word of God “is perfect ... [reviving] the soul” (Ps 19:7). Yes, it is true that at certain times Scripture records improper words spoken by believers in their pain or suffering (as with Job and his friends), but these psalms are not examples of that. In fact, many imprecatory phrases are found in Messianic psalms, which are words fulfilled and spoken by Christ Jesus himself. And a number of these imprecatory psalms were prayed by David, who refused to take revenge upon his enemies and instead prayed *for God to make things just* in his own timing.

Indeed, it is proper for Christians to pray these kinds of prayers even now. Martin Luther rightfully observed, we cannot pray the Lord’s Prayer without cursing. He says:

*I cannot pray without cursing at the same time. If I say, ‘Hallowed be your name,’ I must thereby say: ‘May the names of [the Pope] and all who blaspheme your name be accursed, condemned, and dishonored.’ If I say, “Your kingdom come,” I must thereby say, ‘May the papacy, together with all kingdoms on earth that are opposed to your kingdom, be accursed, condemned, and destroyed. [continued on page 3]*

## Meet Our Newest Members ...

This month, we meet one of our new families, the Doerings: Cole, Stacy, Sylvia (a 5K student in Ms. Plant's room), and Sully (age 3).

Cole was born and raised in Eau Claire. He graduated from Memorial High School, and then went to Chippewa Valley Technical College where he graduated with a degree in Respiratory Therapy. He first started working at the children's hospital in Minneapolis and later worked at Wissota Health in Chippewa Falls. Today he works as a respiratory therapist for Mayo.

Stacy was also born and raised in Eau Claire. She graduated from North High School, and also went to CVTC. She graduated with a degree in the Ultrasound program and began working for the Mayo Clinic in Rochester. She then worked in the Twin Cities for seven years while commuting from Eau Claire but returned with her husband to Eau Claire in 2014 after they both got jobs here. Today she works as the program director at CVTC for the ultrasound program and also works at Marshfield Clinic as a sonographer. Stacy has a Bachelor's degree in Healthcare Management and a Master's degree in Higher and Postsecondary Education. Her schooling and career have gone full circle.

Cole and Stacy met in a truly special way. Stacy started a band, Bumblefist, where she was the lead singer and needed a lead guitarist. Cole auditioned for her band, got the job, and the two of them made a strong connection. They just celebrated their 10th wedding anniversary.

As one can imagine, their main hobby revolves around their music. Bumblefist remains active and performs at several local venues. Stacy sings the lead vocals while also playing the keyboard, and Cole continues to play both electric and acoustic guitar. Special highlights have included playing for Country Jam, Country Fest, and Rock Fest. Since they are now actively raising a family, they have scaled back their performances to once a month. Together, they also perform as a pair, Whiskey Bitters. Ask them more about their music!

The Doerings also share a family cabin in the New Auburn area where they like to go to relax and unplug while also fishing. Finally, Stacy mentioned that she also enjoys deer hunting on their land around Strum.

**Welcome to the St. Mark Family!**

### Important Info

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

At the recent quarterly voters meeting, a question was asked about how to find our Constitution and bylaws. If you are interested in reading them, copies are available in our information rack in the church entry between the pastors' offices.



### Upcoming Events

**The Cornerstone High School Winter Gala** is on Saturday, February 11th. As a reminder to ticket holders, your ticket includes savory appetizers, and dinner, complimentary drink of choice, interactive photo booth, and live music! You can also enjoy a live auctioneer and silent auction that night! Enjoy an adult night out in fellowship with other area WELS members! The event is at the Florian in Eau Claire.

Cocktail hour starts at 5pm with dinner at 6:30pm. We are looking forward to seeing our guests there!

**The St Mark Red Cross Blood Drive** is Friday February 17, 2023 from 12 p.m. to 6 p.m. in St Mark Shaker Center. Visit [RedCrossBlood.org](http://RedCrossBlood.org) to schedule an appointment or contact Pat Culver St Mark coordinator, for questions/scheduling.



## St. Mark Ministry Highlights

### Public Use of the Means of Grace:

**Worship:** We averaged 285 worshipers per weekend in January. The Lord's Supper was administered to 546 in January. Membership stands at 777 souls and 598 communicants.

### Other Official Acts:

#### Membership Actions

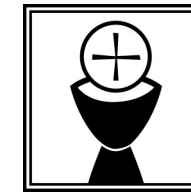
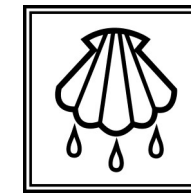
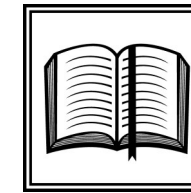
We welcome Don & Shirleen Hahnke by transfer from Our Hope, Chippewa Falls & Jacob, Rebekah, Elizabeth & Benjamin Edwards by transfer from Good Shepherd, Beloit.

We release Lora Johnas by transfer to Zion, Rhinelander & Rani Behm by release to her own spiritual care.

**SNOW REMOVAL** Buildings and Grounds is looking for volunteers to help with snow removal this winter on the weekends. There is a sign-up sheet right outside the church office that lists dates and responsibilities. For more info please contact Zach Jastrow at 715-864-4811 or [zjastrow@gmail.com](mailto:zjastrow@gmail.com).

We have sign up sheets in the entry for:

- Flowers for the Altar
- Snacks for Campus Ministry
- Groups to provide Lenten Suppers & Easter Breakfast
- Delivery of food donations to Feed My People
- Cornerstone Lutheran High School Newsletter



In fact, "every time we pray the Lord's Prayer we are praying that the plans of Satan and all who serve him will fail and that they will receive the judgment which they deserve" (John Brug, *Psalms 1-72*, pg. 23). Of course, we as Christians will also pray for our enemies to come to repentance and receive forgiveness through faith in Christ Jesus, for God himself "wants all people to be saved" (1 Ti 2:4). Psalm 83:16 is a good example of this: "Fill their faces with shame so that they will seek your name, O Lord."

Yet we must also pray these psalms, knowing that God will uphold justice against those who continue to oppose him. He is, after all, a God of absolute holiness and perfect justice. Praying these imprecatory prayers is simply assenting to the will of God. As stated previously, we must not take up vengeful action against our enemies, but we must pray for their conversion and—if they persist in their unbelief—that God's carries out his will of justice and judgment, as he has already promised to do.

Reviewing *law* and *gospel* is also important in considering the imprecatory psalms. God will punish sinners who have rejected him. This is the law. Yet we also know that God loves all sinners and has saved them through the death of his Son, Jesus Christ, a salvation proven by his bodily resurrection! What a comforting gospel, meant for all people! And yes, this God of justice *and grace* must be true to both his law and his gospel.

There is one last point to be made. American Christians living the 21st century have little to no experience with direct, painful persecution. We can understand how these imprecatory prayers would readily be upon the lips and hearts of God's people, who, across the centuries have suffered the murders of families, friends, loss of property, and other forms of trial. I would agree with Professor Brug as he describes the modern Western Church living a "pampered" and "sheltered" existence. As he writes in his commentary on the Psalms: "It is hard to pray imprecatory prayers from padded pews" (pg. 27). It is certainly true how an imprecatory prayer and a prayer for the conversion and of our enemies can be said at the same time. Moreover, while we pray these prayers, we are also moved to show love to our enemies, just as our Lord—who loved us sinners first—calls us to do.

May these psalms—along with the rest of God's holy word—be upon our hearts as we, the Church, go out and share the good news of forgiveness of sins in Jesus. And may they also be in our hearts as we call upon our Lord to return in glory to bring us to his heavenly kingdom on that final day of perfect judgment and justice.

– Pastor Hollmann