



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



September 2022

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

September worship opportunities...

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

Contact Us

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- Principal Micheel: 715-835-6015, peter@smwels.org
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- Mr. Sponholz: 715-835-0213, scott@smwels.org
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- Mrs. Krouse: melody@smwels.org

ST. MARK LUTHERAN CHURCH MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

September 2022

AT A GLANCE

4th - Services at 8:00 &
10:30

6th - Tuesday evening
worship (moved from Labor
Day)

7th - Public & Home
School Confirmation
Begins

New Bible Information
Class begins

8th - Lion Hearts resumes

Campus Ministry
Welcome BBQ

9th - Men's Bible
Breakfast resumes

Power Hour

13th - Board Meetings

20th - Council

20th & 27th - Morning
Moms

On Christ's Descent into Hell

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who...was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended into hell. (The Apostles' Creed: Second Article)

[Our Lord Jesus Christ] suffered for our salvation, descended into hell, rose the third day
from the dead. (The Athanasian Creed: 36)

This devotion is part of a continuing series on the three ecumenical creeds.

Of all the events of Christ's work of redemption, probably the most mysterious has to be Christ's descent into hell. Really, not much is written detailing this event in Scripture. There is only one passage in the Bible that explicitly refers to the event (1 Peter 3:18-19) without which we would probably not even have this clause in two of our three ecumenical creeds. There are another two passages—Colossians 2:15 and Ephesians 4:9—the may or may not be addressing Christ's descent into hell (more on all these passages later). So from the scriptural testimony it is clearly a doctrine and event about which we have precious little information.

Besides just the mysterious nature of this event, Christ's descent into hell has the potential to cause much confusion regarding its purpose. Why did Christ descend into hell? Since hell is the place God created originally as the prison for Satan and his angels who sinned at the beginning (2 Peter 2:4), and since it is a place of judgment for those who reject the Lord in unbelief (Matthew 25:41), it stands to reason that Christ would have descended into hell to suffer this damnation for us. Would this, then, be a further step down in Jesus' state of humiliation? Or perhaps Jesus' work of redemption means he would descend into hell to preach repentance and forgiveness to unbelievers of the Old Testament (OT) era so they might have another chance. Both of these have been popular options among people in the past.

But what do the Scriptures actually tell us about Christ's descent into hell? And, just as importantly, what comfort does this work of Christ give to you? The one passage that addresses this event explicitly tells us, "...Christ also suffered once for sins in our place, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in flesh but was made alive in spirit, in which he also went and made an announcement to the spirits in prison" (1 Peter 3:18-19 EHV). St. Peter tells us that Jesus was "put to death *in flesh*, but was made alive *in spirit*." In the footnotes, the EHV correctly identifies this flesh/spirit antithesis as referring to his state of humiliation (in flesh) and his state of exaltation (in spirit). So Jesus ended his state of humiliation with his death and burial. Then, in the darkness of the tomb which we cannot probe, Jesus bodily came back to life, an event we might refer to as his vivification. It is in this risen and exalted

Meet Our Newest Member....



Callie Otto moved to Eau Claire to attend UWEC. She just finished her freshmen year where she is a pre-med student interested in bio chemistry and molecular biology (BMB). Callie stays busy working at the Nature Academy and also works at a research lab at the college. In her free time she enjoys singing, running, and studying apologetics. If you are in need of a babysitter or caregiver (she is also a certified nursing assistant) give her a call at 651-757-7396. She is free after 5:30 on weeknights and all day on weekends.

Callie hails from South St. Paul, MN. She enjoys visiting her parents and younger brother, Luke, when she can. She attended St. Croix Lutheran High School and was a member at Salem Lutheran Church in Stillwater, MN where she helped with Sunday school, VBS and sang for their contemporary services. You may have already met her when she helped in the craft area at VBS this summer! Fun fact: Callie is the great niece of Gary and Rita Steffenhagen and her dad went to school with Jeannie and Wanda Miller! Welcome Callie



BIBLE STUDIES TO ENGAGE THIS FALL As the fall months begin, we are resuming a number of Bible studies for our members and anyone seeking to study God's Word. Below is a summary of our Bible studies and times with their start dates.

Sunday Morning Bible Study: between services on Sunday in the gym 9:15-10:15 (9/11)

Bible Information Class: Wednesdays 6:30-8:00pm in the Small Meeting Room (9/7)

Morning Moms: two or three Tuesday mornings a month in the Sanctuary

Youth Group Bible Study: Sunday mornings between services in the Small Meeting Room (9/11)

Lion Hearts: Thursday mornings 11:00-12:00 (9/8) in the Small Meeting Room

Campus Ministry: Thursday evenings at 6:00 in the UW-Eau Claire Davies Center (9/2)

Men's Morning Bible Study (breakfast included): Friday mornings 6:30-7:45 in the Small Meeting Room (9/9)

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION WEEK AND MISSION FESTIVAL We will be having mission festival on Sunday, September 25. During the Bible study hour we will have guest speakers from Central Africa Medical Mission present on their work in the mission field in Africa.

St. Mark Ministry Highlights

Public Use of the Means of Grace:

Worship: We averaged 272 worshipers per weekend in July. The Lord's Supper was administered to 353 in July. Membership stands at 792 souls and 586 communicants.

Baptisms: Liam Daniel Weiss and Ava Raelle Hetke

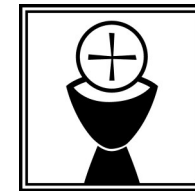
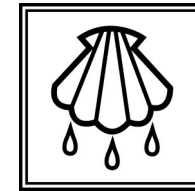
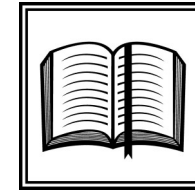
Other Official Acts:

Membership Actions: We welcome James and Melody Krouse along with their daughter, Rhianna who transferred from St. John's Kaukauna. We transfer Aric Jensen to Wisconsin Lutheran Chapel in Madison and Rhonda & Robin Buck to Emmanuel Lutheran in Hudson.

We release to Lee Hruby to his own spiritual care.

WORSHIP CHOIR & BRASS PLAYERS Former members, new members, and families are invited to a social potluck in the Shaker Center at 6:00 pm Wednesday, September 14. Please bring a dish to pass. Utensils and beverages will be provided. Be ready to sign up with name, voice or instrument, and phone number, Music folders will be filled from that list. If unable to attend the social, please contact Gary Steffenhagen at steffgary@gmail.com or 715-450-7877.

POWER HOUR begins Friday, September 9th from 8:30 -9:30 am in the Shaker Center and will be held the 2nd Friday of every month. Power Hour is a free Bible-based activity time for children ages 0-5 and their caregivers. There will be a lesson from the Bible and we will sing Scripture-based songs. A craft project will be provided to bring home that reinforces the lesson and a small snack will be provided. The remaining time you can visit with other caregivers while your children play with toys and other children.



state that Jesus then goes to make an announcement "to the spirits in prison." This means that Christ went down into hell, since Scripture also refers to hell in terms of a prison that holds spirits or angels (Jude 6 and 2 Peter 2:4).

This passage rules out any further need for Christ to suffer. First, Jesus had already been made alive and entered back into his exaltation. In this state of glory he descended into hell. Second, when we recall from John 19:30 that Jesus already announced his work of redemption as complete when he said, "It is finished," and bowed his head and died. No further suffering was needed to make atonement for sin.

The question to answer about this passage is how is what the nature of Jesus' announcement or proclamation was. Though this verb is often used in the New Testament for preaching the gospel, it does not have to mean that. The basic definition is to do the work of a herald, namely, to bring an official proclamation. While we might be led to think that perhaps Jesus was giving OT unbelievers a second chance to repent and believe, a wider reading of Scripture rules this out. Hebrews 9:27 tells us that "it is appointed for people to die only once and after this comes judgment." The conclusion we are left to draw is that this proclamation of Jesus was to announce to Satan and his ilk that they had lost. Jesus had conquered them. He goes right onto their turf to proclaim his victory over Satan. We might not even be surprised if Jesus reminded Satan of the first gospel promise that he would crush the serpent's head.

One of the two passages that is often associated with Jesus' descent into hell is Colossians 2:15, "After disarming the rulers and authorities, he made a public display of them by triumphing over them in Christ." It's hard to connect this passage to any event other than Jesus' descent into hell. The comfort for you is that Jesus triumphed completely over the devil. His accusations no longer have any power over you. The powers of hell have no hold over you because Jesus triumphed over Satan and hell for you. When the devil comes to assault your conscience and haunt you with past sins, you can join with Christ in responding with a victory cry over the devil. What a joy and confidence you have to boldly confess Jesus' descent into hell.