

St. Mark Chairman's Monthly Newsletter

January 2023

Dear St. Mark Church Members,

I hope the Lord has blessed you through the first month of 2023. Last year was a busy year at both our church and school. That has not changed as we go into 2023. Here is an update of what is going on at 3307 State Street.

After much discussion, the Board of Education came to the Church Council with a request to add a ninth teacher to meet the growing enrollment at our St. Mark Lutheran Elementary School. The 2022-2023 school year currently finds 131 students enrolled at our school. The enrollment is expected to increase for the 2023-2024 school year. To make sure we continue with excellent quality Christian education at St. Mark, the Board of Education recommended a ninth teacher was needed. At the December council meeting, council approved the request. A special voter's meeting was called for Sunday, January 8, 2023 to decide on adding that ninth teacher. The voters approved the request. A call meeting was then scheduled for Sunday, January 29, 2023. At that meeting three candidates were submitted to voters to consider, with the Lord's guidance. After reviewing all candidates, the congregation decided to call Ann Marohn, who currently is serving at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Howards Grove, Wisconsin. Ann Marohn is no stranger to Eau Claire and St. Mark. Her husband Chad, served St. Mark School as a teacher and principal for 11 years, from 1999-2010. Chad also recently accepted the call to be the first principal at Cornerstone Lutheran High School. Please keep Ann in your prayers as she deliberates her future of service to Jesus.

With an expected increase in enrollment for the 2023-2024 school year, more space is going to be needed. The Board of Education, council and staff is looking at various locations to hold classes. At this point, conversations are ongoing to rent classroom space from Peace Lutheran Church and also looking at the for-sale Grace Foundation building to see if that would work for our needs. Peace is a Missouri Synod church about four blocks to our east and the Grace building is about a mile west of our building, near the end of Hamilton Avenue. If we would go ahead with the purchase of the Grace building, Cornerstone Lutheran High School has showed interest in partnering with us. Of course, both options would have to make sense, but at least we have options. If you are interested about information for the Grace property, Kevin Escher, a realtor who is a member at St. Mark and helping us with this, has supplied the following link: www.MoveToEauClaire.com. On the first page, enter MLS number 1561913 and click on the photo at the right. You will find a bunch of photos and other information about the property. More information will be provided as it becomes available.

In October, we were informed that Lori Maassen would be retiring at the end of the year from her bookkeeping position which she has held for 27 years. In November, we were informed that Ashley Yang would also be leaving her position as church and school secretary, at the end of the year. Replacing Lori as bookkeeper will be Holly Kohlwey and replacing Ashley as secretary will be Tami Jastrow. Thanks to both Lori and Ashley for your dedicated service to God and St. Mark.

Here are a few quick items from the recently held Quarterly Voter's meeting.

- Every year St. Mark sets an amount of our budget to help support the WELS. This is known as our *Congregation Mission Offering* or CMO. This offering is similar to you deciding what amount you are going to offer to St. Mark from your income. St. Mark then offers their fair share to the WELS to support synod staff, home missions, world missions, synod supported high schools, the synod supported college and seminary, along with many other arms of the synod.

- The amount that the voter's approved for 2023 is \$79,200. There is also an envelope in your offering packet that you can offer additional funds, if you wish.
- Damien Gooch was approved for a vacated position on the Board of Education. His term will be through June 30, 2023.
- The voter's approved a 5% increase to the 2023-2024 book fees.
- Pastor Naumann continues serving Concordia Lutheran Church (ELS) of Eau Claire, as their vacancy Pastor.

St. Mark was started 55 years ago by a group of people that were thirsty for the true message from God. The group joined together with the WELS and started meeting in downtown Eau Claire at the YMCA to form St. Mark. Over the years, the synod has had interest in starting a second WELS congregation in Eau Claire. A few efforts were attempted, but fizzled. With the *WELS 100 home missions in 10 years* campaign, the talk is on again. The council has approved that preliminary discussion go forward. Pastor Mahnke, who is the chairman of the Western Wisconsin Mission Board, was in Eau Claire on January 13th to give a presentation. A follow-up meeting was held on Friday, January 27th. The group then scheduled another meeting, at church, on Friday, February 10th, at 6:00 PM. Everything is in the early stages of the planning for how to go forward with outreach to non-churched citizens of the Eau Claire area. Many volunteers, with God's help, will be needed to make this happen. Our Hope Lutheran Church in Chippewa Falls was a mission church that was started by St. Mark members many years ago.

As you can see, there are many activities going on at St. Mark. It takes volunteers, giving of their time, to help keep everything running smoothly. This may be a little early, but our annual elections for trustee and board positions is held at the end of April during the congregation's quarterly voter's meeting. If you are asked to serve, please prayerfully consider the opportunity to serve Jesus and St. Mark.

If you have any questions, please contact me by phone, 715-829-6401, or email, mroekle@aol.com. You can also contact the various board members. Emails and phone numbers of the St Mark board members may be obtained from Tami, our church secretary.

May God continue blessing St. Mark and its members.

Serving Christ,
Mark Roekle