

St. Mark's Lutheran Church Messenger  
Steven Neal, Pastor  
308-750-1318, church phone  
402-705-1521, personal phone  
APRIL 2022



1306 Howard Ave, St. Paul, NE  
[www.stmarkschurchsp.org](http://www.stmarkschurchsp.org)

The question “Who are we as God’s people in 2022?” serves as our guiding theme for the Lent midweek services this year. We’ve thought about this question considering the context of big tragedies and disruptions over the past few years – the flooding, the pandemic, and the ongoing war in Ukraine killing and injuring thousands.

This is a big question – with a lot of answers! In 2022, we are God’s people the same as in 1922. We are forgiven, justified, saved, redeemed, called, baptized and set free, named and claimed, gathered and sent, fed and nourished and strengthened. We love Jesus, and we are people commanded to love God with all of ourselves and to love our neighbors. Our baptismal covenant God made with us is a forever-covenant, so, we are people who promised God for our whole lifetime to live among God’s faithful people, hear the word of God and share in the Lord’s supper, proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed, serve all people, following the example of Jesus, and to strive for justice and peace in all the earth. Worshipers, churchgoers, communers, do-gooders, servers, followers, advocaters.

In 2022, we are Jesus-followers who give our time and money to help people recover from natural disasters. We give our materials and talents to make and distribute masks. We give up obstinate attitudes and old preferences in order to worship together in safety. Sometimes boldly and sometimes meekly – with excitement and trepidation – we try new things in worship and fellowship. With hearts open to our most vulnerable neighbors, we rise to the occasion to imagine and carry out new ways of taking care of folks. We see the church both inside the sanctuary and inside our homes, outside on the lawn and in the parks and on our sidewalks and streets. We yearn for personal connection and have found new ways with renewed vigor to keep in touch.

In short, we are adaptable, resilient self-givers. This is what I see, and it is what I hope.

As much as I love to focus on your *mighty and not at all small* works in saving people in this world, I love to see our church care for its own, too. The struggles our community has faced have been our own struggles, and I thank God that God has blessed you with each other. So, add “blessed” to the list.

Perhaps the list of characteristics is too long for one short newsletter. It is already an impossibly long list to keep. You see, as much as we try to be saints, we fail, too. Lutherans claim our “saint/sinner” identity. The “saint” part comes from God. We’re only pretty good at the sinner part. No matter how long the list of amazing work you do to serve, we are, above all else, people in need of our savior, Jesus. The work we do to serve others doesn’t close the gap between sinner and saint. Not even close. That’s a fool’s game. The adaptable self-giving you are *guilty of* – serving others – is precisely *because* Jesus has already given himself for you.

Perhaps we are receivers. Faith is a gift, after all. There’s another for the list.

Add them all up, and we are loved.

May you know the love of God and the promise of new life in this Eastern Season.



## ***Easter stewardship: Resurrection reset***

*Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. -Romans 6:3-4*

Christ is Risen! Risen, indeed! Alleluia!

The triumphant words we cherish every Easter signal more than just Jesus' victory over the grave. They announce for us the end of deadness and the start of a new life, a fresh beginning, in our earthly pilgrimage. Jesus was raised from the dead so that we, too, might walk in newness of life.

From Jesus' resurrection, our lives take on a new trajectory, a turn away from the values and precepts of the world and toward the kingdom of God. As we journey, our lives progressively align with the purposes and mission of God.

For a steward-disciple of our Lord, the implications are many. As we walk in newness of life, we might find ourselves

- Re-examining our relationship to “stuff” – our money, our possessions, the things that might have given us a sense of security or worth. Jesus is our security and our worth.
- Drawing closer to family and friends. True wealth is measured by the love we give and receive. Our lives effervesce with the love we receive from God.
- Contributing more to church and charity. Jesus frees us from the grip that possessions have upon us. We can more freely give.
- Gathering into our lives what Paul calls the fruits of the spirit: “Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control” (Galatians 5:22-23).

May your lives as steward-disciples take a resurrection reset. Christ is risen! Risen indeed! Alleluia!

***--Rob Blezard***

*Copyright © 2022, Rev. Robert Blezard. Reprinted by permission. Rev. Blezard serves as pastor of St. Paul's Lutheran Church and as content editor for [www.stewardshipoflife.org](http://www.stewardshipoflife.org).*



## Report of the Church Council

St Mark's Evangelical Lutheran Church of America

1306 Howard Ave, St Paul, NE 68873

March 9, 2022

• President Daryl Anderson called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m. at the church. Attending were President Daryl Anderson, Vice Pres. Emily McCray, Secretary Gary Goldfish, Treasurer Barb Stefanowicz, Financial Secretary Robin Elstermeier, Stewardship George Matthews, Care Committee Ruthie Jacobsen, WELCA President Barb Lepper, Parish Education Tanya Williams and Val Killinger.

• **Minutes:** Motion was made and seconded to approve minutes. Approved by unanimous consent.  
• **Treasurer Report:** Barb S. informed council of an anonymous donation to local mission of \$1,000. Discussion followed on how best to use the funds from the donation. Council agreed to table discussion on the topic of the donation. Barb S. shared the specifics from the cash flow statement. Robin E. moved to approve treasurer report 2<sup>nd</sup> by Tanya W. Motion carried with all ayes, no nays.

• **Financial Secretary Report:** Nothing new to report.  
• **Pastor's Report:** Pastor provided numbers on worship attendance and livestream viewers. He provided numbers on meetings he led or attended and pastoral care contacts. He listed significant projects that are ongoing: utility & finance tracking, bulletin revamp, Lent services planning, Usher/Alter Guild updates, 1<sup>st</sup> Communion class planning, Confirmation, Ukraine outreach, directory information updates, and website launch. Weds. April 6<sup>th</sup> is the next council meeting at 7:00.

• **Stewardship:** The committee met to discuss avenues of approach to non-giving/attending members. Brief meetings, stewardship temple talks and stewardship newsletter articles will continue. George M. informed the council of ways to help the civilians affected by the war in Ukraine. Donations can be made to Lutheran Disaster Response & Lutheran World Relief. A search on an online search engine can be made to find the websites of those organizations. Methods to give money were discussed. George W. said people can make donations 3 different ways: online, mail a check, or call the 800 number provided to receive instructions.

• **WELCA:** Barb Lepper mentioned that the circles meeting is held monthly. The church council is in charge of Lenten supper on Weds. March 16.

• **Old Business:** Discussion was held of putting changing table in women's restroom. A donation for a changing table has been received. It was moved by Pastor Steven to accept gift of changing table 2<sup>nd</sup> by Val K. Motion carried with unanimous vote.

• **New Business:** Ruthie J. had a question about an outreach fund for those who may need funds for an emergency, etc. Barb S. stated that we have such a fund. The funds are disbursed by pastor at best judgement of pastor & council. Tanya W. mentioned a new program for assistance with water bill for those who need it. Council discussed content of meal for Weds. Lasagna, garlic bread, and salad will be served. Council members volunteered to purchase the food.

• **Trustee:** Bulbs were replaced above both sinks in kitchen. Bulbs had been broken from the bulb threads. Replaced 8 foot fluorescent bulb in kitchen. Made a place to hang ladders off of floor in utility room & in kitchen.

• **Worship Committee:** Brenda Wells will sit on the committee. Meeting is Thursday night March 10.

• **Education:** Tanya W. said the Educ. Committee would like to purchase new books for Sunday School: Gold Winter and Blue Spring \$186. Confirmation class will have Braxton & Jacob. They will start in the fall of 2022. First communion classes from 4-5 pm April 27, May 4<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>. June 5<sup>th</sup> will be the church service for first communion. Seven kids will participate. A snack will be served between after school & class starting. Volunteers will be needed to provide & serve snacks. There will be a VBS sign-up sheet for teachers, helpers, snack providers in back of church. VBS is on July 11, 12, 13 from 5-8 pm. The next meeting for VBS will be held in April at St. Mark's.

• **Care Committee:** The next meeting will be 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday in April.

• A motion to adjourn was made and seconded. Motion to adjourn passed with unanimous vote. Meeting adjourned at 8:10 pm. The meeting closed with the Lord's Prayer.

### COUNCIL PRESIDENT

Daryl Anderson  
308-750-2761

### COUNCIL VICE PRESIDENT

Emily McCray  
308-754-4159

### COUNCIL SECRETARY

Gary Goldfish  
308-750-2250

### CHURCH TREASURER

Barb Stefanowicz  
308-750-4398

### FINANCIAL SECRETARY

Robin Elstermeier  
308-750-0848

### STEWARDSHIP CHAIRPERSON

George Matthews  
308-883-1190

### WELCA PRESIDENT

Barb Lepper  
308-750-0931

### PARISH EDUCATION

Tanya Williams  
402-335-7219

Heidi Stelk  
308-379-5671

Val Killinger  
308-750-7074

### CARE COMMITTEE

Ruthie Jacobsen  
308-754-5407

Margie Townsend  
308-850-5965

Lynn Larson  
308-754-4882

Jean Matthews  
308-340-7806

Patty Maun  
402-980-2075

Anita Jepson  
308-754-5262

### TRUSTEES

Alan Kuszak  
308-850-3196

Evan Stelk  
308-380-2449

David Sprague  
308-571-0011

Kevin Jorgensen  
308-754-8065

Gary Goldfish  
Secretary

Daryl Anderson  
President



## WELCA REPORT

Happy Spring!

Esther Circle will meet on Monday, April 4th at 9:30a.m. at the church. Arlene is lesson leader. Lois Circle meets on Tuesday, April 5th at 5:30p.m. at the church. Barb L is hostess and Barb S is lesson leader. I hope our ladies will take advantage of one of these opportunities for fellowship and Bible study. At Lois Circle you will also be served supper as well.

**Last month I told you about Magdalene Omaha, a program that delivers hope, healing and economic self-empowerment for survivors of sex trafficking, prostitution and addiction. On April 29th-May 1st there will be a Saved to Serve opportunity to make tote bags for adults and children who are seeking help. We have the pattern and some of our ladies are already making tote bags. We are asked to help fill these tote bags with needed items that these survivors will need. There is a plastic tote in the fellowship hall for these needed items, as well as a list of what is needed. These items will be taken to Omaha during the Saved to Serve weekend. This is a wonderful opportunity for us to reach out to women and children at risk.**

I hope you have been taking advantage of our Lenten suppers this past month. It has been great getting together for food and fellowship before our Lenten services. Our WELCA women served two of the suppers in March and **WELCA ladies A-K will serve the final supper on April 6th.** Please come and join us!!

Thanks to all those who have been bringing their Best Choice UPC codes to the church. We have over 2000 labels counted and ready to be sent in. We usually wait until we have 3000 labels and then Mini sends them in to be redeemed and we receive \$30 for every 1000 labels that are sent in. Just put your labels in the gallon jar in the kitchen. A lot of you have been bringing in your plastic grocery sacks for our sleeping mat project. It's been great, keep it up!! You can see the finished product on the table in the fellowship hall. Check them out, they look pretty cool!

Blessings,  
Barb Lepper, WELCA President

## STEWARDSHIP REPORT

....."I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink,"

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ!

Has the Holy Spirit led you to feel compassion for the world's victims of disaster, especially today's Eastern European refugees of war? Do you wish to help, and wonder how?

Our Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has provided a way in which 100% of your donation will go where it is needed. The administrative cost is funded by the benevolence we send to the ELCA!

The helping vessel is Lutheran Disaster Response ELCA. If you identify what congregation you belong to when you donate, both you and it get credited.

To give by internet, bring up Lutheran Disaster Response ELCA. They will instruct you.

To give by phone call 800-638-3522, Monday – Friday, 8:00am-5:00pm central time.

To give by mail, make your check payable to Lutheran Disaster Response, write "Eastern Europe Crisis Response", or another situation of your choice, on your check's memo line, and send to: Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, PO Box 1809, Merrifield, VA 22116-8009.

For further information, contact Pastor Steve or me (308-883-1190).

Thank you,  
George Matthews, Stewardship Committee Chairperson



## CARE COMMITTEE

The Care Committee did not meet in March. We continue sending cards and have ordered our cards for Easter. The committee will meet on April 18, 2022 at 2:00 pm at the church.

### *Refugee Support in the War in Ukraine*

St. Mark's Lutheran Church is collecting money for immediate, life-saving support for refugees through Lutheran Disaster Response to provide food, blankets, water, and hygiene kits. 100% of your gifts go entirely and directly to providing help, with no money going to admin or overhead costs.

Please write "Eastern Europe Crisis Response" in the "Memo" line on your check or include a note with any cash offering.

St. Mark's Lutheran Church  
1306 Howard Avenue  
St. Paul, NE 68873

You can also give online at <https://community.elca.org/eastern-europe-crisis-response>

#### *From Lutheran Disaster Response:*

##### **The Situation:**

On Feb. 24, Russian forces invaded Ukraine, launching land, sea and air attacks. Russia has launched air strikes across the country, including on the capital of Kyiv and other major cities. Airports are now shut, and few railway lines are operational. Millions of civilians fleeing the violence are heading toward Ukraine's western districts and such neighboring countries as Poland, Moldova, Slovakia, Romania and Hungary. Over 300 civilians have been killed in the conflict so far, and damage to civilian infrastructure has left hundreds of thousands of people without water or electricity. Ukrainian men of military age (18-60) are forbidden to leave the country, so most of those fleeing the violence are women and children. According to one report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, more than 1 million people are seeking refuge in neighboring countries including Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and Moldova. There are major humanitarian concerns for both internally displaced people and refugees. Many of these Ukrainians fleeing their homes need shelter and such basic necessities as food, water and toiletries. Care for people also includes pastoral and psychological support to address the trauma they've endured.

##### **Our Response:**

Lutheran Disaster Response is accompanying our companions in Ukraine, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia, as well as such ecumenical partners as Lutheran World Federation and Church World Service, in their humanitarian responses to the crisis. These partners provide refugees with immediate support and supplies such as food, blankets, water and hygiene kits. Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton has joined other religious leaders from Europe and around the globe in issuing an interfaith call for peace in the region.



**What you can do:**

**Pray:** Please pray for those in Ukraine, Russia and neighboring countries that have been affected by the crisis in Ukraine. May God's healing presence give them peace and hope in their time of need.

**Give:** Your gifts designated for will be used entirely (100%) to provide support for people impacted by conflict in the region.

**Connect:**

To learn more about the situation and the ELCA's response:

- Sign up to receive Lutheran Disaster Response alerts.
  - <https://www.elca.org/our-work/relief-and-development/lutheran-disaster-response>
- Check the Lutheran Disaster Response blog - <https://blogs.elca.org/disasterresponse/>
- "Like" Lutheran Disaster Response on Facebook, follow @ELCALDR on Twitter and follow @ELCA\_LDR on Instagram.

**APRIL BIRTHDAYS**

- 4<sup>th</sup>-Brian Switzer
- 5<sup>th</sup>-Lola Sperling
- 11<sup>th</sup>-Gary Goldfish
- 16<sup>th</sup>-Cooper Gard  
Ali Larson  
John Herbig
- 21<sup>st</sup>-Pat Larson
- 24<sup>th</sup>-Harold Boquist
- 27<sup>th</sup>-Shelly Goldfish
- 29<sup>th</sup>-Anita Jepson
- 30<sup>th</sup>-Eric Williams  
Ashlyn Lukasiewicz

**APRIL ANNIVERSARIES**



# April

## ST MARK'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

Ushers: Kevin and Theresa Jorgensen  
 Altar Guild: Barb Lepper & Emily McCray  
 Comm Assistants: Robin & Janet Elstermeier

# 2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 ALL FOOLS' DAY	2
3 CHURCH 9:30 AM SUNDAY SCHOOL AND COFFEE AT 10:30AM	4 ESTHER CIRCLE 9:30 AM AT CHURCH ARLENE LESSON LEADER	5 LOIS CIRCLE 5:30 PM AT CHURCH SUPPER SERVED	6 LENTEN SUPPER 5 PM A-K SERVE SERVICE AT 6:30 COUNCIL MTG 7 PM	7	8	9
10 PALM SUNDAY CHURCH 9:30 AM SUNDAY SCHOOL AND COFFEE 10:30AM	11	12	13	14 MAUNDY THURSDAY 6:30 PM	15 GOOD FRIDAY 6:30 PM	16 SATURDAY VIGIL 6:30 PM
17 EASTER SUNRISE SERVICE 7 AM BREAKFAST EASTER SERVICE 9:30 AM	18 CARE COMMITTEE 2 PM AT THE CHURCH	19	20	21	22	23
24 CHURCH 9:30 AM SUNDAY SCHOOL AND COFFEE 10:30 AM	25	26	27	28	29	30