St. Mark's Lutheran Church

December Newsletter



The small church with a BIG heart

Important Dates

Worship Service at Church and Online

Worship Service Sundays 6th, 13th, 20th, & 27th @ 10:00am
Bible Study Tuesdays 1st & 15th 9:30am, 8th 9:00am, No Bible Study 22nd &29th
Quilting Tuesdays 1st, 8th. 15th, & 22nd @ 10am
Church Council Meeting Tuesday 8th @ 7:00pm
Food Shelf Tuesdays 1st 8:00am-9:30am
8th, 15th, 22nd @ 4:30pm-6:00pm
WELCA Wednesday 9th @ 10:00am
Newsletter Deadline December 20th @ 10:00am
Church School Christmas Program December 20th @ 10am
Christmas Eve Worship Services December 24th 4:00pm & 8:30pm

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Prayer Requests

Levi Stein (deployment to Kosovo), Kate Moorhouse(Niece of Marie Otte), Carolyn Horsch, Marc Slinninger, Tami Little(friend of Karen Slininger), Tim Post (Stephanie Krueger's brother), Mary Ohman, Don Otte, Sarah & Jim Otto, Cyndi Christopher(Jill Ballard's Sister), Jerry & Elaine Orvold(Lisa Molitor's Parents), Margaret Hayes, Andy Otte, Bob Neil, and Will Burleigh.

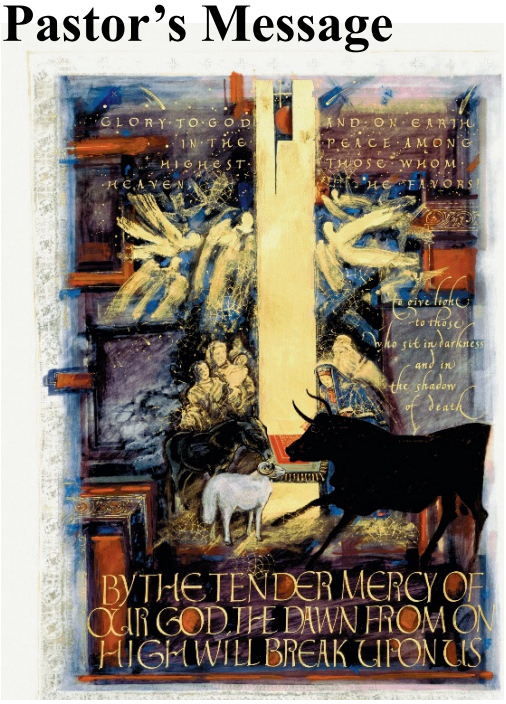
When requested, we will be keeping loved ones on the prayer request list for a month. If you would like them to stay loonger, please let Shelby know.

Please keep all of our Seniors in your prayers, especially:

Robert & Margret Hayes. Carolyn Horsch, Clarice Krenik, Leatrice Taylor, and Carolyn Weidner.

Pray for those who have lost loved ones recently.

Pastor's Message



"By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high shall break upon us, to shine on those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, and to guide our feet into the way of peace." (Luke 1:78-79)

The Canticle of Zechariah

The picture to the left is the illustration for the birth of Jesus in the St. John's Bible. In the illustration gold is used to represent God's presence. In this illustration a dramatic shaft of gold comes down out of heaven to the manager. For me it captures the sense of God breaking in to our world in Jesus.

A large framed copy of this illustration hung by my desk in my office at Our Saviour's and it now hangs in front of my desk in my home office. At the bottom in large letters, it says: "By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us." The image and Zechariah's words remind me of what we anticipate in this Advent season, and what we will celebrate at Christmas. In Jesus birth we experience the power that created the world breaking into everyday life. Jesus comes to meet us in vulnerability and dependency of a baby. It is almost too much for my mind to grasp. Everything in our world suggests that those who have power use it to avoid being vulnerable or dependent. From the world's perspective, what is the point of having power if you can't use it to project strength and be independent? Yet, here is God fully present in Jesus.

Jesus came into creation, as John 3:16 says, because he "…so loved the world." When I am tempted to think that I need to make myself more holy, or make myself pure enough, to be good enough for God, I remember that Jesus was born in a manger, and not a sterile hospital room or the temple. He was born into everyday life among creatures with normal creaturely functions. Jesus didn't come in a way that tried to escape or "clean-up" aspects of life we might find distasteful, unpleasant, or gross. He embraced them.

The second half of Zechariah's canticle is on the side and too small for you to read in the picture above, but it further describes why God has broken into our world in Jesus. It is "…to shine light on those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death." For me this is such good news. It is honest about the fact that darkness and death are part of our world. It doesn't try to deny it or sugar coat it, but says that even though that is true, Jesus has come to bring light in the midst of it. There is so much in our world that grieves me. So much that I want to say, "That isn't right! That's not what God intends!" So much that is the opposite of how Jesus lived. So much suffering, pain, and sorrow. And it is in the midst of this, Jesus come s to bring light, peace, and love.

Pastor's Message Continued

It is too small to read in the copy on this page, but the illustration contains one more scripture quote at the top. The first is the angels' message to the shepherds: "glory to God in the highest heaven and peace among those whom he favors." The angels make clear Jesus comes in peace – in Shalom – the Hebrew sense of wholeness, well-being, and all that makes for sustaining life.

It was the promise Zechariah was given to sing about. A promise he had to wait for. As we wait again for the celebration of Christmas – and for Jesus continual in breaking into our lives even now – it is my prayer that you may be filled with peace, hope, and joy. And that will Zechariah your heart too will be filled with song.

Pastor Lloyd Menke

A word about serving as your interim pastor.

As the end of December draws near I am aware that my time with you is short. As you may know, my contract to serve as your interim pastor ends at the end of December. Thank you for opening your hearts and your lives to me during these last few months.

I have been asked by several people if I will be renewing my contract. There are some realities you need to be aware of. Given that the congregation voted by two thirds to disassociate from the ELCA, and that there is nothing at this point to suggest the second vote will not also achieve the necessary two thirds, renewing is simply not possible. I am a retired ELCA pastor. You should be aware that any ELCA pastor (retired or not) who would come to serve you once you disassociate, would be removed from the clergy roster of the ELCA. While that may not seem like a big deal, it has significant current and future financial tax implications with regard to the ELCA pension benefits.

Not only that, but I have given 40 years of my life being a pastor in the ELCA. I have served for 6 years on the synod council and as a conference dean. While I have enjoyed being at St. Mark's and have come to like and enjoy serving you, there are many congregations in the ELCA that I can serve if I want to continue doing interim work. I have no need or desire to serve where it is clear that the majority of the congregation wants to be served by someone from another church body.

Finally, my service as a pastor has meant that for the last 40 years, I have had 4 Sundays off a year and 4 weeks of vacations a year. I have a son, who is a pastor in Richmond, VA. He has the same limitations. So, if I want to see him and his family, I need to go there. I will be leaving in January to do that – and to celebrate a late Christmas with him.

Please do not take this as a rejection of you. If anything, the congregation is making clear they are seeking to go in another direction. One that departs from who and what I am. As you come to the vote on January 10th , know that I wish you well and that you remain in my prayers.

Pastor Lloyd Menke

Music Notes

Sometimes it can be challenging to keep looking up to God and His ways when my prayers seem to go unanswered, or not answered how I was hoping!
It's at times like this when I am grateful to have connections with other believers. I am so appreciative of the support, encouragement and prayers that other's offer.
Another thing that often helps, is singing songs that remind me God hasn't forgotten. It will all be okay in the end.

God Will Make a Way by Don Moen is one such song.



God will make a way
Where there seems to be no way
He works in ways we cannot see
He will make a way for me
He will be my guide
Hold me closely to His side
With love and strength for each new day
He will make a way, He will make a way

Psalm 121:2 (ESV) says:
I lift my eyes to the hills
From where does my help come?
My help comes from the Lord,
Who made heaven and earth.

Peace and blessings to you as we head into this season celebrating the birth of our Savior!
Lisa



Church Information & Updates

Bible Study Opportunities

Morning Adult Bible Studies

Tuesdays starts at 9:30am

Evening Adult Bible Study

Evening Bible Study is concluded until after Lent. Check back for updates around that time!

Coffee Fellowship

We will be having fellowship after the worship service on the **1st Sunday of the month.**

Church School & Confirmation Information

Church School & Confirmation Registration

On Line Church School Registration -

https://forms.gle/PTnRPKs9jGyLnsyt5

On Line Confirmation Registration

https://forms.gle/z8cKaHEVmufnv51KA

The Church School Christmas Program will be December 20th at 10:00am



Important Upcoming Dates

January10th - Following the 10:00am Worship Service
2nd vote to continue with dissifiliation from the ELCA

January 24th - Following the 10:00am Worship Service
Annual Congregational Meeting

Food Shelf Volunteer Needed

The Food Shelf is looking for a shelf stocker and someone to volunteers to help on the 4th Tuesday of every month for the St. Mark's week. The stocker will stock every week. If you are interested or have questions, please contact
Beth Bester 651-246-9301

If you would like more information, please visit: https://www.stmarksrandolph.com/about-1

ST. MARKS LUTHERAN CHURCH COLUMBARIUM & OSSUARY

EICKHOF ELY OSSUARIUM

BE REMEMBERED.....

Whether you are planning cremation for yourself or wish to inurn the ashes of a loved one, our Ossuarium provides the assurance that your cremated remains will be securely and beautifully held within a lasting monument.



Example only - color will be different

What is our plan?

The columbarium pictured has been ordered in a beautiful black granite and construction of it has started.

You can check out our website

stmarksrandolph.com

for more information.

STMARKSLUTHERANCHURCHRANDOLPH,MN

STMARKSRANDOLPH@GMAIL.COM

WELCA

· Next WELCA-December 9, 2026 @ 10:00 am. Meeting at Dorry's for Christmas party.

· We have a new WELCA schedule for meetings: we will meet the 2nd Wednesday of the months of April, July, October, November & December.

· Ol' Country Bazaar - Saturday, November 28th 9:00 am to 2:00 pm. We hope to see you there.

· Bake Sale & Craft Sale items: We are looking for all members to participate in helping donate baked items and craft items for the WELCA booth at the bazaar. Food items that go well are cookies, bars, breads, sweet breads, cakes, pies and snack mixes. If you have a favorite recipe, please help us out. You can drop off your goodies on Friday November 27th from 11 to 2. If the church is open, you can put the items on the check in table.

· Volunteers – We will need volunteers for the WELCA booth and also the kitchen on both Friday and Saturday. If you would like to volunteer, please send an email to the church email or contact Dixie at 612-578-8743.

· Bible Study after WELCA: There will be no more bible study after the WELCA meetings on Wednesdays.

· Christmas Party: Anyone is welcome to join us for our Christmas party at Dorry's.

· Prayers: for Veterans, active soldiers and their families.

Council Minutes

St. Mark's Lutheran Church

Secretary's Report

October 13, 2026

Attendees: Dixie Schaffer, Keri Lorenzen, Dan Kuhn, Chicky Otte, Lucinda Preston, Dean Taylor, Tyler Otte, Lindsay Bester, Shelby Kuhn, Stephanie Krueger, Pastor Lloyd, Christine Sachs

Absent: Luke Dubbles, Rob Nivala

Building Uses:

● Randolph Football Team for meals before games
● 4H Clubs
● Lorenzen Bridal Shower (10.24)
● Randolph NHS Halloween Party and food shelf donation (10.31)

Secretary's Report:

Motion to accept Secretary's report by Dixie Schaffer, seconded by Lucinda Preston. Motion passed.

Financial Secretary's Report

● The Township sent excess money back from permitting/escrow, back into the capital improvements account
● $100 donation back from F&F raffle winner

Motion to accept the Financial Secretary's report by Tyler Otte, seconded by Chicky Otte. Motion passed.

Treasurer's Report:

Motion to accept the Treasurer's report by Lucinda Preston, seconded by Dixie Schaffer. Motion passed.

Pastor's Report:

● Worship is going well
● Confirmation studying The 10 Commandments
● Pastor is working with the 10th graders on their faith statements and preparing for Confirmation on Nov. 1st
● Pastor is leading a Bible study on the Book of Acts
● Pastor reported on visits and conversations with the seniors
● Attended the Theological Conference this week

Deacon's Report:

● Deacons have been meeting with Dixie on church decor
● Nov 1st - fellowship and cookies to celebrate Confirmation

Trustee's Report:

● Marv has been preparing instructions for maintaining the church

Board of Education Report:

● Working on Christmas Program - December 20th at 10am
● Shelby will order Bibles for the 7th graders
● Operation Christmas Child - need shoe boxes
● Working on mission outreach opportunities - Valentine's boxes + others

WELCA Report:

● The Bazaar - Saturday, Nov. 28th, 9am-2pm

Feast & Festival:

● n/a

Old Business:

● Columbarium update: they are available for purchase. Shelby will put in the newsletter. Otte's Excavating and concrete to be done yet this fall. Columbarium will be arriving in Nov/Dec. ● Rick is getting a quote on a commercial-grade back door

New Business:

● Christmas Services - Christmas Eve 4pm & 8:30pm
● We'd like to hang up the print from Pastor Lou's family
● Pastor would like to designate for housing allowance (up to $15,000) for 2026 ○ Lucinda Preston made a motion to accept Pastor's request to designate up to $15,000 for housing, Dan Kuhn seconded, motion passed
● We will cover Pastor Lloyd's mileage for the conference he attended
● The first vote on September 20th passed. Bishop Grimm received and acknowledged the certified letter on Oct 2nd. Looking to schedule the 2nd vote on Sunday, January 10th ● Annual Meeting will be Sunday, January 24th
● Pastor shared his idea of doing some stewardship messaging
● Pastor's contract currently states the end of the year, he's discussing timing with his family ● Congregational Meeting + Potluck + Dixie retirement party: October 25th
● Prepare a 2027 calendar of events and things that need to be done and when

Next meetings: Tuesday, November 10th, 7pm (December 8th)

Motion to adjourn by Tyler Otte, seconded by Lucinda Preston, meeting adjourned. Respectfully submitted by Keri Lorenzen

Community Events

Community Food Shelf

Here at Saint Mark's Lutheran, we try our best to serve our neighbors. One of the many ways we help is by providing food to our local communities. Saint Mark's Lutheran would like to thank you for your generosity in supporting our food shelf.

If you know anyone that could benefit from receiving some extra food please let them know we're here to help.

1st Tuesday- 8:00 am - 9:30 am
2nd, 3rd, 4th Tuesdays -
4:30 pm to 6:30 pm

All cash donations are used to buy healthy perishable food items.

College Student Food Shelf Invite

The Food Shelf is inviting any College Student to come and get some supplies from the food shelf. We want to help with your expenses during these years. Please come when the Food Shelf is open or at 9 am before Church on Sunday or Email randolphmnfoodshelf@gmail.com
Or contact Beth Bester at (651) 246-9301

Wheelchair Available

If you are in need of a wheelchair, for a day, a week, a month, or six months, we have 1 wheelchair at church that you can borrow. Check with Shelby on availability.

If you know of any events that we should add to Community Events, please contact Shelby at stmarksrandolph@gmail.com or call (507) 263-9182 before the Newsletter deadline which is the 20th of the month by 11:30 am.

Grief Material

If you are in need of some reading material regarding grief, we have a section in our library for you to borrow. You can check it out when the church is open or call Shelby at 612-986-1908 and she will set up a time that works for you to meet at the church. We have the book "I wasn't ready to say good bye" by Brook Noel & Pamela D. Blair, PHD

If you would like to talk to someone, you can call Pastor Lloyd at 507-248-4231



Saint Mark's Lutheran Church

PO Box 206, 28595 Randolph Blvd. Randolph, MN 55065
(507) 263-9182

Sunday Worship
10:00 am
& Streaming on Facebook

The Small Church

with a Big Heart

We're on the Web & Facebook

Giving Options

You can send your offering through the mail at PO Box 206 Randolph
or
download the Vanco Mobile app on your mobile phone
search st marks randolph mn
or
click the GIVE button on our website.

Interim Pastor:	Pastor Lloyd Menke
Church:	(507) 263-9182
Cell:	(651) 248-4231
Email:	llmenke@gmail.com
Office Assistant	Shelby Kuhn
Cell:	(612) 986-1908
Email:	shelbykuhn11@gmail.com
Musician	Lisa Molitor
Email:	lisa.molitor@yahoo.com

President	Dan Kuhn
Vice President	Tyler Otte
Secretary	Keri Lorenzen
Treasurer	Christine Otte
Financial Secretary	Dixie Schaffer
Deacons	Stephanie Krueger
	Lindsay Bester
	Lucinda Preston
Trustees	Robert Nivala
	Dean Taylor
	Luke Dubbels

Church Email: stmarksrandolph@gmail.com
Web Site: www.stmarksrandolph.com
Facebook: St. Mark's Lutheran Church
Instagram: stmarksrandolph
WELCA Facebook: St. Mark's Randolph MN WELCA