



ST. MARK CROSSINGS



St. Mark Lutheran Church

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OUR MISSION: As disciples of Christ, St. Mark ministers that all may know the joy of Christ's love through ministries of Welcoming, Growing, and Caring.



BREAKING NEW GROUND

At the recent ELCA Church-wide Assembly, some important decisions were made concerning the ministry policies of our national church body. The decisions I am referring to are outlined on the next 2 pages which follow this article, in a letter from our Presiding Bishop, Mark Hanson. How do I feel about these decisions? I am personally, generally supportive of them. The Church must continually wrestle with how to interpret the Bible in a developing world. No longer do we believe, for example, that the Sun revolves around the earth as assumed in Joshua 10:12-14. No longer do we insist that women remain silent in worship and with their heads covered as Paul instructed. No longer do we accept the institution of slavery which is upheld by passages in both the Old and New Testaments. Even an event like the Ascension of Jesus which, if taken literally, assumes a flat earth and a heaven above the clouds must be re-imagined. The Bible remains authoritative, but how its authority is applied to specific human issues in a changing world is often a matter of struggle and debate. The resolutions outlined in Bishop Hanson's letter reflect the Church's recent struggle to faithfully interpret the Bible in light of a human reality which cannot be forever denied or ignored.

Still, the issue is not only the Bible per se, but also traditions and norms. When big changes are made in ecclesiastical and societal norms, the natural question which follows is, "what's next?" In light of this question, we must trust that God will continue to guide the church forward toward appropriate change and away from changes that would eventually be harmful. Still, we cannot oppose change that may indeed be right, even though it may produce difficult complexities which must be worked through.

Perhaps, though, the most important part of the new provisions of the Church is the concept of the "bound conscience". This term, while difficult to "pin down", has to do with respecting the firmly resolved opinions of individuals and congregations. **No individual is being asked to change his or her opinion about this issue. No congregation is being asked to change any of its policies.** If a congregation does not want to consider an openly gay, coupled candidate for its Pastor it will not be asked to do so. If a congregation does not approve of blessing same-sex unions, it will not happen in that congregation. **In the vast majority of congregations, then, there will be no change in current ministry policies and procedures.** Changes will only occur in congregations seeking to change.

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Finally you might ask, “what will happen differently at St. Mark as a result of the ELCA decisions?” My simple answer is, “nothing.” **I read St. Mark at this time as a moderately conservative congregation. Therefore I think it is in the best interest of this congregation at this point in its rich history to make no changes in its current policies at all.** I will certainly initiate no change, and so any changes that would occur would have to come as a result of a “grass roots movement” within the congregation which I do not anticipate. I do not plan to put a strong emphasis on this issue as St. Mark moves forward in ministry. There is so much more for our congregation to focus on than this issue, and that is what I plan to do. I thought, though, that you needed to know my candid thoughts on the recent decisions of our church body and my pastoral response to them.

Finally, I would like to say that I am proud and not ashamed of our national church body for how it has handled this issue. It has not caved into fundamentalism, nor has it hastily forced change on anyone. It has thoughtfully and responsibly dealt with a difficult issue by relying on a deeper view of the scripture, our tradition, and the love for the neighbor. As Robert Frost said in his well known poem; he has taken “the road less traveled.” So our church body has taken the difficult, less-traveled road in seeking to honestly deal with a controversial, yet important issue in our time. I commend our leadership for it.

God Bless you all! -Pastor Paul

CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY UPDATE FROM PRESIDING BISHOP MARK S. HANSON

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. -- Colossians 3:14-15

I write to you from the 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly in Minneapolis with official information about the actions of this assembly related to human sexuality. I am grateful for the manner in which this church has engaged in this conversation. The way this assembly has discussed these questions is a continuation of the way this church has deliberated: with deep and heartfelt respect for each other, engaging with Scripture, listening to the faith stories and experiences of one another, and through worship and prayer seeking the discernment of the Spirit.

In my response to the voting members on Friday, August 21, I made this request: we need one another. We need time. We need the voices of those who lament and those who rejoice over these actions, for together we have been called to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ and engage in God’s mission for the life of the world.

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The assembly adopted 676-338 -- precisely two-thirds of those voting -- “Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust,” the ELCA’s 10th social statement, with minor editorial amendments. It also adopted a series of implementing resolutions with amendments. This theological and teaching document builds on the key Lutheran principles of justification by grace and Christian freedom to serve the neighbor. It emphasizes that central to our vocation, in relation to human sexuality, is the building and protection of trust in relationships. It therefore affirms that we are called to be trustworthy in our human sexuality and to build social institutions and practices where trust and trustworthy relationships can thrive. The social statement addresses marriage, same-gender relationships, families, protecting children, friendships, commitment, social responsibility and moral discernment. Regarding same-gender committed relationships, the social statement says that this church is not in agreement and recognizes the different perspectives which are present among us.

Our assembly also adopted resolutions proposed by the Church Council based on those contained in a “Report and Recommendation on Ministry Policies.” The actions direct that changes be made to churchwide policy documents to make it possible for those in committed same-gender relationships to serve as rostered leaders in the ELCA. There were amendments to two of the proposals. The assembly adopted the resolutions in the following order, beginning with a strong statement about how we will live together in the face of our disagreements:

Resolution 3: “RESOLVED, that in the implementation of any resolutions on ministry policies, the ELCA commit itself to bear one another's burdens, love the neighbor, and respect the bound consciences of all.” (Adopted 771-230 as amended)

Resolution 1: “RESOLVED, that the ELCA commit itself to finding ways to allow congregations that choose to do so to recognize, support and hold publicly accountable life-long, monogamous, same-gender relationships.” (Adopted 619-402)

Resolution 2: “RESOLVED, that the ELCA commit itself to finding a way for people in such publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationships to serve as rostered leaders of this church.” (Adopted 559-451)

Resolution 4: This resolution called upon members to respect the bound consciences of those with whom they disagree; declared intent to allow structured flexibility in decision-making about candidacy and the call process; eliminated the prohibition of rostered service by members in publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous same-gender relationships; recognized and committed to respect the conviction of members who believe that the ELCA should not call or roster people in committed same-gender relationships; called for development of accountability guidelines; directed that amendments to ministry policy documents be drafted and approved; and stated that this church continue to trust congregations, bishops, synods and others responsible for determining who should be called into public ministry. (Adopted 667-307 as amended)

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I invite you into important, thoughtful, prayerful conversation about what all of this means for our life in mission together. What is absolutely important for me is that we have this conversation together.

We meet one another finally -- not in our agreements or our disagreements -- but at the foot of the cross, where God is faithful, where Christ is present with us, and where, by the power of the Holy Spirit, we are one in Christ.

In Christ,
The Rev. Mark S. Hanson
ELCA Presiding Bishop

Comments of Bishop Hanson to the assembly at the conclusion of the decisions on human sexuality are at <http://www.elca.org/assembly> on the Web.



NEW YOUTH GROUP FORMAT

On Sunday, September 27th, St. Mark began a new format for youth ministry. There will now be 2 active youth group entities at St. Mark. One group will focus on elementary age children. The second group will focus on grades 6-12. At the first event, the groups met together for pizza and dessert, and then broke apart for movie watching and discussion. Stay tuned for more on the youth groups in the near future.

GIVING

Would you like to benefit the congregation or other ministries and receive tax benefits for yourself? Consider a gift of appreciated securities. Through this type of gift, you can give more to the church than you originally invested, and may be able to take a tax deduction for the current market value on the date of the gift.

For more information on how you can make gifts for the benefit of the church, contact Barbara Carl, Regional Gift Planner for the ELCA Foundation/Lutheran Planned Giving at 724-438-7741, or contact the ELCA Foundation at 800-638-3522, ext. 2970.

YOUTH SUNDAY OCTOBER 25



Reformation Sunday will again also be “Youth Sunday” at St. Mark. Our young people of many ages will “take over” leading much of the 10:15 worship service on this day. Please do not use this as an opportunity to miss church. Our youth always do a fine job with this service, and supporting our youth should be priority one for all of us.



Wednesdays at 12 noon and 7:30pm
Starting OCTOBER 7
WEDNESDAY BIBLE STUDY

This fall the Wednesday Bible study will be focusing on the Gospel of Luke using a study called "Learning Luke" by Dr. David Tiede. Dr. Tiede is one of the best known New Testament scholars in the Lutheran Church. We will watch video presentations featuring Dr. Tiede and a panel of pastors and lay leaders from various walks of life. Then we will discuss the presentations and biblical texts in our classroom setting. Each session will last about an hour.

This year we will begin our study on Wednesday, October 7th at 12:00 Noon (Bring your lunch) and 7:30 p.m. in the Conference Room. We will have 6 sessions this fall and we will have 6 sessions in the early Spring. Please join us for this exciting study!

THANKS

We want to take this opportunity to thank four devoted people that have helped us with our church envelopes for the past number of years. They are: **Helen Mendel, Kitty Hagedorn, Harry Abplanalp and Dick Strickler**. Without fail, they are with us every Monday morning, come rain, snow or sunshine and we really appreciate the job they continue to do.

So we are asking for a volunteer to join this foursome and be trained to fill in when one of them is on vacation or off for some other reason. This only takes a short time to do this job, after being trained and it is strictly a fill-in-job, not a permanent job every Monday morning. If interested, please call the church office. Thanks.



Mark your calendar- Join the fun!

Saturday, October 10 from 6-8 PM Costume Party !

Kids of all ages join us for our G.L.O.W. (God Lights Our Way) party. Fun, Snacks, Crafts, Games, Contests—Candy!

Pick out your favorite costume and join us for glow in the dark bowling, guess the weight of the giant pumpkin and many more games and fun.

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Our annual congregational meeting to elect church council members and approve the budget will be **Sunday, October 18th following both worship services.** Please plan to attend this important meeting. Please come and be a part of making decisions for the ministry of St. Mark.

****Please note that October Council meeting has been moved up to Monday, October 5th beginning at 6:30 P.M.**

LOOKING AHEAD TO NOVEMBER

Sunday, November 1st – This will again be our **All Saints** observation with candles in memory of all St. Mark members who have died in the past year. We never forget how much they meant to us, and we rejoice in the triumph of the resurrection.

Sunday, November 8th – **Consecration Sunday.** This is the day all of us are asked to highly consider our commitment to the Lord. In a consumer-driven society, our commitment must include a financial decision.

Sunday, November 22nd – The Hanging of the Greens project follows 10:15 worship, with a pizza lunch.

Sunday, November 29th – **Fast Food Sunday.** Once again, this being a 5th Sunday, we encourage everyone to give the cost of a fast food meal as a special offering. This offering will go to the “Tour de Revs” which was a 13,000 mile bike trek on one bamboo constructed bicycle by 3 Lutheran Pastors from our Synod to raise money for ELCA World Hunger. This will be the last offering for the “Tour de Revs” project.

CROSSROADS

St. Mark's Youth in Ministry

A new youth group format has begun at St. Mark. (See the article on page 4 of this newsletter.) We hope all elementary, middle school, and high school age youth will consider being a part of these new groups.

Also, the area-wide Lutheran Youth Group will continue to meet every other month. The first meeting in September was at Foggy Bottom Country Club. A service project meeting is in the planning stages for October. Stay tuned.

OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS

- 1—Mary King
 2—Mildred Amend, Lucia Proch
 3—Doug Barnhart, Nancy Braden, Brandon Gast
 Bob Mullavey
 4—Cheryl Stuntz
 5—Jane Cline, Dan Crews, Mark Fulton,
 Cassandra Henry, Melissa Reuther
 6—Dave Lang, Grant Parshall, Nicholas Parshall
 7—Emy Auber
 8—Les Cline
 9—Lora Reuther
 10—Megan Ondrik
 11—Lynne Ellison, Robert Schafer, Sr.
 12—Rob Schmidt, Randy Schmidt
 13—Courtney Bridgers, Joanne Graebe
 15—Doris Schafer
 16—Loretta Hatcher, Mason Lapp, Seth Myers
 21—Ken Kriner, Jr., Josh Marshall
 22—Kelly Ondrik, Rachel Petri, Kendyl Sorge
 23—Rosalie Henke, Brenton Naumann
 26—Brian Crawford, Michael Kravolic
 27—Gina Minch, David Naumann, Amber Polomik
 28—Jason Marshall
 29—Ruth Ann Rinehart, Allison Roesser,
 Otto Zwicker
 30—Brittany Hillberry, Whittany Hillberry,
 Rob Naumann, Jim Taylor

**OCTOBER WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES**

- 6—Bruce & Loretta Hatcher
 9—Mark & Tammy Robinson
 12—Mike & Delite White
 16—Les & Jane Cline
 18—Josh & Kelly Robinson
 20—Albert & Jo Wyatt
 22—Jerry & Monica Hannahs
 Dick & Melissa Opic
 24—Max & Christina Oravetz

OCTOBER ALTAR FLOWERS

- 4—Helen Petri in honor of son, Joe Jr. at his birthday 10/8
 Pat & Leslie Garrett in honor of daughter, Shelby's 24th birthday 10/11
- 11—Ruth Little in memory of husband George (died 10/10)
 Clara Folmar in honor of granddaughter Courtney Bridger's birthday 10/13
 Peggy & Jim Glaser, and Eleanor Nickerson in memory of Robert
 Nickerson at his birth date 10/13
- 18—Les & Jane Cline in honor of their 61st Wedding Anniversary 10/16
 The Stein Children in memory of father, Josiah at his birth date 10/22
 Helen Petri in honor of granddaughter, Rachel's birthday



**OCTOBER
 ALTAR
 FLOWERS**

26— **OPEN**



FLU SEASON H1N1 (Swine Flu) and other Strains GUIDELINES

Flu season is hitting early this year. We continue to be concerned about the H1N1 virus but with Fall and winter approaching, other strains will be making their appearance as well. There are a few easy and common sense steps that can be taken to protect your health and the health of your loved ones.

STAY HOME IF YOU ARE SICK! Symptoms may include: fever or chills **and** cough or sore throat; runny nose, body aches, headache, tiredness, diarrhea, vomiting. Stay home until you are fever free for 24 hours (non-medicated). Usual time is 3-5 days.

Wash your hands frequently with soap and water for 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.

Avoid touching your nose, mouth and eyes.

Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue, or cough and sneeze into your upper sleeve.

Wash your hands or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer after coughing, sneezing, or blowing your nose.

Keep frequently touched, common surfaces clean (telephones, computer, equipment, etc.)

Do not use other's phones, desks, offices, equipment unless first cleaning them with a disinfectant.

Maintain a healthy lifestyle: rest, diet, exercise and relaxation

*****Above information from the CDC website.*****

People concerned with the passing of the peace can bow (place your hands behind your back to indicate you do not wish to shake hands) or carry alcohol-based gel or wipes. Small bottles of hand sanitizer will soon be available in the upper and lower narthex for you to take with you into worship if you choose to do so.

If you have recently been ill or have any concerns, it is recommended you do not use the Common Cup.

CONSIDER HOSTING A FLU SHOT CLINIC AT YOUR CHURCH. CONTACT YOUR LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT, HOSPITAL OR DRUG STORE FOR MORE INFORMATION. (H1N1 vaccine is expected to be available in October)

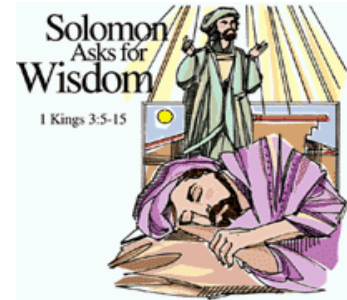
SUNDAY SCHOOL SCHEDULE FOR OCTOBER

October 4 Noah Genesis 6:12-21;7:9-22; 8:1-12; 9:1-17

Main Theme: "The Stories of Kings"

October 11 David 2 Samuel 8:8-16

October 18 Solomon 1 Kings 2:1-4; 3:6-12; 4:29-34



THIS 'N THAT

SPECIAL THANKS to **Ray & Missi Braun** and all who helped with the Adult Steak Fry on Sept. 5th. It was very enjoyable.

CHURCH COUNCIL will meet on the first Monday of October (Oct. 5th) at 6:30 P.M.; instead of the usual second Monday. Please mark your calendar.

We have Sunday, **October 25th open for Altar Flowers**. If you would like to dedicate a vase of flowers that day to a loved one or in honor of something please sign up on the flower chart in the lower narthex. Donation of \$20 is requested.

We **NEED A SPONSOR** for the **November and December issues of the Newsletter**. If you are interested in one of them, please call Grace at the church office (242-3466). A donation of \$100 is asked to partially fund the cost of the postage, printing and materials to send our monthly newsletter.

CANDY DONATIONS NEEDED FOR THE G.L.O.W. COSTUME PARTY. Please bring individually wrapped candy and leave it in the box outside Amy Hinkelman's office before October 10. Thank you!

WOMEN'S LUNCH GROUP will not meet in October due to Turkey Dinner week. They will meet again the third week in November. We will let you know where.

IS YOUR GIVING CURRENT? Our anticipated "Giving" through August 31, 2009 was \$113,333. "Giving" received to this date totals \$119,785. Everyone is to be commended for their generous giving. Total income-to-date is \$158,165 while total spending-to-date is \$166,557 **resulting in deficit spending to date of \$8,392**. The August church financial statement is posted in the lower narthex.

MEALS ON WHEELS: A big **THANKS** to all the many members of St. Mark who donated funds or baked desserts for "Meals on Wheels".

In the recent "Football 2008" newspaper supplement that recaps all Ohio Valley high school teams, St. Mark's **Robert Jones** was mentioned as a member of the Wheeling Park High School team.

BUS TRIP— Once again, Security Travel is having a bus trip to Columbus, OH on December 5th to see the "**Living Christmas Tree**" performance at Grace Brethren Church. This is a Saturday matinee show and includes lunch at Schmidt's Restaurant in German Village in Columbus. The cost is \$80. There is a sign-up sheet on the first floor. If any questions, call Dick Strickler (304-242-6614) or Merv Evans (304-242-1617).

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WILSON & ELIZABETH BREEDEN
And brothers CARL & THOMAS BREEDEN**