



February 2017

CROSSMARKS

St. Mark Lutheran Church (ELCA) of Charlottesville, VA • www.stmarklutheran.org • 434-293-3311 • office@stmarklutheran.org
A Reconciling in Christ congregation • Lutheran Campus Ministry at UVA • St. Mark Lutheran Preschool

A STAFFING UPDATE FROM COUNCIL

As we anxiously await the nomination of a new Pastor by the call committee, it is with much sadness that I bring you news that Anne Carter, after much time in thought and prayer, has come to realize that she needs to resign her position as Director of Youth and Family Ministry, effective February 1, 2017.

She has been the guiding light and spiritual inspiration for our youth over the last four years and demonstrates a deep love and gift for this ministry. It has been especially critical over this last year without a full time pastor.

This comes with the realities of increased family responsibilities and the transition to a full-time position in the school system in September.

Please understand that she remains a member of St. Mark with a vested interest in the success of youth ministry and the lives of our youth and children but as of February will no longer be the Director of Youth and Family Ministry. We are grateful to have had her leadership in this ministry and are thankful she remains a presence in our congregation.

Peace,

Lewis Horton
President of Mission Council

St. Mark Lutheran Church, with Christ Jesus as the cornerstone, is a people called by God to be servants of all people; to experience God's saving grace through faith; to come together as the body of Christ in worship and celebration of the gifts of God; and to reach out to those outside the church with witness to the loving grace of God through Christ Jesus. To answer this call, our mission will include reaching out to and beyond the members of St. Mark.

WORSHIP HIGHLIGHTS

February 5 – Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany: Light shines in the darkness for the upright, the psalmist sings. Isaiah declares that when we loose the bonds of injustice and share our bread with the hungry, the light breaks forth like the dawn. In another passage from the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus, the light of the world, calls his followers to let the light of their good works shine before others. Through baptism we are sent into the world to shine with the light of Christ.

Isaiah 58:1-9a [9b-12] • Psalm 112:1-9 [10] • 1 Corinthians 2:1-12 [13-16] • Matthew 5:13-20



February 12 – Sixth Sunday after the Epiphany: In today's reading from Deuteronomy we are called to choose life by loving and obeying God. Much of today's gospel reading echoes portions of the Ten Commandments. Jesus' instructions to the crowd reveal a pattern of behavior that honors both God and the neighbor, resulting in life and health for the whole community. We, too, are invited to embrace these commandments, not out of fear of retribution, but because God has promised that to do so means life for us.

Deuteronomy 30:15-20 • Psalm 119:1-8 • 1 Corinthians 3:1-9 • Matthew 5:21-37



February 19 – Seventh Sunday after the Epiphany: In today's first reading we hear, "You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy." Yet we know we cannot achieve perfection. Our attempts to love neighbors and even our enemies fall short of what God desires for us. Yet in Jesus we see one who loved even those who persecuted and killed him. We are made holy in baptism, and forgiven at the table of God's mercy. As a people made holy by God, we go in peace to love as we have been loved.

Leviticus 19: 1-2, 9-18 • Psalm 119:33-40 • 1 Corinthians 3:10-11, 16-23 • Matthew 5:38-48



February 26 – Transfiguration of Our Lord: Today's festival is a bridge between the Advent-Christmas-Epiphany cycle that comes to a close today and the Lent-Easter cycle that begins in several days. On the mount of transfiguration Jesus is revealed as God's beloved Son, echoing the words at his baptism. This vision of glory sustains us as Jesus faces his impending death in Jerusalem.

We turn this week to Ash Wednesday and our yearly baptismal journey from Lent to Easter. We will put aside the alleluia at the conclusion of today's liturgy. This word of joy will be omitted during the penitential season of Lent and will be sung again at Easter.

Exodus 24:12-18 • Psalm 2 • 2 Peter 1:16-21 • Matthew 17:1-9

CONGREGATIONAL NEWS

We are pleased to announce that the **SERRV orders** this year have produced **\$639.47** that St. Mark is able to contribute towards malaria nets; thanks to all who participated!



Women's Book Club: The women will be meeting in the church library **on February 27 at 7:00 pm.** We will be discussing *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter* by Carson McCullers. It is about a deaf man named John Singer who does not speak, and the people he encounters in a 1930s mill town in the US state of Georgia. Please get the book, read or listen to it, and come and join us to discuss how you felt about the book.



Since 1933, the **International Rescue Committee, (IRC)** has helped refugees address the challenges and opportunities of rebuilding their lives in the United States. The IRC's New Roots program helps refugees become self-sufficient and contribute to their new home through community gardening, nutrition education and small-business farming.

With training, tools and land provided by the IRC, refugees are sharing their agricultural skills and producing affordable, locally grown vegetables and fruit for their families and neighbors.

PLEASE JOIN US on **Sunday, February 26** in the nave, immediately following service, to learn from Brooke Ray, head of IRC New Roots who will share more information about the program in Charlottesville and help us explore how we can be involved.

Questions ask Elaine Oakey, Rich Leahy or Gail Milligan

Safe Space Training -- Feb. 11, 2017: This may not be the first event you have added to your 2017 calendar, but it is a very important one for the congregational life of St. Mark Lutheran Church. All Mission Council members, staff, preschool staff, Sunday School teachers, youth advisers, parents, senior high youth, campus ministry participants, and the congregation at large are encouraged to take two hours out of your busy schedule to come to this event. It is sponsored by C'ville Pride and will enhance our understanding of the challenges that members of the LGBTQ community and their family members face in day to day living. It will also help us in our ongoing efforts to be a welcoming community for all people, and a safe space for everyone. This is an important topic for all, but an essential one for a congregation that has chosen the Reconciling in Christ designation, as we at St. Mark have done.

We will meet for from **9:30-11:30am:** breakfast goodies and coffee will be served; a staffed nursery will be provided. Trained presenters Julie Weed and Lyndele von Schill will be our speakers. A sign-up sheet is available in the narthex. If you have questions, please contact Susan Seehaver. Please mark your calendars!



- From Cure SMA and Lutheran Family Services, for our quarterly donations.
- From PACEM, for our support.

Notes are posted on the bulletin board outside the church office.



February 17 through March 4, we will be hosting a dozen or more homeless women of Charlottesville in our fellowship hall. There are many different ways you can serve, and hopefully something from this list below will speak to you at the place where you can give. Also, if you have a relationship with a store or restaurant that might like to donate some of the items below, feel free to ask them.

We will have an orientation **after church on Feb. 12** for people making meals and people staying overnight. If you have any questions about anything, please contact Heidi Jones. Thank you!

- **Donate cash that will buy CVS gift cards for the women:** Give to Heidi Jones or put in donation collection after church on Sundays. Checks can be written to St. Mark, with PACEM noted on the comment line.
- **Donate individually wrapped snack items:** These are offered to the women as they leave every morning. We need cereal bars, crackers, trail mix, Pirate's Booty, Veggie Sticks, Clif Bars, raisins, packages of nuts, etc. Put them in the collection bin in the narthex.
- **Donate travel-size toiletry items:** Hand sanitizer, lotion, cough drops, feminine hygiene products, toothbrushes, toothpaste, deodorant and lip balm. Put them in the collection bin in the narthex.
- **Donate pillow treats:** mints or small chocolates, and small cards or inspirational sayings for us to put on their pillows every night.
- **Make and serve a meal (these slots are filling up fast!):** Sign up at <http://bit.ly/2j0BmSe>.
- **Bring other food items:** We need drinks, ice, fruit and other small food items to keep the kitchen stocked. Sign up at <http://bit.ly/2j0BmSe>.
- **Wash tablecloths:** Sign up at <http://bit.ly/2j0BmSe>.
- **Spend the night:** Sign up at <http://bit.ly/2j0BmSe>.
- **Plan an activity:** Maybe you or someone you know could (these are just a few ideas; feel free to think of others!) offer haircuts or pedicures (or other foot care), offer massages, do a craft, help with resumes, offer a nurse for consultations, play Bingo (the church has the game; talk to Heidi for prize ideas) and more! Sign up at <http://bit.ly/2j0BmSe>.
- **Be a snow emergency backup volunteer:** If you live close to St. Mark and have 4WD, let Heidi know.
- **Help set up the fellowship hall on Feb. 17:** We will get everything ready and enjoy dinner together while we work. Sign up at <http://bit.ly/2j0BmSe>.
- **Help make the living area in the fellowship hall homey:** Would you want to wash the curtains in the fellowship hall? Do you have a soft rug (8x10 or so) we could borrow or keep? Do you have magazines or books women would like that you're done reading? Do you have movies you'd like to share? (Put your names on those so that we can return them...) Any other ideas are welcome.

YOUTH AND FAMILY MINISTRY

To the Faith Family of St. Mark - I am so grateful for the four years I've spent leading youth ministry, for the support and encouragement of the congregation. Most of all, I am grateful for each of the youth and children with whom I've had the honor of walking as they journey in faith... and with whom I will still continue to walk. While I may no longer be Director of Youth and Family Ministry, I am still very much invested in the relationships I've built and in the ministry as a whole.

As you may imagine, I struggled mightily with this decision. Ultimately, through much time spent in thought and prayer, I understand that this is the best decision for my family, who needs more of me than ever before. I look forward to helping a new Director transition into leading youth ministry, and am excited for what the future holds for the congregation of St. Mark.

Peace,
Anne

A SOCIAL MINISTRY OPPORTUNITY

Love INC has coordinated a food delivery for several years. The delivery volunteer has had to withdraw due to a health issue. They are now in need of someone who would volunteer to make a food pantry pick up and delivery to 4 locations, once a month.

The pick up is at Holy Comforter, 208 East Jefferson St., between 9:30 and 10:00 AM, every third Friday. One order is brought to Love INC, and the other three are delivered to the clients in town.

Please let Raymond Klein at Love INC know if you are able to volunteer to help these folks in need. He can be reached at raymond@loveinccville.org or 434-977-7777.

PRESCHOOL



In my January note, I spoke about “What does it mean to minister?” I’d like to extend that thought today by sharing with you some of the ways the preschool endeavors to reach out to the community. While there are other ways we reach out to the community (such as scholarships) I wanted to take a minute to highlight the work we’re doing within the Early Childhood Community.

St. Mark Lutheran Preschool has a rich history of being an active participant in the Early Childhood Community of Charlottesville. In year’s past, the preschool was accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and was an active member of the Central Virginia Association for the Education of Young Children (CVAEYC) even offering workshops at the school. Following in this tradition, SMLP co-sponsored, along with Congregation Beth Israel, University Montessori School, Our Neighborhood Child Development Center and CVAEYC, a conference for teachers, which was held at the Jefferson School, the weekend of January 19-21. This conference immersed teachers, along with educators from across the country, in a content rich institute designed to help us become more reflective teachers. By participating in this learning institute, we were also able to spread the news that St. Mark Lutheran Church continues to support and provide a play based program that is accessible to and inclusive of children from all walks of life, cultures, religions, ethnicities and abilities.

In March, the preschool will host an on-site workshop for the Nature Explore Program. (We’re also hoping to receive our certification as a Nature Explore Playground at this time.) This workshop will be offered to educators from the surrounding community and from across the country. We’re hopeful that approximately 60 teachers will attend. We will open the gates of the playground and the doors of the school, for teachers to explore and experience the loving, warm environment that is historically the trademark of St. Mark Lutheran Preschool.

Participating in events such as these spreads a positive “vibe” in the community about the church, the school and the gospel, opening eyes and hearts to a place of peace and hope. It is our hope that these activities not only bring new families to the preschool, but also to the church.

We are also looking forward to supporting the mission of the church to serve the homeless community through PACEM. The children will be baking cookies, writing little notes and drawings to leave on pillows and collecting toiletry items to add to the care items that the church will provide. We’ve donated quite a few of the “leftover” items from our conference, such as “grab-n-go” snacks, coffee, cups, plates and tea. These are all little things, but it’s the little things that make a BIG difference in the lives of these women. We will be praying for you and for the women, asking God to bless your time together.

May the peace of Christ be with you and give you warmth in this winter season.

Carla

MISSION COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

At Council's January 10 meeting:

- Preschool Director Carla Moody reported that the Preschool presently has 55 students, its capacity. They have added one more full-time teacher and would like to hire a part time coordinator for their chapel services
- Bill Stewart's contract as Vice Pastor was extended until such time as we have a called pastor in place.
- Mission Council formed an ad hoc committee to review the language and provisions of our constitution and by-laws. The committee will advise council on administrative structures for committees and insure that our language is inclusive and that we are in compliance with ELCA requirements.
- Mission Council approved a proposed 2017 budget to send to the congregation for approval at the annual meeting on January 29.



CHURCH
BUSINESS

	Offering	Attendance
December 4	\$5,015	112
December 11	3,156	79
December 19	4,362	96
December 25	20,541	40