



January 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

PROVIDING, CARING AND SHARING

This time of year. This season... is so special for many reasons. Our Lord and Savior's birth, reconnecting with family and friends, giving...and giving thanks, and especially PCS. Something that we at St. Mark know all too well. While many wait for the season, we live PCS every day and twice on Sunday.

On behalf of the Discipleship Team, I would like to thank you all for the PCS you show me, my family, each other, our beloved community, and those in need. As a missional church we touch many lives. My brothers and sisters in faith, we are a healthy family and during the difficult time of finding a spiritual leader many congregations suffer. We however have come together, dug deep and gone above and beyond like a strong family often does. We will have a new Pastor soon and we must continue on our PCS journey and keep the momentum. Any Pastor that comes to St. Mark will find it an absolute pleasure to be a part of this family.

Now PCS does not stand for Personal Communication Service or Politically Correct Statement or for our military folks, Permanent Change of Station. It stands for Providing, Caring, and Sharing.

Providing - This is also the time of the year we take stock on what it will take financially to continue our mission and although a measurement of health for a family like ours is never financial, we still need to be able to forecast, to budget...to provide, so that our journey as Disciples of Christ continues to make

an impact. During our time of pastoral vacancy, our focus on the health of St. Mark has left a negative impact on meeting our 2016 pledges. We start our 2017 pledge drive today with this talk!

More information will come this week. Check your email, your mailboxes, and most of all, pray for the guidance to give what you can to help us put together the most accurate budget possible.

Caring - Our impact on the community is heartwarming and another reason I am thankful to be in your family. As you consider your pledge, keep in mind all of the wonderful ministries here that you can wrap your arms around and share the love.

Sharing - We are in great need of members in our internal ministries as well. I will ask that you also pray and ask for guidance for those involved in our many teams and perhaps you can find your passion in one or several of them. Also consider a contribution to the best Preschool in Charlottesville! I know I am biased, but having a thriving preschool tied to our mission here St. Mark has got to be good. If you haven't visited in a while take a moment. It's an instant jolt of feel good.

While much of the nation and the world is divided, we at St. Mark are strong! But there is always room for greater PCS. We've all gone above and beyond, but that's what we do...that's who we are. Let's keep our momentum and mission moving forward and continue to love each other, our community and those in need.

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

January 1 – First Sunday of Christmas, service of lessons and Carols: As we celebrate the Twelve Days of Christmas, our gospel today confronts us with the death of innocent children at the hands of Herod. The birth of Christ does not remove the power of evil from our world, but its light gives us hope as we walk with all the “holy innocents” of past generations and today who have suffered unjustly. In our gathering around word and meal, God continues to redeem us, lift us up, and carry us as in days of old.

Isaiah 63:7-9 • Psalm 148 • Hebrews 2:10-18 • Matthew 2:13-23



January 8 – Baptism of Our Lord: In the waters of the Jordan, Jesus is revealed as the beloved Son of God. Through this great epiphany, Jesus fulfills all righteousness and becomes the servant of God who will bring forth justice and be a light to the nations. In the waters of baptism we too are washed by the Word, anointed by the Spirit, and named God’s beloved children. Our baptismal mission is to proclaim good news to all who are oppressed or in need of God’s healing.

Isaiah 42:1-9 • Psalm 29 • Acts 10:34-43 • Matthew 3:13-17



January 15 – Second Sunday after Epiphany: Today’s gospel opens with further reflection on Jesus’ baptism. He is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, and the one anointed by the Spirit. In the liturgy we come and see Christ revealed among us in word and meal. We go forth to invite others to come and worship the Holy One, and to receive the gifts of grace and peace made known among us.

Isaiah 49:1-7 • Psalm 40:1-11 • 1 Corinthians 1:1-9 • John 1:29-42



January 22 – Third Sunday after Epiphany: Jesus begins his public ministry by calling fishers to leave their nets and follow him. In Jesus the kingdom of God has come near. We who have walked in darkness have seen a great light. We see this light most profoundly in the cross—as God suffers with us and all who are oppressed by sickness, sin, or evil. Light dawns for us as we gather around the word, the font, and the holy table. We are then sent to share the good news that others may be “caught” in the net of God’s grace and mercy.

Isaiah 9:1-4 • Psalm 27:1, 4-9 • 1 Corinthians 1:10-18 • Matthew 4:12-23



January 29 – Fourth Sunday after Epiphany

Who are the blessed ones of God? For Micah, they are those who do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God. For Paul, they are the ones who find wisdom in the weakness of the cross. For Jesus, they are the poor, mourners, the meek, those who hunger for righteousness, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers. In baptism we find our blessed identity and calling in this countercultural way of living and serving.

Micah 6:1-8 • Psalm 15 • 1 Corinthians 1:18-31 • Matthew 5:1-12

CONGREGATIONAL NEWS

The Women's Book club will meet Monday night, **Jan. 23 at 7:00** in the church library. We will be discussing *A Man Called Ove* by Fredrik Backman. Ove is the grumpiest man you will ever meet, a curmudgeon with staunch principles, strict routines, and a short fuse. This book has caused a sensation across Europe. This is an uplifting exploration of the unreliability of first impressions and a gentle reminder that life is sweeter when it is shared with other people. This is also a movie at the Victoria Crown Theater. Read or listen and come out to talk about it at our meeting on the 23rd.



Please mark your calendars! As we look toward the new year, it's important that we remember the two weeks in which we will be hosting the **PACEM** women. Our guests will be with us **February 18 through March 3, 2017**. As you begin to think about how you may be able to support this ministry and the homeless women in our community, one simple yet important preparation we might make is to hold them in prayer during these cold, dark winter days. In the coming weeks, we will create sign ups for meals, linen preparations, token gifts, and all other aspects of our ministry. In the meantime, please see Heidi Jones, Kristen Wray, or Anne Carter with your questions.

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 2 hours; 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 will soon be available in the narthex. If you have questions, please contact Susan Seehaver.



A gentle reminder: The parking spot at the front door is to be used when loading/unloading only, not for parking for extended periods. In addition, please do not park in the two spots marked "Visitor" in the parking lot. Thank you for your understanding and cooperation!



2017 pledge cards are available for you to pick up on the member mailbox table in the narthex. Please return your card in the provided envelope by **January 8. Thank you!**



- From Lutheran Campus Ministry, for providing a home away from home, fellowship and meals
- From the Wray family, for the prayer blanket, emails, phone calls, flowers and prayers
- From Western State Hospital, for help with their Operation Santa campaign

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



ANNUAL MEETING

Mark your calendars! The Annual Congregational Meeting will be held on **Sunday, January 29th**, following the 10:15am worship service and a potluck meal. Reports will be received, a 2017 budget adopted and elections held. We'll be seeking delegates to the 2017 Synod Annual Assembly held June 9-11, as well as electing Mission Council members. All are encouraged to attend!

YOUTH AND FAMILY MINISTRY

The LIGHT



Shines in the
darkness
& the darkness
did not
overcome it
John 1:5

I love fresh starts, new beginnings. 2017 offers just that. I'm not a huge resolution maker, but this year feels different. There are too many important things happening in this world - my own tiny world, the world of my community, and the world at large - for me to want to be anything but intentional, thoughtful, and deliberate in how I begin a new year.

Disheartened by choices our country has made, distraught over the war in Syria, discouraged by the chronic hunger and homelessness in our community, and distracted by the challenges of raising up my sons, I find myself returning again and again to John 1:5. *"The light shines in the darkness... and the darkness did not overcome it."* John 1:5.

I know that I must act with greater love, and shine with brighter light, than I have in years past. Haven't I always wanted this, intended this, as one who strives to be Christ-like in my daily life? Of course. But today, I feel a sense of urgency to do so... and also a sense of great hope. If I can shine light in the darkness, perhaps someone else will reflect that light and shine it on someone else. The knowledge that darkness does not overcome light, that love indeed conquers hate, leads me to want to live more generously in my actions and words, to show love and shine light. To do so requires diligence, patience, reflection, and focused attention. The darkened sky at night, brilliant with stars clearly visible from the lamp-less community where I live, will be a constant reminder to me that light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it...

Upcoming Youth Events in January

Junior High Youth Group will meet Sunday, **January 8** from 12:00 - 2:30. Meet in the fellowship hall for lunch (provided). Bring a friend!

Senior High Winter Celebration retreat is **January 20 - 22!**

...and a **combined event for all youth** is in the works for January. Stay tuned!

PRESCHOOL



Greetings from the Preschool and Happy New Year! As I sat down to write this missive, I found myself thinking about what it means to “minister.” Webster’s defines it this way – “To give help or care.” Helping and caring are both integral parts of what we do every day in the preschool and as you can imagine, there are many ways that these acts get carried out.

To begin with, we help children grow by encouraging them to be independent, creative, problem solvers and thinkers. We show care for them with acts of affection (hugs, kissing boo-boos, etc.) words of support and general physical care such as changing diapers, wiping faces and changing clothes. There are many other ways we give help and care in the preschool.

We minister to families who struggle with maintaining a healthy balance between work and family life. The preschool supports their efforts by being a school they can count on to be open when they need us to be open, by providing a safe, clean environment for their children to play and grow, and by hiring teachers and staff who will care for their children with the love of Christ.

We minister to families struggling to make ends meet by providing an accessible tuition, offering discounts for siblings and by making financial aid available through the scholarship program.

We minister to children with special needs by maintaining an accessible space in the classrooms and on the playground. Our programs are differentiated and teachers give care by making sure that the needs of all children are met. Teachers have open hearts and provide a welcome and inclusive environment.

We minister to teachers by paying salaries that meet or exceed industry standards, by providing a positive work environment and with thankfulness for their hard work. We support teacher’s efforts to care for themselves and their families with paid time off for illness, emergencies and vacation. We give care by supporting professional development and encouraging teachers to create, learn and grow.

As a ministry of St. Mark Lutheran Church, the faculty and staff of St. Mark Lutheran Preschool serve as the hands and feet of a people called by God to serve and help others. This is an active, vibrant ministry in every sense of the word.

Thank you for your support of this ministry!

Carla

MISSION COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

At Council's December 13 meeting:

- MC approved plans for a discussion of remodeling for the narthex and bathrooms to take place in January. The results of the discussions will be used to create schematics to use in discussing remodeling options
- Patty Marbury outlined the schedule for completing the call process. It is hoped the process will be complete early in the New Year.
- Preschool reported that they presently have the equivalent of 53 full-time students and a waiting list for new openings.
- Preschool has hired a new teacher's assistant and one new teacher.
- Council approved plans to hold "Safe Space Training" for staff and interested members of the congregation.



CHURCH
BUSINESS

	Offering	Attendance
November 6	\$6,344	100
November 13	4,055	80
November 20	4,774	81
November 27	3,311	54