



March 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

SOMETIMES YOU JUST HAVE TO ASK

On the Sunday following President Trump's implementation of the ban on refugees and immigrants, our Senior-high discussion group talked about its meanings and implications and what we could do about it. Bishop Eaton posted a statement on the ELCA webpage that read in part, "The Bible calls us to welcome the stranger and treat the sojourner as we would our own citizens. I agree with the importance of keeping our country secure as the administration stated in its executive order last Friday, but I am convinced that temporarily banning vulnerable refugees will not enhance our safety nor does it reflect our values as Christians. Instead, it will cause immediate harm by separating families, disrupting lives, and denying safety and hope to brothers and sisters who are already suffering". The Bishop from the Washington DC area synod had posted a similar statement, but a search of our own Synod's webpage found that we were silent on the matter.

Concerned that our Bishop had said nothing, our group authored an email to Bishop Mauney asking that he consider posting something on the Synod web page in support of refugees and immigrants. As the primary author, Anna Bon-Harper sent the following email the Synod staff: *Dear Bishop Mauney, We are the senior high discussion group at St. Mark Lutheran Church in Charlottesville. In light of current events, we believe it would be Christ-like to express our support and solidarity of immigrants and refugees who are suffering from war and terror. We ask that you, as presiding Bishop of the Virginia Synod express support of those in need of welcoming refuge by posting a statement of support on the synod webpage. We think a statement similar to that of our national Bishop and the bishop of the Washington Synod would be appropriate as it is indeed our responsibility to welcome and serve those most in need. In Christ, St. Mark Senior High Discussion Group*

A few days later, a response was posted on the Synod web page, which reads in part: *I join with our Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services in seeking through their work to welcome and advocate for the rights of the stranger, the alien, the immigrant, the refugee, from all parts of the globe to live here among us. Color, slant of eyes, language, religion, gender should not deter us who worship a Lord who became the 'alien righteousness' for us, of semitic color and language, Jewish in faith, crucified as a terrorist of the empire, who claimed to be the Son of Man and the Son of God among us. Prisoners of war to refugees should find a welcome among us who quietly consider, "I was a stranger and you welcomed me" from Matthew 25. "Lord, when did we do this?...As you did it to the LEAST of these, you did it to me." Providing safety and hope to refugees of the world reveals more than politics; it reveals the character of a nation. (see full response here: <http://www.vasynod.org/lutheran-response-refugees-world/>)*

St. Mark's webpage now also includes the message by Bishop Eaton which includes an invitation to action: *"I also encourage you to consider adding your voice by calling your members of Congress to share your support for refugees and using online advocacy opportunities through current alerts at [ELCA Advocacy](#) and [LIRS](#).*

In Matthew 25:35, Jesus said, "I was a stranger and you welcomed me." Our Lord not only commanded us to welcome the stranger, Jesus made it clear that when we welcome the stranger into our homes and our hearts – we welcome him.

We can be very proud of our Senior High students for their action, and the result it produced and hope you consider Bishop Eaton's invitation to action as well. – Paul Seehaver, Sr. High discussion group coordinator

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

March 5 – First Sunday in Lent: Today's gospel tells of Jesus' temptation in the desert. His forty-day fast becomes the basis of our Lenten pilgrimage. In the early church Lent was a time of intense preparation for those to be baptized at the Easter Vigil. This catechetical focus on the meaning of faith is at the heart of our Lenten journey to the baptismal waters of Easter. Hungry for God's mercy, we receive the bread of life to nourish us for the days ahead.

Genesis 2:15-17, 3:1-7 • Psalm 32 • Romans 5:12-19 • Matthew 4:1-11



March 12 – Second Sunday in Lent: During Lent we journey with all those around the world who will be baptized at the Easter Vigil. In today's gospel Jesus tells Nicodemus that he must be born of water and Spirit. At the font we are given a new birth as daughters and sons of God. As God made a covenant with Abraham, in baptism God promises to raise us up with Christ to new life. From worship we are sent forth to proclaim God's love for all the world.

Genesis 12:1-4a • Psalm 121 • Romans 4:1-5, 13-17 • John 3:1-17



March 19 – Third Sunday in Lent: In today's gospel the Samaritan woman asks Jesus for water, an image of our thirst for God. Jesus offers living water, a sign of God's grace flowing from the waters of baptism. The early church used this gospel and those of the next two Sundays to deepen baptismal reflection during the final days of preparation before baptism at Easter. As we journey to the resurrection feast, Christ comes among us in word, bath, and meal—offering us the life-giving water of God's mercy and forgiveness.

Exodus 17:1-7 • Psalm 95 • Romans 5:1-11 • John 4:5-42



March 26 – Fourth Sunday in Lent: Baptism is sometimes called enlightenment. The gospel for this Sunday is the story of the man born blind healed by Christ. I was blind, but now I see, declares the man. In baptism God opens our eyes to see the truth of who we are: God's beloved sons and daughters. As David was anointed king of Israel, in baptism God anoints our head with oil, and calls us to bear witness to the light of Christ in our daily lives.

1 Samuel 16:1-13 • Psalm 23 • Ephesians 5:8-14 • John 9:1-41

CONGREGATIONAL NEWS

Free Indeed: Devotions for Lent 2017 - This devotional book for the Lenten season based on Luther's Small Catechism will serve as the basis for a weekly discussion in the library during Lent. For those who are able to attend we will gather **each Wednesday beginning March 8th at noon**. Bring your lunch if you wish. Books are available in the narthex. There is a suggested donation of \$2.50 to cover the cost. Please place the money in an envelope marked "Free Indeed" and put in the clear container marked "Free Indeed" in the office or give to Nancy. Questions? -- laurel.mcclurken@gmail.com



ELCA World Hunger's 40 Days of Giving 2017 - There are some copies of this Lenten devotional containing daily scripture, reflection and prayers in the narthex. Please take one for your family's use.



Congratulations to our new **Mission Council officers**, elected at the February 13th meeting: President Duane Osheim, Vice-President Sara Bon-Harper, and Secretary Laurel McClurken.



As you read this, we're in the second half of our **PACEM hosting** of homeless women from our community. Thank you to everyone who has offered their help this year! If you'd like to help in the final few days, please go to bit.ly/2j0BmSe and see if there are any further needs, or send an email to Heidi Jones.

To learn more about PACEM, go to pacemshelter.org or [facebook.com/PACEMshelter](https://www.facebook.com/PACEMshelter).

Women's Book Club: The Women's Book club will meet Monday, March 27, at 7:00 in the church library. We will be discussing *Hillbilly Elegy* by J.D.Vance. This book is subtitled A Memoir of a Family and Culture in Crisis.

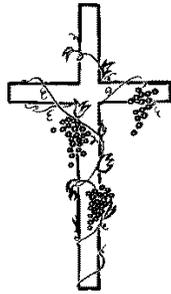
This is a probing look at the struggles of America's white working class through the author's own story of growing up in a poor Rust Belt town in Ohio and an Appalachian town in Kentucky.

Please read the book and come and join our discussion. All women of the church and their friends are invited.



Girl Scout Troop 328 is partnering with Community Attention Foster Families (CAFF) to hold a community **Foster Care Awareness Event** at First United Methodist Church, 101 East Jefferson Street, Charlottesville on **Saturday, March 25 from 3-5pm**. Come and learn the WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, WHY, and HOW of Foster Care. For questions contact Marnie Allen, CAFF 434 970 3735.

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES AND EVENTS FOR LENT and HOLY WEEK



Wednesdays, March 8 through April 5

Lenten devotions
12pm – Library

Palm Sunday, April 9

Worship service at 10:15am

Maundy Thursday, April 13

Simple soup supper, 6pm Fellowship Hall
Maundy Thursday Service at 7pm

Good Friday, April 14

Good Friday service at 12pm
(no evening service this year)

Easter Sunday, April 16

Easter services at 8 and 10:15am
Easter Breakfast at 9am in Fellowship Hall,
followed by
Children's Egg Hunt (no faith formation
classes)

YOUTH AND FAMILY MINISTRY

Grace Casola has agreed to serve as **Acting Director of Youth and Family Ministries** for St. Mark replacing Anne Carter. Grace is a fourth-year Religious Studies from Roanoke and President of our Campus Ministry group. She is a regular at St. Mark and has sung in the choir. After she graduates in June she hopes to continue working with congregational ministries and may return to school to study theology. We hope that everyone one will help her continue the ministries Anne has begun.

PRESCHOOL



Greetings from the Preschool! We've thoroughly enjoyed these warm, sunny, winter days and eagerly await the first days of spring. March is going to be a busy month in the Preschool! On March 2nd, the whole school will celebrate Dr. Seuss's birthday with a "Wacky-Tacky" day, special snack treats and lots and lots of books! We're also busy getting ready to host a Nature Explore workshop on March 25th. The workshop will bring educators together, from all over the country, for a one day workshop on using your outdoor classroom. With "company" coming, we're putting the "finishing" touches on the playground and spiffing up the inside of the school with some fresh paint and new bathroom floors (finally!)

Did you know...?

- The Preschool has been a ministry of the church since the late 50's when it was first opened as "St. Mark's Kindergarten & Nursery School."
- Members from the congregation share their time, talents and treasure to support this ministry by assisting with:
 - communication & technology
 - fiscal oversight of check writing and annual audits
 - physical support of the building and grounds
 - direction and training to ensure compliance with CPP policy
 - background checks
 - oversight of the scholarship program
 - helping with preschool family/church events
 - donations of materials and supplies
 - donations to the scholarship fund
 - donations to the playground fund
 - oversight of the program through service on the Preschool Committee
 - oversight of the program through service on Mission Council
- The Director of the preschool, as an employee of the church, is responsible for ensuring that the mission of the church is carried out through the ministry of the preschool.

Thank you, as always, for the many ways you support this ministry! Please contact the preschool office at 434-293-0792 or a member of the preschool committee, if you would be interested in serving on the committee or volunteering in some other capacity in the preschool.

VA SYNOD NEWS

What does it mean to be Church in these times? With each other, with partners who share our Christian faith? With our neighbor? Tapestry, the Virginia Synod Steering Team on engaging “diversity in context,” has put together a 5-week Lenten study series, for use by either congregation groups or individuals. It comes in two parts:



Weekly Webinars led by Directors of Evangelical Mission. Directors of Evangelical Mission, or DEMs, are rostered leaders appointed by the ELCA to serve in Synods to assist congregations with mission, outreach, and stewardship. Four DEMs will be presenting on the following:

Week 1: Intro "Being Church Together in a Changing World"

Week 2: God's Mission has a Church (Why does God have a church?) – Pastor Erika Uthe, SE Iowa Synod

Week 3: Listen, Listen, Listen! (Why listening - listening together - is necessary.) – Pastor Deb Stalin, Minneapolis Area Synod

Week 4: Calling: You Can't Do It By Yourself (Why being Church Together is Necessary) – Pastor Justin Grimm, St Paul Area Synod

Week 5: Final Thoughts on "Being Church Together in Changing World" – Bishop Jim Mauney, (and DEM for the VA Synod!)

Webinars will be shared each Monday beginning on March 6th, and available for download to any personal device on the **Virginia Synod Vimeo page**. The webinar videos will be accompanied by Scripture and discussion questions – so a great resource for congregations and individuals out there looking for a study series over Lent!

Weekly Devotions from People Across the Synod. Each week, there will also be Lenten devotions posted to **TAPESTRY's blog**, written by Virginia Synod Lutherans!

Just exactly does it mean to be Church together in this day and age? Let's start by studying together, imagining what God might be up to in our congregations, communities, and synod!

MISSION COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

At its February 13 meeting, Mission Council:

- appointed Tony Marbury and Tom Hecmanczuk to one-year terms on the Council
- elected Duane Osheim President, Sara Bon-Harper Vice-president and Laurel McClurken Secretary for 2017
- appointed Grace Casola to a four-month term as Acting Director of Youth and Family Ministries



CHURCH
BUSINESS

	Offering	Attendance
January 1	\$5,252	50
January 8	4,787	47
January 15	3,538	70
January 22	2,190	84
January 29	14,449	75