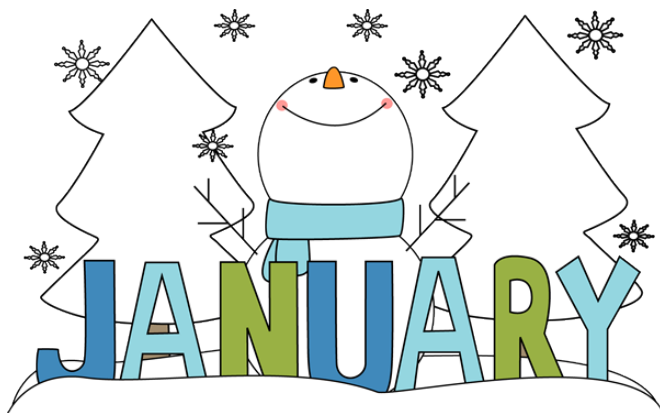


ST. MARK'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
201 N DIVISION AVENUE
POLO, IL 61064
Church Phone: 815-946-2919
Email: stmarkspolo@frontiernet.net
Website: stmarkspolo.com



2024



January 2024 St. Mark's Lutheran Church, Polo, Illinois (815) 946-2919

E-mail: stmarkspolo@frontiernet.net Website: stmarkspolo.com

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4 10:00 Prayer Partners	5	6
7 9:00 Sunday School 9:00 Adult Bible Study 10:00 Social Time 10:30 Worship 11:30-1:00 Confirmation	8 No sorting clothes for Second Hand Rose 5:00-6:30pm Community Meal at FUM	9	10 7:00pm Church Council meeting at St. Mark's Committee reports due for annual report	11 10:00 Prayer Partners	12	13
14 9:00 Adult Bible Study 10:00 Social Time 10:30 Worship	15	16 9:00am Quilters	17	18 9:00 Worship & Hospitality Meeting 10:00 Prayer Partners	19	20
21 9:00 Adult Bible Study 10:00 Social Time 10:30 Worship 11:30-1:00 Confirmation	22	23	24 Deadline to submit articles for February Newsletter	25 10:00 Prayer Partners	26	27
28 9:00 Adult Bible Study 10:00 Social Time 10:30 Worship Annual Congregational Meeting after worship	29	30 Work Second Hand Rose January 30 th - Feb 3 rd	31	Feb 1 10:00 Prayer Partners	Feb 2	Feb 3
<u>Date</u>	<u>Worship Assistant</u>	<u>Altar Flowers</u>	<u>Greeters</u>	<u>Tellers:</u> Melody Reap, Lorin & Joyce Gatz		
January 7	Hailey Walker			<u>Altar Guild:</u> Cliff & Amy Bardell		
January 14	Julie Hoak					
January 21	Trish Patterson			<u>Head Usher:</u> Cindy Schryver		
January 28	Kent Anders					



**ST. MARK'S EVANGELICAL
LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA**
201 N. Division Avenue, Polo, IL 61064

Email: stmarkspolo@frontiernet.net
Church office: 815-946-2919
Website: stmarkspolo.com
Pastor Scott Ralston

Mission statement: *St. Mark's ELCA is a community of believers who gather to hear God's Word in Christ; worshipping, serving, and proclaiming God's love for all people and the world.*

St. Mark's Youth Sunday School

January 7th
9:00am-10:00am



Confirmation Class dates:

January: 7th & 21st

Confirmation will be held after worship from 11:30-1:00 with lunch provided. Make sure to check the Team Reach app to stay up to date!

St. Mark's Annual Congregational Meeting – January 28th

St. Mark's Annual Congregational Meeting will be held January 28th after worship. Please join to help us review our year, set our budget and elect new council members!

If you are interested in joining a committee or church council, please let Pastor or a current council member know.



Welcome newly baptized member

Theo Robert Webb!

Theo is the son of Casandra and Austin Webb. Sponsors are Brady Webb and Tess Kurschner.



Annual Reports Due!

All committee reports are due to the office by January 10th.

Quilters are looking for help!

The Quilters are looking for people to make quilt tops at home and bring them to church for us to assemble. We have fabric squares you can use. You do not need experience, we can teach you! If interested, contact Joyce Gatz.

Hello Beloved St. Mark's Lutheran Family,

I am willing to bet that I had our Christmas tree up earlier than anyone else. You see, I got a Christmas tree when mom moved, and knowing that I didn't have a good way to store it I set it up out on the porch. And I didn't take it down. It's been up ever since. But I did wait until Thanksgiving to turn the lights on. My original plan was to turn it into a "holiday tree" – with decorations for each of the holidays throughout the year. Now it waits... to be decorated when the girls come home.

Perhaps it was because when I got married my oldest daughter Faith and I had this tree, our special tree, one I bought off the display at Walmart and convinced the manager to give us a discount on. It was our daddy daughter tree. Now, when Kari and I got married, our families combined we got another tree... but Faith and I put up our special tree out on the porch. We'd decorate it together, we'd listen to Christmas music and it was good. So that special tree is in the living room now, and this newly acquired tree is on the porch. And I like it that way, always present, always reminding of good times, and that Christmas is never really that far off.

It is a source of pride among many Lutherans to believe that they invented the candlelit Christmas tree in Germany and brought it to the United States in the 1800s. There is some historical evidence that German Christians were the first people to have Christmas trees indoors, one to the earliest recorded was in 1605 in Strasbourg. But even back further, evergreens were believed to have mystical powers as far back as ancient Egypt and Babylon. The Romans decorated with greens for the celebration of Saturnalia, a celebration held around the time of the winter solstice. Closer to our Lutheran roots, it is a widely held belief that it was Martin Luther that first added lighted candles to a tree. According to a common version of the story, walking home one winter evening, Luther was awed by the stars twinkling amidst evergreens. To recapture the scene for his family, he erected a tree in the main room and wired its branches with lighted candles. That seems so dangerous... a live tree with lit candles on it. Newer innovations, like pre-lit artificial trees are probably much safer, but I must admit, there is something special about a live tree.

A fun thing to do with your children or grandchildren this time of year is to tell the stories of the Christmas trees of your own childhood. We all have memories of our first tree; whether you remember trudging through the woods or snow to cut down your own, driving to the lot to buy one, or the first time your family settled for a "fake tree". It is good to remember and recounted those stories.

One of my favorite things about our Christmas trees, they are reminders. And it is trees that bookend the story of Jesus. We use an evergreen tree to celebrate Jesus' birth – and a cross made of wood to remember his death. Presents under the tree remind us of the gift of God's love. The evergreen nature of the tree reminds us of everlasting life with Christ. The angels we put on top guiding our eyes heavenward remind us of Gabriel coming to Mary with amazing news, and appearing to the shepherds in the fields announcing the Savior's birth. Perhaps you put a star on top, reminding you of the Star that shone over Bethlehem that night.

In church Christmas is celebrated over two weeks, but Christ coming into our world...to live, teach, heal, forgive, and save us... we can celebrate that all year long! I'm praying your Advent is good, your Christmas is full of good memories, and that your New Year is truly blessed.

Peace and Blessing now and always,

Pastor Scott

Save the Dates!

February 4th – Kids Trivia Day

February 11th – “Souper” Bowl Sunday Soup collection



Altar Flower Update

The sign up sheet for altar flowers in 2024 is now available! We are working with Flowers Etc. in Dixon to provide our weekly altar flowers. You can always order your own flowers wherever you choose, or Lori can order them for you. We will need to order 2 weeks prior since delivery will need to be arranged.



Polo Community Meal

The next meal will be held January 8th, 2023 at Faith United Methodist.

Polo Lifeline Food Pantry Needs:

Cereal (not shredded wheat), toilet paper, sugar, cookies, snacks/bars, hamburger helper, chicken in any form except live.

If you would like a Devotional book for January, February, March please let the office know. One will be sent or dropped off at your home.



November Finance Report

Income	Expenses	Net Income
9,236	7,929	1,307

St. Mark's Lutheran Church
Council Meeting

November 8, 2023 7:00 p.m.

Members: Renee Boyle, Mary Calderon, Cindy Schryver, Hailey Walker, Trish Patterson & Lisa Hinrichs (via zoom)

Attendance and Quorum: declared by Renee Boyle

Opening Prayer by Renee

Secretary's Report: provided by Trish Patterson

Sept Minutes – Lisa moves to approve. Hailey 2nd.

Oct Minutes - Cindy motions to approve. Mary 2nd.

Treasurer's Financial Report: provided by Lori Christen

Sept Treasurers report – Renee moves to approve. Lisa 2nd.

Oct Treasurers report – Trish moves to approve. Hailey 2nd.

Old Business:

- Constitution Review and Approval (Merla) – reviewed with council – will be sent to Synod in January for approval. – Renee makes a motion to approve the constitution as Merla presented. Trish 2nd.

New Business:

- Need approval for an invoice to PurChem for \$500 to purchase chemicals for treating the boiler system as well as install the hardware to put it into the steam system. Marilyn took notes on how to do the maintenance to have on file. Hailey motions to approve. Renee 2nd.
- Request \$90 donation to LOMC – Trish motions to approve donation. Cindy 2nd.
- Plans for altar flowers following Country Floral's closing – do we want to do a thank you gift to Country Floral? Yes, Candlelight gift certificate for \$100.00 – Pastor makes a motion. Hailey 2nd.
- Nominations for 2024 council – Nominating committee is Craig, Cindy, Merla & Steve. Lisa motions to approve the nominating committee. Renee 2nd.
Lisa will be going off. Cindy and Hailey will be staying on.
- Do we want to do artificial flowers for the altar? Lori to get some prices from Flowers Etc and Weeds in Dixon and Merlins in Oregon.

Committee Reports:

- **Pastor's Report** – Central Conference meeting was today, could not attend as he had a funeral here at the church, for Richard Hose. Confirmation is going well and the kids are GREAT! Visits are up to date.
- **Finance (Lisa)** – she will be working on this in Dec early Jan. Draft for budget for next year. Steve and Pastor will review with Lisa.
- **Worship & Music (Trish)** – next meeting is Dec 20th.
- **Hospitality (Hailey)** – everything on hold until the 1st of the year.
- **Fellowship (Lisa)**
 - Fall supper review – it was amazing! Sold 115-120 tickets. Planned on 150. \$1700.00 made. Cost was \$300. Sunday School kids want to do trivia on Feb 4th, 2024. Spring meal on April 20th.
- **Education (Renee) -**
 - Sunday School review - Sunday school volunteers for Nov 5th are Sydney Bartelt and Kim Printz. December 3rd is Trish Patterson and Kim Printz. Dec 10th childrens sermon in church. Kids Christmas party after church. Lisa and Pastor can work together to do a kids party on Dec 10th.
 - Confirmation review – it is going well. Nothing in December. It will resume in January.
- **Memorial (Cindy)** – nothing set yet
- **Property (Steve)**
 - Update on Chimney/Tuckpointing - Chimney is complete. Waiting for a response from Sterling Commercial Roofing regarding a log of flashing and gutter problems, as well as possible rotten wood under shingles. – table this until next month.
- **Polo Council of Churches (Pastor)** – Next meeting is Nov 28th.
- **Liaison (Trish/Lisa)** – next meeting is Nov 12th after church.
- **Next meeting:** Wednesday, December 13th

Vote to Adjourn Meeting by - Trish makes a motion to adjourn. Renee 2nd.

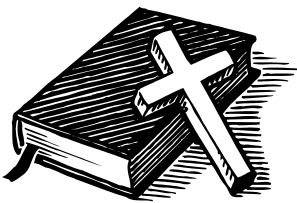
Thank you!

- ~ Thank you to all who helped decorate our church for Christmas.
- ~ Thank you to all children who attended our Christmas party. Thank you to Pastor Scott and any parents who helped plan.
- ~ Thank you to Charlie & Linda Gall and Chelsea Schryver for loading and delivering our pears for Christmas Baskets. Thank you to Lori Davids and Kathy Mitchell for helping pack the baskets. THANK YOU to all who donated the pears. We met our goal and also had about 20 extra cans that were donated to the food pantry.
- ~ Thank you to Charlie Gall for contacting Nicor when he smelled a gas leak here at the church.
- ~ Thank you to Tracey Anders for getting all our candles ready for our Candlelight Service. Also thank you to all who helped serve at this worship.
- ~ Thank you to Cheryl Goeking for organizing our hymn sing service.

“Thank you to everyone for the cards, prayers, phone calls, and well wishes for me at the time of my surgery & recovery. It all means so much to me. Prayer is powerful.” ~ Merla Brooks

“St. Mark’s people, Oh my goodness! Your friendship, prayers for our son-in-law, and business have been beyond any “thank you” needed. We will miss the people of Polo!” ~ Marlin & Norma (Country Floral)

Please let us know if someone needs a thank you.



Prayers for those in need of healing: Shelby Hose, Tommy Knipple, Pat McPherson, Mary Ann Olson, Lyle Printz and Lyle Reap.

Those in care facilities: Sibyl Acker, Tammy Karrow, Trudy Karrow, Jessica Kimpel and Marian Schnulle.

Those in Military service: Bryan Connell, Dustin Knapp, Brad Reigle and Travis Roop.

January Birthdays & Anniversaries

Birthdays

1	John Engel	20	Wyatt Patterson
2	David Shuman		Drew Benner
4	Sara Thorngren	21	Teresa Barnhart
	Anderson Carroll	22	Tyler Merdian
5	Michael Smith		Tom Rienstra
6	Terrie Wilder	24	Melody Reap
7	Larry Slager	26	Laurel Smith
11	Mark Stahler	27	Zachary Grobe
	Gabriele Booth		Brent Shipman
12	Sydney Gunder	28	Matthew Sullivan
13	Linda Hose		Theresa Rogers
	Emily Gabaldon	29	Stephanie Gilbert
14	Tess Kurschner		Nancy Grossnickle
19	John White	30	Amy Merdian
	Alan Wiegmann		

Anniversaries

19	Robyn & Phyllis Dyer
20	Bob & Kathy Mitchell

The beautiful poinsettias that decorated the sanctuary this year were given by:

Presented in loving memory of Ed Grossnickle, Aunt Nancy and Aunt Vonda by Cliff, Amy, Tommy and Joey Bardell.

Presented to the church in honor of the newborn King by Merla Brooks.

Presented in memory of our loved ones by Josh & Lori Christen and family.

Presented in loving memory of our granddaughter, Maverick Dee Mumford, by Phyllis and Robyn Dyer.

Presented in loving memory of Lee Hinrichs by Andy, Lisa and AJ Hinrichs.

Presented in loving memory of Kenneth Obendorf by Betty Obendorf and family.

Presented in honor of our great grandson, Theo, by Leo and Joan Rienstra.

Presented in loving memory of Jerry and David Schwingel by Priscilla Schwingel.

Presented in loving memory of my husband, Sherwood Shank, by Linda Shank.

Presented in loving memory of Robert & Mildred Clothier, Russell and Irene Peterson, Jeanne Scholl and Richard Espisito by Laurel & Ken Smith.

Presented in loving memory of our grandmother, Connie Stahler, by Brittan & Brinley Mullens and Henry & Harper Hickerson.

Presented in loving memory of our mother, Connie Stahler, by Allison and Andrea Stahler.

