



**2023**



**ST. MARK'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
**201 N DIVISION AVENUE**  
**POLO, IL 61064**  
**Church Phone: 815-946-2919**  
**Email: [stmarkspolo@frontiernet.net](mailto:stmarkspolo@frontiernet.net)**  
**Website: [stmarkspolo.com](http://stmarkspolo.com)**

# **December 2023 St. Mark's Lutheran Church, Polo, Illinois (815) 946-2919**

**E-mail: [stmarkspolo@frontiernet.net](mailto:stmarkspolo@frontiernet.net) Website: [stmarkspolo.com](http://stmarkspolo.com)**

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					<b>1</b>	<b>2</b> 9:00am Decorate church for Christmas <b>Polo Christmas Festival (All day)</b>
<b>3</b> <b>9:00 Sunday School</b> 9:00 Adult Bible Study 10:00 Social Time 10:30 Worship	<b>4</b> Sort clothes for Second Hand Rose	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b> 7:00pm Church Council meeting at St. Mark's	<b>7</b> 10:00 Prayer Partners	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>10 Poinsettia Orders Due</b> 9:00 Adult Bible Study 10:00 Social Time 10:30 Worship <b>Congregational Meeting</b> 11:30-1:00 Kids Christmas Party	<b>11</b> 5:00-6:30pm Community Meal at FUM – <b>St. Mark's Serves</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b> 10:00 Prayer Partners	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>17</b> 9:00 Adult Bible Study 10:00 Social Time 10:30 Worship	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b> 9:00am Quilters	<b>20</b> Deadline to submit articles for January Newsletter	<b>21</b> 10:00 Prayer Partners	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>24</b> 9:00 Adult Bible Study 10:00 Social Time 10:30 Worship 4:00pm Christmas Eve Candlelight Service	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b> Work Second Hand Rose December 26-30	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b> 10:00 Prayer Partners	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>31</b> 9:00 Adult Bible Study 10:00 Social Time 10:30 Worship / Hymn Sing						

<u>Date</u>	<u>Worship Assistant</u>	<u>Altar Flowers</u>	<u>Greeters</u>	<b><u>Tellers:</u></b> Julie Hoak, Phyllis Dyer, Sharon VanOosten
<b>December 3</b>	Tracey Anders	Steve & Suzanne Sorenson		
<b>December 10</b>	Linda Gall	Cheryl Goeking		<b><u>Altar Guild:</u></b> Lisa Hinrichs
<b>December 17</b>	Merla Brooks	Poinsettias		<b><u>Head Usher:</u></b> Lisa Hinrichs
<b>December 24 10:30 am</b>	Trish Patterson	Poinsettias		
<b>December 24 Christmas Eve 4:00pm</b>	Kent Anders	Poinsettias		
<b>December 31</b>	Julie Hoak			



# ST. MARK'S EVANGELICAL

## LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

201 N. Division Avenue, Polo, IL 61064

Email: [stmarkspolo@frontiernet.net](mailto:stmarkspolo@frontiernet.net)

Church office: 815-946-2919

Website: [stmarkspolo.com](http://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

December 3<sup>rd</sup>

9:00am-10:00am

Join us and invite a friend!



### Special Congregational Meeting – December 10<sup>th</sup>

There will be a special congregational meeting on Sunday, December 10<sup>th</sup> following worship. This will be a short meeting to approve changes made to our constitution so it can be ratified at our annual meeting in January. Copies with changes will be provided before the meeting for any questions.



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### Kids Christmas fun day Sunday, December 10<sup>th</sup>

In place of our usual Christmas pageant, join us for worship at 10:30 where we will have "A Christmas Story" with your help (no preparation needed). After worship we will have a kids Christmas party for Sunday School age through Confirmation. We will have food, games and more from 11:30-1:00. (Any parents are welcome to stay and help!)



### Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

December 24<sup>th</sup> 4:00pm

Join us for your favorite lessons and carols!



### Favorite Christmas Hymn Sing - Dec. 31<sup>st</sup>

Do you have two favorite Christmas Carols? We are having a hymn sing on Sunday, December 31<sup>st</sup>. Vote on Sunday December 10 & 17<sup>th</sup> on a slip of paper for your two favorites. You can vote both Sundays.



Christmas Food Baskets



### Christmas Baskets – Pear collection

Polo Council of Churches is once again creating Christmas food baskets. St. Mark's has been asked to donate 150 cans of pears. Please place them in our coffee room by Sunday, December 10<sup>th</sup>. We are already over half way there!!



Hello St. Mark's Lutheran,

Here we are; December is upon us. As I was walking outside today with Elyse there is a chill in the air that has me thinking about winter break, snow days, and Christmas. She was telling me about Christmas decorations in the yard and in the house, and I asked the question "where is Jesus?" And she said to me, "dad, he's in the manger, in the nativity."

Our ideas, imaginings of that Nativity Scene in the stable in Bethlehem have been shaped by our Christmas Gospel, movies we've seen, other books we've read. And for many people it's a favorite family tradition to set up the nativity each year. Some of you might even have one set up in your yard or in your home. For Christians, we recognize there's something special about that Nativity Scene.

What's amazing as we look at this scene is how humble it is. The Word made flesh is born not in the powerful city of Jerusalem, but lowly Bethlehem. His parents are not of the family of Caesar Augustus, the Emperor of the day, but a humble carpenter and a young maiden. His first visitors are not rulers, military leaders, or the rich and mighty of society, but humble, lowly shepherds. His first bed is not the comfortable cradle one would expect to find in the palace, but a feeding trough filled with some straw. While angels sing "Glory to God in the Highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men" that night in the sky, it's hard to find the glory, because it's hidden in simple human flesh.

When we think about it, just as His life begins in a humble, seemingly un-glorious way, His life will also end in a similar way. His glory will be hidden when that same flesh we see in the manger is pierced by nails driven into His hands and feet, and that same blood that fills this child's veins is shed on a cross outside of Jerusalem. To the eyes of the world, it's one of the least glorious scenes one will ever see. But through the eyes of faith, we see the true Glory. God saw we needed a savior and sent the Son to take our sin on Himself, to die to bring us forgiveness, and to rise to give us eternal life with Him.

That's how He brings us peace with God. That's what He was destined to do from His birth in this stable! Jesus is the greatest Gift ever given! Lots of gifts are going to be exchanged this Christmas. Some of them will be great gifts, things you've always wanted. Yet, toys break, electronic gadgets go on the fritz, or quickly become outdated. That new sweater you got will get snagged on the filing cabinet and become unraveled. Gifts of this world wear out or break. This gift in the manger from God to us, the gift of His Son in human flesh to save us from our sin and death is the perfect gift. It never stops giving. It never comes in the wrong size. It never wears out or breaks. As you imagine that scene, let your eyes of faith transport you back to that night in Bethlehem. Take in the humbleness of the scene. Reflect on the fact that the almighty God of heaven and earth has chosen this humble place to begin His life of service. Remember that this moment was necessary to ultimately win the forgiveness of your sins and eternal life. What this child is born to do, is where you will find your true joy and peace this Christmas season!

Praying that your holidays be filled with peace and many blessings, and that Christ's light continues to shine through you.

Merry Christmas to you and yours,  
Pastor Scott



**Annual Reports due soon!**

The year is coming to an end and we are already preparing for our annual meeting in January. If you are the head of a committee, please submit your annual report to the office as soon as possible. Thank you!



**CROP Walk Results**

Our area Crop Walk total for 2023 was \$7080.00!  
Thank you again to all who donated!



**Confirmation Class dates:**

December: 10<sup>th</sup> (Christmas Party)

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!

Rock River Valley Barbershop Chorus Presents

**A Christmas Celebration**

**Date:** Sunday, December 10<sup>th</sup>

**Time:** 3:00pm

**Place:** Bethel Reformed Church, 230 E. 23<sup>rd</sup> St., Sterling, IL

**Cost:** Freewill Donation



*Altar Flower Update*

The sign up sheet for altar flowers in 2024 is now available! We are working on an agreement 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. Pricing and arrangements are still being worked on to find the best option for us.



**St. Mark's Quilters**

St. Mark's Quilters donated 15 quilts to Focus House! They are now in need of 4-ply yarn and large pieces of fabric for quilt back. Flat sheets are most welcome! We also welcome more people to tie knots in already assembled quilts or to sew quilt tops or hem quilts at home. Our next Quilting Day will be Tuesday, December 19<sup>th</sup> from 9:00-11:00am. Come join us in fellowship and ministry!



### **Polo Community Meal**

The next meal will be held December 11<sup>th</sup>, 2023. **St. Mark's serves!** See the sign up sheet to donate a salad or dessert.

### **Polo Lifeline Food Pantry Needs:**

Sugar, canned fruit (except mixed fruit), lunch meat  
Ketchup, juice boxes, coffee, tea bags, chicken noodle soup, cream of mushroom soup, cheese, syrup, any kind of meat.

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

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### **St. Mark's Lutheran Church Council Minutes**

October 11, 2023 7:00 p.m.

**Members:** Renee Boyle, Cindy Schryver, Trish Patterson & Pastor Scott

**Attendance and Quorum:** declared by Renee Boyle – NO QUORUM

**Opening Prayer by Trish**

**Secretary's Report:** provided by Trish Patterson – not enough for a quorum. Will have to vote next month.

**Treasurer's Financial Report:** provided by Lori Christensen – not enough for a quorum. We will have to vote next month.

**Old Business:**

- Constitution Review and Approval (Merla) - Merla was not at council meeting so we did not review this

**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

**Committee Reports:**

- **Pastor's Report** – Central conference meeting today in Rock Falls. Confirmation is going well. Pastor had a Creation Care event for social ministry. It is to educate the Synod. It went really well. Visits are up to date. 3 recent funerals.
- **Finance (Lisa)** – Hope to meet in November
- **Worship & Music (Trish)** – next meeting is December 20th
- **Hospitality (Hailey)** – Merla has nothing to report per Hailey's text to Trish P
- **Fellowship (Lisa)**
  - Fall Supper on Nov. 4th
- **Education (Renee)**
  - First Sunday School held, sign up sheet for monthly helpers - Please Volunteer! – We had 4 kids the first Sunday of October. We talked about the 10 commandments. Trish helped Lisa. No kids Christmas program planned since we do not have many kids. Dec 10<sup>th</sup> "A Christmas Story" skit during church.
  - Nov 17<sup>th</sup> Confirmation Camp at LOMC - Renee, Pastor, 1 boy, 4 girls
- **Memorial (Cindy)** – nothing to report
- **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. Tuckpointing out front will be starting soon.
- **Polo Council of Churches (Pastor)** – Pastor was not able to attend
- **Liaison (Trish/Lisa)** – meeting on November 12th

**Meeting Done at 7:50 PM**

**Next meeting:** Wednesday, November 8<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 PM

October Finance Report

Income	Expenses	Net Income
5,807	10,774	-4,967

**Polo Community Council of Churches Meeting September 26, 2023**

President Jeff Davidson called the meeting to order at 7:00pm at St. Mark’s Church. Those attending were: Marla Buskohl, Sharon Miller, David Poole, Suzanne Sorenson, Suzanne Stout, Don Hay, Marilyn Schwartz, Merla Brooks, Mary Williams, Pastor John.

Pastor Jeff gave a devotion symbolizing our faith by being a part of missions and doing good works.

Secretary report was corrected and approved as corrected.

Treasurer: Marilyn Schwartz reports 2 deposits and one bill paid to Village Inn. A balance of \$1532.01 as of 9-15-23. Approved as reported.

REPORTS:

Second Hand Rose: Sharon Miller will attend the Chamber of Commerce Dinner and speak about the history of Second Hand Rose.

Lifeline Pantry: Truck delivery was today. Numbers are increasing and many supplies are needed.

Our Table: Next meal is October 30 with FUMC and COB hosting. After much discussion regarding low attendance numbers, it was decided to change the meal to the second Monday of each month. Therefore, the next meal hosted by St. Mark’s/ St. Mary’s will be held on December 11. Beginning in January 2024 each meal will be on the second Monday monthly. Announcements and bulletins as well as newsletters in each church need to reflect this change.

New Business: Discussion followed the proposal from Pastor Jeff regarding the Pennies from Heaven Program. Kathy Wragg from the Polo Senior Center has volunteered to be the coordinator of the program to aid those in need. Pastor Jeff, Pastor Suzanne Stout and Marla Buskohl will meet with Kathy and put together guidelines and bring information to the next meeting.

Sauk Valley Impact Program was discussed. St. Mark’s, Second Hand Rose, Pine Creek Church and COB are participants

Vespers at Polo Rehab will be covered by FUMC in November. Please check your schedules for future months that are assigned to your church.

November 12 will be a harvest service with lunch to follow at Pine Creek Church.

Christmas Basket information will be coming soon from the host church, Pine Creek. Delivery date will be December 16.

Next meeting will be held at Crossroads Church on Tuesday, November 28 at 6:00pm.

Secretary, Marla Buskohl



*Sympathies to the family and friends of Richard Hose who passed away on November 2<sup>nd</sup>.*

*Sympathies to the family and friends of former member Toni Cross who passed away November 9<sup>th</sup>. This is the sister of Karen (Larry) Reap.*

## Thank you!

~ Thank you to all who helped with the Fall Ham Loaf Supper from planning, preparing food, serving and cleanup. There was a profit of about \$1300.

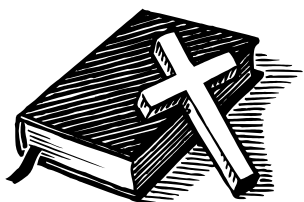
~ Thank you to Tracey Anders for always filling our candles with oil and preparing candles for Christmas Eve.

~ Thank you to Samantha Gray for using her Cricut to make new name plates for Pastor Scott's name on our sign out front, saving us a couple hundred dollars!

“ I want to convey heartfelt thanks to my St. Mark's Family for your many acts of kindness to make my 90<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration so special ... from singing Happy Birthday in church (3 weeks in a row!), to the many cards and well wishes, and spending time with me and my family at the Open House at the Senior Center a few weeks ago. I am so blessed to be part of this very special church family. Thank you and God's blessings!”

~ Carol Garkey

*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.

## December Birthdays & Anniversaries

### Birthdays

3	Leo Reinstra	18	Samantha Krenc
4	Colton McBride	20	Brittney Karrow
5	Larry Slager	23	Rita Dauphin
6	Diane Rasmussen		Phyllis Houck
7	Matt Morrison	24	Maddex Woodin
8	Trish Patterson	25	Cindy Bauling
9	Bryce Haye		John Ennenga
11	Elaine Sweet	27	Melissa Johnson
12	Brad Sorenson		Linnea Thorngren
	Wrenley Dawson	28	Jessica Sullivan
13	Janet Garkey	30	Rylyn Karrow
	Julia Hackbarth		
	Carol Suits		
	Ashley Ambeau		

### Anniversaries

2	Steve & Suzanne Sorenson
22	Larry & Karen Reap
	Pat & Leslie McPherson
31	Lyle & Barb Grobe



**Below is an invite from the Crossroads women's ministry group in Polo.**



Our women's ministry ("Sisters") would love to invite you/your ladies (age 16 - 101) to attend our annual Christmas event, "White Christmas", on Saturday, December 9 from 9am - 11:30am. Childcare will be provided. We thought this would be a beautiful way to get to know our local church friends and build relationships across our community.

Tickets are \$10/lady which includes a full catered breakfast, Christmas craft, speaker (Pastor Lisa Clay), and worship. We're asking ladies to bring a wrapped pair of holiday socks and encouraging note to exchange.

If your church is interested in attending or you'd like to promote the opportunity to your ladies, please feel free to email [nbradshaw@crossroadscn.com](mailto:nbradshaw@crossroadscn.com) or call anytime (cell: 248.890.0265).



### *Christmas Poinsettia Orders*

Anyone wishing to have a poinsettia in the church in memory of a loved one or wishing to present a poinsettia to the church for Christmas, please fill out the form below. Please mail or bring to the church office by Sunday, December 10<sup>th</sup>. The cost of the poinsettia is \$14.00. If you are planning on buying a poinsettia elsewhere, please still fill out the information and return it to the church office. Thank you.

Message for church bulletin:

“Presented to the church to the Glory of God by

\_\_\_\_\_

OR

“Presented in loving memory of \_\_\_\_\_

Your name \_\_\_\_\_

Are you ordering through the church? YES / NO

**Please make checks payable to “St. Mark’s”**