

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



October 2025 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 10:00 Prayer Partners	3	4 Deadline for farmers to sign up for free lunch on October 15 th
5 9:00 Adult Bible Study 10:00 Social Time 10:30 Worship	6 Sort clothes for Second Hand Rose	7	8 7:00pm Church Council Meeting	9 10:00 Prayer Partners	10	11
12 9:00 Adult Bible Study 10:00 Social Time 10:30 Worship	13 5:00-6:30pm Community Meal at FUM Columbus Day	14	15 Feeding our Farmers free lunches	16 10:00 Prayer Partners	17	18
19 9:00 Adult Bible Study 10:00 Social Time 10:30 Worship	20	21 Work Second Hand Rose October 21 st – 25 th 9:00am Quilters	22	23 10:00 Prayer Partners Deadline to submit articles for November Newsletter	24	25
26 Reformation Sunday 9:00 Adult Bible Study 10:00 Social Time 10:30 Worship	27	28	29	30 10:00 Prayer Partners	31 Happy Halloween! 	
<u>Date</u>	<u>Worship Assistant</u>	<u>Altar Flowers</u>	<u>Tellers:</u> Julie Hoak, Sharon VanOosten			
October 5	Beth Wiegmann	Joan Rienstra				
October 12	Linda Gall		<u>Altar Guild:</u> Marilyn Nelson			
October 19	Trish Patterson		<u>Head Usher:</u> Beth Wiegmann			
October 26	Julie Hoak					



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.*

Feeding our Farmers

October 15, 2025

To honor the essential work you do (during harvest season and every season),
we are providing lunch for you and your crew!



Farmers, please sign up by October 4th

Call or text one of our team leaders:

Sheryl: 815-238-5200

Joy: 815-622-6458

Cheryl: 815-441-8652

October 15th - Pick up at one of our host churches

Hosted by your friends at: Pine Creek Christian Church, Brookville UMC, East Jordan UMC

Volunteers are needed on October 14th to help pack lunches



LOMC – Oregon, IL - Make plans to join us for Autumn Fest on Saturday, October 11!

It will be a day of fun at camp including Pumpkin Carving, Cider Pressing, Crafts, Wagon Rides, Hikes, Campfire S'mores, and a "Taste of Camp".

10am – 3pm: Activities: Pumpkin Carving, Cider Pressing, Crafts, Wagon Rides, Hikes, Campfire S'mores, and a "Taste of

Camp".

11am – 1pm: Lunch available for purchase (\$10)

3pm: Closing Worship

Reformation Sunday – October 26th



Peace and blessings to you and yours,
Pastor Scott



The Mobile Food Pantry truck will be in Polo
on November 12th, 10:00-11:30am.
This is open to all community members, not just low income.

Polo Community Meal

The next community meal will be held
October 13th at Faith United Methodist
5:00-6:30pm.

Polo Lifeline Food Pantry Needs:

Toilet paper, sugar, soup and cash
donations.

.....

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

.....

St. Mark's Lutheran Church Council Meeting Minutes Aug 13th, 2025 7pm

Present Members: Cindy Schryver, Cliff Bardell, Terry Jenkins, Trish Patterson, Pastor Scott, and Patty Callahan. Not Present: Steve Sorenson and Beth Wiegmann

Attendance and Quorum: Yes

Opening Prayer – by Pastor Scott

Secretary's Report – Patty makes a motion to approve. Cindy, 2nd. Motion passes.

Treasurer's Report – Trish makes a motion to approve. Patty, 2nd. Motion passes.

Old Business:

Church basement for Sunday service? – Head usher

Internet and phone – Discussion was done by Lori's research. Terry makes a motion to do the 2 yr contract with Comcast. Pastor 2nd. Motion passes.

New Business:

Steve needs help in Sept for head usher. Council members will help out when needed.

Committee Reports:

Pastor – VBS went well, they did it in the evening and had a few more kids. He is keeping up with visits.

His vacation was good. Pastor was in the parade in Forreton and did the outdoor service. They raised \$850.00 for the local food pantry. He did a blessing before school at the Reform church in Forreton. Going to a conference in Sterling for Vitality on Aug 22nd and Aug 23rd. Social ministry meeting on the 6th. PLC at Lutherdale on Sept 15th – 17th. He did a funeral today and a funeral tomorrow.

Finance – Renee – Cliff – nothing to report

Worship N Music - Beth- hymns are set. Marla will be filling in for Cheryl while she is recovering from her surgery.

Fellowship/Hospitality – Marilyn Nelson – Marilyn is having her knee replaced tomorrow.

Education – Pastor – nothing to report

Memorial – Cindy – nothing to report

Property – Steve – Ryan Nelson family sprayed the weeds around the church and the parking lot across the alley. We thank them for their time and endeavors. We have begun weed whipping the sprayed weeds to make it look a little better.

Polo Council of Churches – Suzanne Sorensen - nothing to report

Liaison - Trish – meeting in fall

Trish makes a motion to adjourn meeting - Patty, 2nd. Motion passes. Meeting adjourned at 7:32 pm.

Closing prayer – by Pastor Scott

Next Meeting Sept 10th, 2025, 7pm

August Finance Report

Income	Expenses	Net Income
\$6,542	\$9,359	-\$2,818

Polo Council of Churches July Meeting Minutes

President Jeff Davidson called the meeting to order at 6:00pm at Faith Discovery Church. Those in attendance were: Marla Buskohl, Josh Brown, Sharon Miller, David Poole, Suzanne Sorenson, Suzanne Stout, Don Hay, Marilyn Schwartz, Calvin Carver, Merla Brooks, and Jon Schwartz.

Pastor Jeff led devotions about growing and learning together.

Secretary's minutes were read and approved.

Treasurer's report showed a balance of \$3168.83 after a donation of \$534.00 was sent to Honduras. A motion was made and seconded to Reimburse Marla B for supplies purchased for "Our Table".

Sharon Miller reports that Second Hand Rose is receiving nice donations and adequate income from sales. The insurance policy change is in the works and David Poole is checking with Country Companies for an estimate.

Polo Food Pantry has had many customers and is in need of food items and money.

Kidz Cafe is using United Way "Summer Eats" and is giving out lunches on Mondays and Wednesdays.

Pennies From Heaven has been extremely busy helping community members with gas cards and covering utility bills. More funds are needed as we head into the fall and winter months.

New business: Pine Creek Church and PCCC are inviting community members to "Sing For Unity" as part of the International Day of Peace. Sunday, September 21 at 2:00 is the date. Meet at the Polo Senior Center for singing and ice cream and fellowship, following. Each church is asked to bring cookies and or ice cream toppings.

The CROP Walk for Hunger will be on Sunday, September 28 at 2:00 pm in Brookville. Please join them or help support the walkers.

Next meeting will be on Tuesday, September 23, 2025 at St. Marks Lutheran Church at 6:00 pm.

Secretary, Marla Buskohl

October Birthdays & Anniversaries

Birthdays

1 Maycie Powell
Charles Bartelt
3 Betty Hook
4 Brenner Bushman
Miles Bushman
Lexi Christen
Aubrey Richardson
5 Lydia Kelly
Marcia Printz
Randal Gabaldon II
6 Cassandra Hinrichs
7 Brad Long
Julie Merdian
10 Michelle Gunder
11 Pam White
Noelle Carroll
12 Renae Shrader
Karen Reap
Westley Bauling
Sarah Wiegmann
14 Trevin Woodin
Barret Clothier

16 Kortney Heckman
17 Carolyn Altenburg
18 Don Nelson
20 Michael Hecathorn
22 Shirley Clayton
Karen Olsen
Andy Hinrichs
Chloe Bartelt
23 Mason Peterson
24 Jeff Meyer
Suzanne Sorenson
Ian Slager
25 Melanie Wyatt
26 Margery Immel
27 Samantha Hinrichs
Tracey Anders
Jonathan Heath
28 Colten Meyer
Shauna Gipe
29 Julie Albrecht
Kimberly Barnhart

Anniversaries

11 John & Pam White
12 Joe & Amy Merdian
20 Ed & Karen Olsen
23 Ryan & Robyn Nelson
26 Amanda & John Carroll

The following pages are written by Bill Hare and Brad Long
about their Honduras Missions.

9/17/2025

Dear St. Mark's Lutheran Church,

We are very grateful for the donation you sent to help us get food to those in need in Honduras. Brad Long has made 2 trips to Honduras this summer in order to make the food mission happen. He sent journal entries during the beginning of his second trip and he summarized the whole trip after he was back in the US. We wanted to share his notes with you so you could see what you helped to accomplish. This year we worked with another mission group and there is still 30,000 pounds of food left to be moved out of a warehouse, repackaged into family bags and delivered to those in remote places who need it most. We are continuing to seek donations to finish this huge project.

"After arriving in Honduras and traveling a bit, I was welcomed into Angel's house. I was embraced by Angel, his wife, his two children, his brother, and our hostess, his mother-in-law, Mrs. Chila and her three dogs. They showed me my living quarters, which was a bed right beside the food packages that had already been repacked for delivery to the villages. My bed was placed on top of four bricks that jacked the bed about ten to twelve inches above the ground level dirt floor which became a river when it rained due to the brittleness of the rusted roof sheets that had seen better days. In order to be able to hop in bed, I had to place a folded box on the floor so that I was able to remove my shoes and not touch my feet on the cold moist surface of the floor.

The next thing I found difficult to adapt to was visiting the bathroom (latrine) after the protocol of trying not to get my feet muddy beside my bed. Now, let me tell you how different the bathroom situation is for Angel and his family. The bathroom is not located inside house. The latrine is located beside a water reservoir called a pila. I thank God that at least they have a basic rudimentary toilet bowl which has to be flushed with a bucket of water. Instead of a door, the latrine had an embroidered velvet curtain held by three clothesline hooks. The wind outside made that curtain fly back and forth in such a violent way that privacy seemed like a utopia under those conditions. I had to continually cough so that everyone would know that I was sitting on the throne in order to avoid an

embarrassing encounter with anyone in the household. Thank God for toilet paper, which is not used by everyone in Honduras. We brought our own, but the family always guarded it like a premium commodity and brought it back into the house after each use or a passerby might steal it.

The next challenge I faced was the shower situation. We were up in the mountains and it was 50 degrees outside. I normally take a bucket shower bath, but given the extreme conditions, grandma always provided me with a boiling tea kettle to warm the water in the bucket. The curtain conditions were worse and the curtain was flying around while I was showering, needless to say I lost all my dignity while showering with a dipper bowl. After showering, the board on top of the water reservoir was replaced because that area serves many purposes. They do their dishes, wash their vegetables and fruit, do the laundry and wash their hands in the very same place. They did all my laundry there as part of the paid service that they provided. Our laundry was then taken to the kitchen and hung on a clothesline on top of the wood cooking stove to dry in the corner of the kitchen, otherwise the cold weather would be an impediment for it to dry.

The house where I stayed has one light bulb. There is no insulation, there are open ceilings made from old termite consumed pine tree timber that remains in position by God's grace. There are no modern appliances of any kind. There is no refrigerator, washing machine, dryer, dish washer or modern stove. Everything is cooked on an adobe stove with firewood and the cover of an old fifty-five oil drum is the cooking surface. We spent many nights close to that old stove to stay warm while the family gave me coffee, dinner and they shared old anecdotes of grandpa who recently passed away. Many times we ate in the darkness of the kitchen due to the daily blackouts. Every morning Angel, his brother or his son used a rusty axe to chop wood to feed the stove so that it would remain hot on a constant basis. One night I gave the family three flashlights because they used the splinters of wood as torches. I also observed that their son was doing his high school homework by candlelight every night because he is studying to become an electrician. His parents monitor every assignment and report card, because they didn't get a chance to go to school and they want their children not to go through the harsh living conditions that can result from illiteracy. Our hosts fed us mostly

beans, eggs and vegetables because there is no meat due to the lack of refrigeration. The food was delicious and well cooked. There is no waste whatsoever, they ration their food because it is my feeling that they don't know what they will eat the next day. Grandma sells \$14 of tortillas every other day in order to buy basic food items for the family. Otherwise, they wouldn't have any income because there are no jobs available for Angel and his wife. Angel is very appreciative for the opportunity to rent (which is a barter of eight days of hard work during the planting season for the owner of the land) some land (less than a half an acre) to be able to harvest the corn that grandma uses for the tortillas she sells. Even in the darkness of their house, they have fellowship, they talk, they listen, they laugh and they are not distracted nor absorbed by technological gadgets and all they have is their anecdotes, life experience stories and dreams for a better future for their children and their family. They dream to improve their living conditions at home and even though they never expressed it, they all wish for an opportunity to improve their quality of life.

We traveled from their house, which we used as our hub, to deliver food rations to at least 12 other villages that were in dire need of food support. Travel was rugged and rough. It felt like driving across a cornfield downhill most of the time. At one location, people that received the food rations waited at least three hours due to us being delayed because driving conditions were so harsh. Sometimes we had to be escorted to the cross roads by local leaders because the people came down from their mountain sides to the paths so that they would be all reunited to receive the food donations. It was very common to hear that they were extremely appreciative of these food rations. One lady expressed that this food came right on time and she would be able to light her stove that evening because she had nothing left in her kitchen.

Let me describe what happened as we pulled up to each distribution site. First the community leader and Angel would organize the community in priority from elders, to nursing mothers, to family recipients. Then I would share Bill and Betty's message of solidarity and love on behalf of the donors sharing God's love for Honduras. Then Ana, who is a preacher and Hernie's wife, would open in prayer, giving thanks to the Lord for the opportunity of sharing God's bounty where it is

most needed. Giving Him honor and glory that only He deserves. And each person that received a food package also received God's blessing. We had long days traveling, organizing, distributing and heading to different villages every single day under harsh conditions, many times without the proper rain gear. We had no jackets and the temperatures were about forty degrees at night. We could literally see our steam from our body heat abandon our shivering skin with the reflection of the truck's headlights. This made us eventually sick with unexpected colds that forced us to get intramuscular injections to improve our health before going to the next stage of distribution.

As of today, we are now ready to reload after distributing 1,547 food rations. We are currently waiting for some containers to be unloaded at the hubs so that we may haul the food rations to the communities down south where our ministry has been working for 2 decades. I have to share with you that this has been the biggest food security program that I have participated in with Bill, Betty, Beth, Hernie, his wife Ana, and their baby daughter, Genesis Amari Jocabed. None of this would be possible in the past, during this current mission and also in the future without the trust deposited in Bill and Betty and also without the support of the Polo Council of Churches and individual and group donors that have had an active participation in this miracle of love that the Lord has granted us to be part of."

The following 2 pages are what Brad wrote a few days after he returned home.

Food mission information:

- Our mission worked with another mission group to distribute food to those in need.
- The box truck was loaded at a warehouse and hauled 7,300 pounds of rice and cornmeal each time. 50,000 pounds was hauled for this mission.
- These loads were repackaged into family packages. This repackaging took place in 4 different homes across Honduras.
- Some of the mission work happened near the borders of Guatemala, El Salvador and Nicaragua.
- 3,600 families received food during the two parts of our mission this month.

These are some of the thoughts from Brad Long (Polo, IL) when he returned home from Honduras. Although my dad, Bill Hare, still wishes he could return to Honduras, that is not possible any more. Brad is now his representative. Brad took a message from my dad to the people in southern Honduras that mean so much to him and Brad also brought greetings back.

“We wish to thank all who have supported this mission. Many people received food and wish to thank the supporters for not forgetting those who are in desperate need.

We traveled several hundred miles during this mission. Miles in Honduras are not the same as miles here in the US. Roads are rough, many are just dirt or mud with BIG rocks. Heavy duty vehicles are a necessity to get to the villages where we deliver food. I usually drove the Toyota Land Cruiser.

The 16 villages in southern Honduras are extremely remote and have no other outside help. Bill always said, “We go where no one else will go.”

This time there were many daily police road blocks on our travels. They ran the dogs around our vehicles and asked us questions. They were looking for drugs and human traffickers, especially in the box truck.

When we arrive in the villages, the people line up to receive the food. We pray with each family representative and tell them they have many brothers and sisters that love them and pray for them. We wish God’s blessings on them and tell them we pray that God may grant them daily bread.

When I enter back into the US after spending more than 30 days in Honduras over the past 2 months, I know how blessed people are and most don't know it or they take it for granted. I have often said, "there are no poor people in the US." We have clean drinking water, wells that don't run dry and power that stays on. (If people are lucky enough to have power, it was off daily and sometimes it was 24-48 hours before it was back on.) We have help from fire, police, food banks, churches and places like Goodwill and Salvation Army. We have job opportunities, access to education and government help with food, housing and health care. There is always a big adjustment period when we return from Honduras to a country that has so much when we leave people that truly have nothing and we have been fully immersed in that way of living.

I have always felt by being a blessing to someone else, you will be blessed. We could not do this mission work without each donor that supports us and each donation, no matter the size, matters to those receiving food. 100% of the money sent to Bill goes to support this work in Honduras. **This mission was the biggest food delivery we have ever done and there is more food yet to be repackaged and delivered.** We were able to employ several Hondurans to help with the work and that money will feed their families."

We thank you for your support,

Bill, Betty, Beth, Brad 

Ernie, Honduran Coordinator, and his wife Anna and their baby who also travels with them