
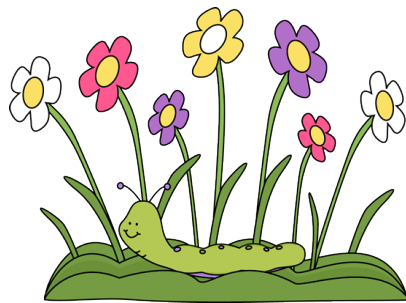



ST. MARK'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
201 N DIVISION AVENUE
POLO, IL 61064
Church Phone: 815-946-2919
Email: stmarkspolo@frontiernet.net
Website: stmarkspolo.com

March 2026



Palm
SUNDAY

Hosanna!
Blessed is He
who comes in
the name of
the Lord! The
King of Israel!

 JEG
JIM &
ELIZABETH
GEORGE

March 2026 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 9:00 Adult Bible Study 10:00 Social Time 10:30 Worship	2 Sort clothes for Second Hand Rose	3	4 6:00 meal 6:30 Lent Service <u>in Forreston</u>	5 10:00 Prayer Partners	6 4:30-7:30pm Brookville UM Fish Fry	7 Congregational Resourcing Event at Sauk
8 Daylight Savings Time Begins 9:00 Adult Bible Study 10:00 Social Time 10:30 Worship	9 5:00-6:30pm Community Meal at FUM	10 Work at Second Hand Rose March 10 th – 14 th	11 6:00 meal 6:30 Lent Service <u>in Polo</u>	12 10:00 Prayer Partners	13	14
15 Deadline to order Easter Lilies 9:00 Adult Bible Study 10:00 Social Time 10:30 Worship 11:30 Church council meeting	16	17 9:00am Quilters Deadline to submit articles for April Newsletter Happy St. Patrick's Day!	18 Mobile Food Pantry in Polo 6:00 meal 6:30 Lent Service <u>in Forreston</u>	19 10:00 Prayer Partners	20 First day of Spring! 	21
22 9:00 Adult Bible Study 10:00 Social Time 10:30 Worship	23	24	25 6:00 meal 6:30 Lent Service <u>in Polo</u>	26 10:00 Prayer Partners	27	28
29 Palm Sunday 9:00 Adult Bible Study 10:00 Social Time 10:30 Worship						

<u>Date</u>	<u>Worship Assistant</u>	<u>Altar Flowers</u>	<u>Tellers:</u> Melody Reap, Patty Callahan, Reanne Kurschner
March 1	Lisa Hinrichs		<u>Altar Guild:</u> Carol Suits
March 8	Cliff Bardell		
March 15	Trish Patterson		<u>Head Usher:</u> Patty Callahan
March 22	Linda Gall		
March 29	Tracey Anders		



ST. MARK'S EVANGELICAL

LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

201 N. Division Avenue, Polo, IL 61064

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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.*

2026 Lent schedule

Readers needed! If you would like to volunteer to read a short passage at the Lent services in Polo, please let Pastor or Lori know.

Wednesdays during Lent (**6:00 p.m. Meal, 6:30 p.m. Service**)

March 4th in Forreston

March 11th in Polo

March 18th in Forreston

March 25th in Polo

Maunder Thursday (April 2nd) 6:30 p.m. in Polo

Good Friday (April 3rd) in Forreston

Easter Sunday (April 5th)

Faith Lutheran Church 6:30 a.m. and 9:00 a.m.

St. Mark's Lutheran Church 10:30 a.m.



Brookville UM Church Annual Fish Fry

Friday, March 6th, 2026

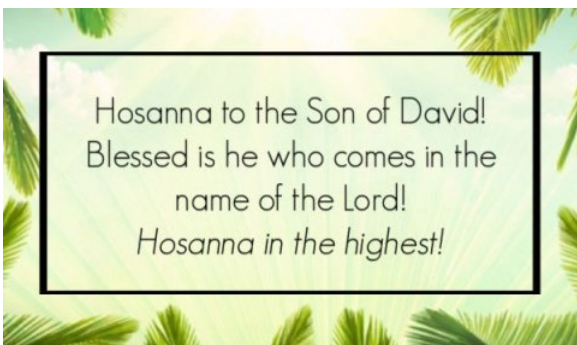
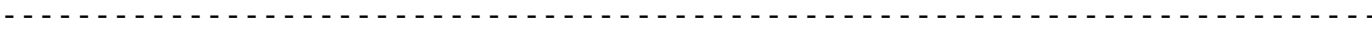
Serving 4:30-7:30pm

Adults \$18

Children ages 5-12 \$10.00

Children 4 & under FREE

Bake Sale! Dine in or carry out



March 29th

Beloved St. Mark's & Faith Lutheran Churches,

February invites us into a quieter kind of faithfulness... the rush of Christmas has passed. The new year has begun to settle into its rhythms. And in the church, we continue walking through the season of Epiphany—a season that reminds us that Christ is revealed not only in moments of wonder, but in ordinary days and faithful lives.

Epiphany is about light—about seeing more clearly who Jesus is and who we are called to be. It invites us to notice where God is at work in places we might otherwise overlook: in relationships, in service, in worship, and in care for one another. These weeks remind us that faith is not only about believing, but about living—about reflecting Christ's light in our words and actions.

Scripture promises us, *“The Lord is near to all who call on him”* (Psalm 145:18). That promise does not depend on energy levels, certainty, or strength. God draws near simply because God is faithful. As we move through these winter weeks together, my prayer is that you know this deep truth: you are not alone. You are part of a community rooted in grace, held together by love, and sustained by God's presence.

Throughout February, we remain in Epiphany, hearing stories of Jesus calling disciples, healing the broken, and revealing God's love in the world. Wherever you find yourself on your faith journey—strong, uncertain, weary, or hopeful—you are welcome here.

Later this month, the church year turns toward Lent. The season of Lent begins on **Ash Wednesday, February 18**. Ash Wednesday marks a turning point—a day of honesty, humility, and hope—as we remember both our mortality and God's deep mercy. The Sunday following will be the **First Sunday of Lent**, as we begin our forty-day journey toward Easter.

I am deeply grateful for the many ways people in both congregations continue to serve—often quietly and without recognition. From worship leadership to visiting, quilting, preparing meals, cleaning, praying, and offering encouragement or a ride when needed, these acts of care are the heartbeat of the church. Thank you for being the body of Christ in action.

Winter can feel long. Days can feel heavy. And yet, even here, there is light. As the days begin to lengthen, may you notice signs of grace in places you might not expect. May you be reminded that you are not forgotten, not overlooked, and never alone.

You are beloved. You are valued. You are held gently in the loving arms of God. And as always—God loves you, and so do I.

Peace and blessings,
Pastor Scott Ralston

St. Mark's Lutheran Church
Meeting Minutes
January 11th 2026 after Church Service

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

Attendance and Quorum: Yes

Opening Prayer – by Pastor Scott

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

Treasurer's Report - Trish makes a motion to approve. Cindy 2nd. Motion passes.

Old Business: Nothing to report.

New Business: All committee annual reports be turned into the church secretary by January 9th for the annual report.

2026 Budget review for St Marks – Discussion made. Trish makes a motion to approve Lori's requests. Beth 2nd. Motion passes.

Cliff makes a motion to approve the budget. Terry 2nd. Motion passes.

Pastor talked about taking a sabbatical this summer. Talked about coverage etc..Pastor will let us know when he is looking to take maybe a month off.

Feb 1st is the Annual meeting for St Mark's.

Committee Reports:

Pastor – Double visits done in December. Pastor took gifts to his visits. Christmas service went wonderfully. Christmas brunch at Faith went well on Christmas morning.

Finance - Renee – nothing to report.

Worship N Music – Beth – she has her report in. Next meeting in Feb.

Fellowship/Hospitality – Marilyn – nothing to report.

Education – Pastor – nothing to report.

Memorial – Cindy – Steve will have Lori make copies for us.

Property – Steve – all the outside windows need to be scraped and painted. Steve will check with someone to get an estimate. Discussion was done about the parking lot. Not worth putting a bunch of money into the parking lot to repave it, but need to have lines painted. High school kids can do it and get their volunteer hours.

Liaison – Trish – next meeting is scheduled in April.

Motion to adjourn meeting – Trish makes a motion to adjourn. Terry 2nd

Closing prayer – by Pastor Scott

Meeting adjourned at 12:40 pm

Next Meeting February 15th 2026 after church Service

January Finance Report

Income	Expenses	Net Income
\$8,004	\$8,308	-\$305

St. Mark's Annual Congregational Meeting February 1, 2026

11:32 AM: Meeting led by Steve Sorenson, Church Council President.

Opening prayer by Pastor Scott.

Steve declared a quorum.

Nominations for the church council – Steve discussed every council members current terms. No elections from the floor. We have to approve for them to continue. Andy Bartelt makes a motion to approve. Kathy Mitchell 2nd. All approved.

2026 Synod Delegates, June 12th and 13th, 2026. The council will be looking for 2 delegates.

Secretary's Report – motion to approve 2025 Annual Congregational Secretary's report – Minutes are approved.

Financial Reports – Proposed Budget for 2026 – Amanda Carroll makes a motion to approve the proposed budget. 2nd by Marcia Printz. Motion passes.

Committee and Organizational Reports – pages 9-13 – no questions from the congregation.

Yoking Summary – Page 13 – Steve explained the joint services, 2 in Polo, 2 in Forreston. We will continue doing joint services for Lent. Kim Printz will share our service schedule for 2026 on our social media page. Steve gave her permission. Cliff makes a motion to approve the yoking agreement. Patty Callahan 2nd.

New Business – Steve let the congregation know that the council has discussed a Sabbatical for Pastor to have some time off to do so. He is going into his 14th year and he has never taken one. He is going to take 1 month this year. He will start at the end of May and into June. Going to go out to Colorado and then go to Glacier National Park. Cliff explained this is nothing new, there is a budget line for this.

Closing Prayer by Pastor Scott.

Motion to adjourn the meeting by Cliff Bardell. 2nd by Tracey Anders. Meeting adjourned at 11:55 AM.

**Congregational Resourcing Event
March 7th, 2026**

The theme for our synod for 2026 is Going Deeper. We will be focusing on asking the hard questions that will help us grow in faith and service.

Sign up online at nisynod.org/programs/cre



***Polo Good Friday Community Service will be held
at Pine Creek Christian on April 3rd***

5:00pm Meal

6:00pm Worship

-OR-

Join St. Mark's & Faith Lutheran in Forreston at 6:30pm



Pennies from Heaven donations continue to be needed

The Pennies from Heaven fund has been depleted and there are people in Polo in need of help. Any donations are appreciated. Make checks out to St. Mark's and we will send them to the Polo Council of Churches.



Polo Community Meal

The next community meal will be held on March 9th at Faith United Methodist 5:00-6:30pm.

Polo Lifeline Food Pantry Needs:

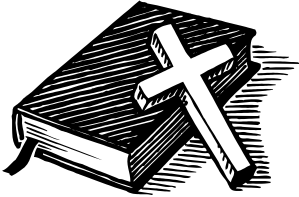
Juice or drink mixes (ex. Lemonade, crystal light), ketchup, mayonnaise, rigatoni noodles, canned tomatoes, spaghetti sauce, sugar, monetary donations.

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

Thank you!

~ Thank you to all our council members that have served this past year! We are very grateful to you and thank you for continuing to serve at St. Mark's.

Please let us know if someone needs a thank you.



Prayers for those in need of healing: Darlene Barnhart, Patty Callahan, Karen Fetterman, Mike Hecathorn, Pat McPherson, Mary Ann Olson, Ken Smith and Laurel Smith. **Those in care facilities:** Ron Bardell, Tammy Karrow, Evelyn Meyer and Beulah Nelson. **Those in Military service:** Nathaniel Yingling.

March Birthdays & Anniversaries

Birthdays

2 Ashley Nelson
3 Nathan Groth
4 Cassie Mekeel
5 Matt Rienstra
6 Brian Suits
7 Laura Lopez
Levi McBride
8 Ron Shuman
10 Beth Wiegmann
Jenny Baker
11 Mark Boyle
12 Katie Mottaz
14 Bobby Boothe
Shelbi Massolle
15 Ashley Haye
16 David Baker
Jennifer Yingling

Anniversaries

17 Marco Powell
18 Lori Wolber
19 Mary Ann Olson
Beulah Nelson
Bob Mitchell
20 Joyce Folkers
Nathan White
21 Sandra Woodin
23 Marcia Barnhart
Hunter Barnhart
24 Marilyn Nelson
Shannon Gipe
26 Becky Patterson
29 Dawn Mitchell
James Grobe
31 Ashley Boothe
9 Larry & Deborah Slager
23 Harold & Joyce Folkers
26 Dan & Janet Brown

Easter Lily Order Form

Easter Lilies will be available this year for \$16.00. If you would like to purchase one, please return this form by **March 15th**.

Please include your cash or check payable to St. Mark's Lutheran Church with this form and put them in the offering plate, mail to the church or put in the secretary's mailbox.

Given By: _____

In Memory Of: _____

OR

In Honor Of: _____



Are you ordering through the church: YES / NO

If you are bringing a lily but you are not ordering it through the church, please fill out this form if you would like your information in the bulletin.