

St. Mark's Messenger, January 2025



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Pastor Doug's Letter

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year,

A Prayer for the New Year

Lord, as Jesus has come to us this Christmas,
may we carry Jesus,
the light of the world,
in our hearts and actions.

May we be beacons of God's love to others.

May the light and love of Christ descend
into our world in new ways to bring peace.

May your Holy Spirit be at work in each of us
to enable us to have hearts filled with gratitude.

May we praise God more and complain less.

May we find joy in little things,
the greeting of a friend,
the smile of someone we do not know,
the opportunities to be helpful to those in need.

Yes, come, Holy Spirit to mold us into people
who find joy in our actions of love to others,
for love is a verb.

Amen. So be it. So be it for me. So be it for us all.

Written and sent to you from Pastor Carol Pretorius with love.

For those of you looking for an online devotional, I recommend the Daily Meditations from the Center for Action and Contemplation (<https://cac.org/daily-meditations/salt-of-the-earth/>) for its depth of spirituality.

For an insightful understanding of the Sermon on the Mount, I enjoyed the Bible Project's series on it. Using their app was easiest.

Sacred Space (<https://sacredspace.com/>) is a daily reflection on a Scripture passage that is in the Ignatian tradition of imagining yourself as part of the story.

Be blessed in 2025 with a daily sense of God's presence.

Peace be with you all,



The Listening Heart: A Bible Study and Reflections of Ephesians

On the Tuesdays in January and February (starting January 14th), you are invited to reflect together on the Book of Ephesians. Led by Pastor Doug in the mornings (10:30 am to 12 pm) and then again in the evenings (7 pm to 8:30 pm). The group will listen for how these words speak to us today.

Thank You Notes Received

In December, St. Mark's received Thank You notes from Rylie and Josie Jeanneret for the college care packages, Auglaize County Crisis Center for St. Mark's annual donation of \$250, the Wapak FCA for supplying them with their breakfast last month, and from Joe Landry's family for always being a wonderful church family to Joe and for supporting them in their time of grief. These notes are pinned to the cork board in the hallway next to Multi-Purpose Room 4.

Otterbein Worship

Pastor Doug has recently started providing a worship service at Otterbein Cridersville at 10:30am on the second Thursday of the month except for this January when it will be on the 23rd.



Worship Attendance for Dec. 2024

	Sat.	Sun.	Stream	SS	Wed.
11/30 & 12/1 & 12/4	22	76	90	32	29
12/7 & 12/8 & 12/11	17	61	133	33	36
12/14 & 12/15 & 12/18	20	101	119	38	38
12/21 & 12/22	22	59	120	N/A	N/A
Christmas Eve	5pm: 69	7pm: 105	Livestream: 136		
12/28 & 12/29	17	49	81	N/A	N/A

Financial Information

Year-to-Date

as of December 31, 2024:

General Fund YTD:

Income = \$254,581

Expenses = \$250,004

General Fund Month of Dec.:

Income = \$27,526

Expenses = \$27,577

Worship Services for January

Jan. 4 & 5 **Boy in the Temple** Twelfth Day of Christmas Sunday
Communion

Psalm 2 Luke 2:41-52

Wisdom Teachers

On this twelfth and final day of Christmas, we hear the last of Luke's stories about Jesus' birth and boyhood. This single story from his childhood reveals his precocious desire to know more of God and to live the God-centered life. We too are invited to learn from every experience and from every wisdom teacher.



Jan. 11 & 12 **Jesus' Baptism** Baptism of Our Lord

Psalm 51:6-17 Luke 3:1-22

A Prophet's Voice

January 6 is the day the magi bring their gifts to the infant Jesus, and it also marks the beginning of the Season of Epiphany. Epiphany means to reveal, to enlighten, and to gain sudden clarity. The star guiding the magi was their epiphany. Today we celebrate the baptism of Jesus when he has an epiphany when he is called "the beloved son." John the Baptist, the prophet on the edge of society, sets Jesus on his journey of transforming the world.

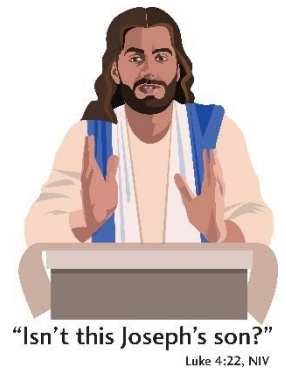


Jan. 18 & 19 **Sermon at Nazareth** 2nd Sunday after Epiphany Sunday Communion

Psalm 146 Luke 4:14-30

Do You Hear What I Hear?

Luke introduces Jesus starting his ministry with a sermon in his hometown of Nazareth. It doesn't go well. Like us, the congregation knew what they wanted to hear and what they expected to hear. When Jesus goes off script and preaches a sermon contrary to their expectations, they come very close to killing him. As an old preacher once said, "Don't become a preacher unless you look good on wood." "Isn't this Joseph's son?"

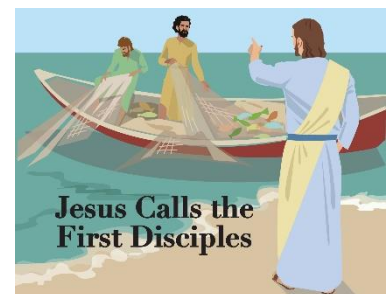


Jan. 25 & 26 **Fish for People** Third Sunday after Epiphany Youth Sunday

Psalm 90 Luke 5:1-11

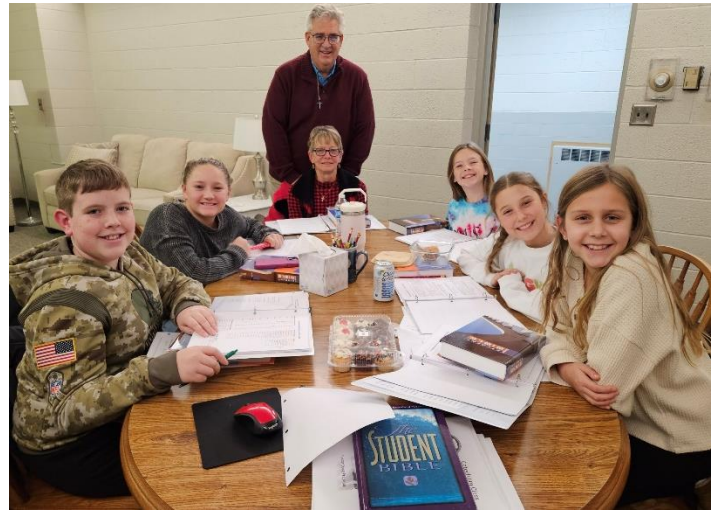
Actions Speak Louder Than Words

Peter heard a whole sermon from Jesus while Jesus was preaching from Peter's boat to the crowds on the shore. However, it was not until Jesus acted to help Peter at his place of need that Peter realized who Jesus was. Actions speak louder than words.



Getting Ready for Catechism Class

Laura Heitz took this picture of the catechism class. From left to right are Ethan Dickey, Kelsey Schneider, Pastor Doug, Cindy Klosterman, Evelyn Oen, Ella Price, and Avery Newman. Missing from the photo is Ethan Jeanneret who started the class but now is learning about God in a much different way.



Photos from the Youth Christmas Dinner

The seven high school youth exchanged Secret Santa Christmas gifts and then had a white elephant gift exchange. Kenzie Schneider, Kaylee Dickey, and Lyla Wilder are pictured at left with their white elephant gifts.

Below and to the left is the hot game of Jingle Ball in which prizes are collected as you unwrap the Saran Wrap Ball. Susie LaMarr (bottom right) was the big winner because she collected the prize at the center of the ball.



Photos from the Youth Thanksgiving Dinner



The youth are catching marshmallows in their mouth from a teammate throwing them across the Fellowship Hall. Susie LaMarr is successful (top left), Lyla Wilder is lined up, and the white streak is the marshmallow (top middle). Blake Rogers catches one thrown the length of the hall (top right). The youth also enjoyed a typical Thanksgiving Feast and painted crosses (below). Some turned out so well that the youth planned on giving them as Christmas gifts.



St. Mark's Lutheran Church Congregation Meeting Minutes

December 1, 2024

Laura Heitz, Council President, called the meeting to order at 11:24 AM.

Pastor Doug opened the meeting with prayer.

Laura Heitz presented the Congregational Minutes from December 2, 2023 listed in the bulletin. She called for a Motion to accept. Ruth Doll made the motion to accept Julie Miars Golden seconded. Voice vote approved the 2025 Budget.

Paul Rogers presented the 2025 Budget to the congregation listed in the bulletin. Bob Wiesenmayer asked for clarification of the dedicated and endowment funds. Paul offered the details. A unanimous ballot approved the 2025 Budget.

Pastor Doug thanked Mike Burton for serving two three-year terms on council. Mike was praised for his contribution, particularly in the finance area. Laura Heitz was thanked for her second year as president and will serve one more year in her term. Shelley Koch's first term ends on 12/31/26.

Announced at its November 18th meeting the church council appointed: Karen Lenhart to fulfill Dustin Jeanneret's term ending on 12/31/25, Marguerite Wallen to complete the first vacant term that ends on 12/31/26 and Nelson Golden to complete the second vacant term that ends on 12/31/26.

Mark Swaney was nominated to serve a second three-year term. Corrin McBride and Amanda Schmerge were nominated to serve the first three-year term. Laura Heitz asked for a motion to accept. Pastor Doug made the motion by acclamation to accept the nominees. Nelson Golden seconded. Nominees accepted by a round of applause. Laura Heitz acknowledged and gifted the Committee Chairpersons:

Ruth Doll – Co-Sunday School, Altar Guild and Prayer Chain

Carol Garber – Co-Sunday School, Kitchen

Paul Rogers – Finance, Youth

Mike Burton – Renovation

Rod Metz – Property & Maintenance

Julie Miars Golden – Worship & Music

Laura Heitz called for any new business, hearing none, asked for a motion to adjourn. Mark Swaney made a motion to adjourn, and Jen Garber seconded. Motion carried.

51 congregational members attended.

Meeting closed with prayer.

Submitted by Tina Waltz

12/1/2024

St. Mark's Council Meeting Minutes for December 19, 2024

President Laura Heitz called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

In Attendance were Laura Heitz, Shelley Koch, Mark Swaney, Mike Burton, Amanda Schmerge, Nelson Golden, Karen Lenhart, Marguerite Wallen, and Pastor Doug. JP Metz and Corrin Wilder were excused.

Opening Prayer & Devotion were led by Pastor Doug. He read I Timothy 3:1-13, which gave the qualifications of pastoral and council leaders. Everyone introduced themselves and talked about one of the qualifications that they most noticed.

The Church Council read the **Motto, Mission, & Vision Statements** in unison.

The November 18, 2024, Council Minutes were approved unanimously. (Mark Swaney moved and Mike Burton seconded.)

The November 2024 Treasurer's Report was presented by Mike Burton. He explained the details of the report for the benefit of those who were seeing it for the first time. The General Fund Income for November was \$27,311 and the General Fund Expenses were \$22,941. Year-to-date as of November 30, 2024, our General Fund Balance is \$4,628. Mark Swaney moved the November 2024 Treasurer's Report be accepted and Shelley Koch seconded. It was approved unanimously.

- Pastor Doug moved and Mike Burton seconded that the \$12,000 surplus in the checking account from unrecorded interest income be credited to the Capital Improvement Fund when Administrative Assistant Elaine Hawkins and Finance Chairperson Paul Rogers close out the 2024 books. It was approved unanimously.
- Mike Burton recommended that the Finance Committee in 2025 consider taking out two certificates of deposit at Minister Bank, each of them in an amount of \$20,000 to \$25,000, one of them for a six-month period and the other for a three-month period. The money would come from the General Fund Reserves. The CD's would roll over automatically unless there was a need. Now that the Renovation is completed and expenses are regularly predictable, this would allow the church to earn a higher rate of interest.
- Pastor Doug reported the Mission Wapak funds (\$5,715) are available for use to support new ministries in Wapakoneta, but that there has not been a means by which members apply for use of these funds. He recommended that one consideration might be to aid Chuck Curry in his ministry of finding homes for the homeless. Shelley Koch suggested another possibility might be the support the foster home ministry of Generations of Love. She will report back with suggestions.

Pastor Doug's Report:

- Joe Landry died on December 19.
- Gloria Headapohl informed me that they have joined Harvest Baptist Church but which to remain connected with St. Mark's in a greatly reduced capacity.
- I will be on vacation in Florida from Monday December 30 thru Friday January 3.
- Thank you for the new office chair.
- Thank you for your service this past year.

New Business:

There was a brief review the year and in answer to the question "What went well this year?" the following was mentioned:

- Elaine Hawkins has done a fantastic job as our administrative assistant.
- A few more youth are participating in the youth programs.
- We have a full council with a couple of younger members.
- Carol Garber and Ruth Doll are working hard to make Sunday School work?
- The stewardship program was successful.
- The new sign is great.
- The New Beginnings Learning Academy and St. Mark's have a good symbiotic relationship.
- The congregation has been quite supportive of the families of members who died this year.
- Carol Garber has done great work coordinating the dinners with good food and beautiful set up.
- Starting the new worship services at Otterbein is good.
- Melissa Grunden has fantastic choices of music that is thematic and beautiful.

In response to the question, What do we need to do better, it was suggested that we have not yet contacted the families who donated to the Memorial Fund to use them appropriately.

Council Installation will be at the worship services of January 4 and 5.

Nelson Golden was **elected president of the church council** and Laura Heitz was elected vice-president. The election of the officers of Secretary and Treasurer were postponed to next month. In addition, we will organize how we might delegate functions and responsibilities.

The Next Meeting will be Thursday January 9, 2025 at 7:00 pm.

Amanda Schmerge moved to **adjourn** at 8:44 pm and Mike Buston closed out his terms of office by seconding it. Motion approved. Laura Heitz distributed Christmas thank you gifts to all the council members.

Respectfully Submitted,

Pastor Doug Pretorius

Happy Birthday!

Rick Regula	January 1	Shirley Wiesenmayer	January 14
John Richardson	January 1	Randy LaMarr	January 22
Isabella Jeanneret	January 2	Lyla Wilder	January 24
John M. Doll	January 3	Addi Fisher	January 26
Larry J. Thuman	January 3	Trish Miller	January 26
Nathan Garber	January 4	Carol Garber	January 27
Dustin Dobie	January 7	Bev Cummins	January 28
Chris Sorensen	January 9	Marian Schlegel	January 30
Marilyn Wills	January 12		



St. Mark's Motto

Be God's Grace in Action

St. Mark's Mission

St. Mark's Mission is to fulfill the Great Commission by extending God's Grace to all people.

St. Mark's Vision

St. Mark's will transform the Wapakoneta area and the world into a community of love by connecting the disconnected to God's grace and salvation.

We welcome, support, and care for all people.

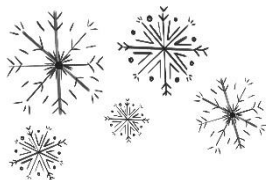
Pastor	Doug Pretorius	PastorDougP@gmail.com	419-512-4491
Administrative Assistant	Elaine Hawkins	StMarksWapak302@gmail.com	
Church Musician	Melissa Grunden		
Custodian	Amanda Wilder		
Technology Coordinator	Dustin Jeanneret		

St. Mark's Evangelical Lutheran Church

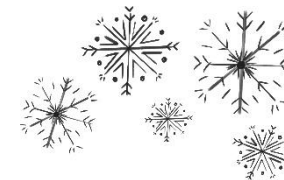
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January 2025 – St. Mark’s Calendar



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	
			1 <i>New Year's Day</i>	2	3	4 8a - Men's Bible Study 5p Communion	
5 9a - SS for All 10:15a - Communion TSC Taping	6	7 9a - Preschool Chapel	8 10:30a - Gardens 5:30p Worship & Music Mtg. 6:45p - Catechism 7p - Choir Practice	9 9a - Preschool Chapel	10	11 5p Communion	
9a - SS for All Ages 10:15a - Worship 1p - Conference Catechism	12	13	14 10:30a - Listening Heart 7p - Listening Ht. 8p - Finance Mtg.	15 10:30a - Gardens Worship 6:45p - Catechism	16 7:30p - Council	17	18 8a - Men's Bible Study 5p Communion
19 9a - SS for All 10:15a - Communion	20	21 9a - Preschl. Chapel 10:30a - Listening Heart 7p - Listening Ht.	22	23 9a - Preschool Chapel 10:30 - Otterbein Worship	24	25 5p Communion	
26 9a - SS for All 10:15a - Wors. Service Youth Sunday	27	28 10:30a - Listening Heart 7p - Listening Ht.	29 6:45p - Catechism	30	31		

Who Does What?

10:15am Sunday	5-Jan	12-Jan	19-Jan	26-Jan
Greeters, Pearl St	Tracy Blake Dick Ault	Delani Harter Jeff Hunlock	Doreen Kinninger Bob Kinninger	<i>Greeters:</i> Drexler & Bostyn Dobie <i>Greeter & Offering:</i> Ella Price
Greeters, Seltzer St & Offering	John Doll Jeanne Clark	George Hengstler Heidi Lisi	Corrin & Devin McBride	<i>Greeter:</i> Landon Baeumel <i>Greeter & Offering:</i> Avery Newman
Bulletins & Offering	Kay Ault Collin Lenhart	Kim Harter Ron Lenhart	Courtney & Mike Burton	<i>Bulletins:</i> Jennings McEvoy <i>Bulletins & Offering:</i> Grace & Susie LaMarr
Candle Lighter	Ethan Dickey	Ella Price	Evelyn Oen	Kelsey Schneider
Cross Bearer	Kelsey Schneider	Avery Newman	Ella Price	Ethan Dickey
Reader	Bob Wiesenmayer	Heidi LaMarr	Kristi Fisher	Kenzie Schneider, Jacob Hicks (<i>Psalm</i>)
PowerPoint	Shelley Koch	Paul Fox	Shelley Koch	Kelsey Schneider
Communion	Tina Waltz	N/A	Meddy Ruck	N/A
Servers	Barb Srisongkham		Karl Schlegel	
Song Leader(s)	Julie Miars Golden	Kristin Doll	Jen Garber	Lyla Wilder, Kaylee Dickey, Addi Fisher, Gabby Raney, Kenzie Schneider, Kerrigan Lenhart, Evelyn Oen
Fellowship	Elaine Hawkins	Karen Lenhart	Amanda & Ashley Schmerge	Jen Garber
Sound Tech	Nelson Golden	Chad Doll	Chris Sorensen	Blake Rogers, Trent Lisi
Video Tech	Rich Garber	Dustin Jeanneret	Elaine Hawkins	Dustin Jeanneret
5:00pm Saturday	4-Jan	11-Jan	18-Jan	25-Jan
Greeter	Sandy Davis	Laura Heitz	Marguerite Wallen	Sue Jeanneret
Bulletins	Dianne Knipp	Carol Jeanneret	Connie Rompilla	Sandy Swaney
Reader	Melissa Grunden	Laura Heitz	Alex Rompilla	Mark Swaney
Communion	Betty Elsass	Carol Jeanneret	Dianne Knipp	Mark Swaney
Servers	Marguerite Wallen	Sue Jeanneret	Alex Rompilla	Sandy Swaney
Singer	Carol Pretorius	Carol Pretorius	Carol Pretorius	Carol Pretorius
Musician	Melissa Grunden	Melissa Grunden	Melissa Grunden	Melissa Grunden
Altar Guild for the Month of January: Paula, Amanda, and Ashley Schmerge				