

St. Mark's Lutheran Church  
Messenger  
Steven Neal, Pastor  
308-750-1318, church phone  
402-705-1521, personal phone  
February 2019



1306 Howard Ave, St. Paul, NE 68873  
[www.stmarkschurchsp.org](http://www.stmarkschurchsp.org)

### A Valentine's Day Message

**“4 Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. 5 It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. 6 Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. 7 It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. 8 Love never fails.” (1 Corinthians 13:4-8)**

Most of us are very familiar with these verses. They are mainstays at weddings and offer a poetic picture of love. They describe love in its action, that is, what it does and how it is practiced. “Love never fails” is the true heart of the passage.

But we do fail. Our actions fail, our wills fail, our hearts fail. Does this mean we don't love? I don't believe so. Watch parents cheer for their children. See people arrive and depart in airports. Hear the grief of a spouse when their partner is lost. Certainly we love.

What then about love never failing? I invite you to look at the verses surrounding this poetry, verses 1-3 and 8-13. Paul writes about gifts from God, the gift of glossolalia, speaking in tongues, and the gift of prophecy. He even mentions giving to others. Likewise, love is a gift. And though one might have been given other gifts, without love, we are nothing. The love that God has for you and gives you to is a gift that never fails. We are not God. Our love, when considered as actions, is not perfect and will fail. But we try as hard as we can and we pray for God to empower and encourage us to reflect God's most perfect love towards others.

Paul goes on to say that we only know and do these, prophecy and other gifts, in part, and that “when completeness comes, what is in part disappears.” What Paul is getting at in his kind of round-about way is that one day completeness will come, and when that day comes what will remain is faith, hope, and love, and the greatest of these is love. Love is the greatest, most perfect gift. God has loved you since before you were known by anyone else, and that gift will always remain.

Pastor Steven



## Report of the Church Council

St. Mark's Church Council Minutes January 9, 2019

### CHURCH SECRETARY

Pat Hansen  
308-336-3246

### COUNCIL PRESIDENT

Michael Bockmann  
308-750-5222

### COUNCIL VICE PRESIDENT

Kevin Jorgensen  
308-754-8065

### COUNCIL SECRETARY

Val Killinger  
308-750-7074

### CHURCH TREASURER

Barb Stefanowicz  
308-750-4398

### FINANCIAL SECRETARY

Janet Elstermeier  
308-754-5506

### STEWARDSHIP CHAIRPERSON

Judy Johnson  
308-754-4103

### WELCA PRESIDENT

Barb Lepper  
308-750-0931

### PARISH EDUCATION

Stephanie Neal  
308-750-

Brenda Wells  
754-750-9333

### CARE COMMITTEE

Linda McKnight  
308-754-4490

Pam Switzer  
308-754-4461

Ruthie Jacobsen  
308-754-5407

Margie Townsend  
308-754-4612

Lynn Larson  
308-754-4882

Emily McCray  
308-754-4159

### TRUSTEES

Gary Goldfish  
308-754-6042

Tom Schacht  
308-754-5536

Don Nelson  
307-247-8121

Daryl Anderson  
308-754-4797

Members of the Church Council met at 6:30 p.m. for a bible study before the monthly council meeting.

Those present included: Pastor Steven Neal, President Michael Bockmann, Vice President Kevin Jorgensen, Secretary Janet Elstermeier, Treasurer Barb Stefanowicz, Stewardship Judy Johnson, Financial Secretary Erik Williams, Trustee Pam Wells, Parish Education Linda Schacht, Care Committee Ruthie Jacobsen and WELCA Barb Lepper.

President Mike called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m.

Pastor Steven opened the meeting with prayer.

Pastor asked about an omission in the December minutes. We had had a discussion of the format of Pastor's monthly activity report, and some suggestions were given to Pastor by members of the church council. This format will be started in January of 2019. A motion was made, seconded and carried (M-S-C) to accept the minutes of the December Council Meeting, as corrected.

The Treasurer presented the financial report for the month of December, 2018. It was M-S-C to accept this report. Barb then explained that there was an error in the proposed budget for 2019. She explained the problem and it was corrected. This budget will be explained at the annual meeting and the congregation will vote on this proposed budget.

**PASTOR STEVEN'S REPORT:** He explained the way he plans to record his activity report. The Howard County ministerial association is planning to extend invitations to other ministers in nearby counties to join their group. He said the local food pantry is separating itself from the ministerial association, apparently to improve financial opportunities. Pastor reminded any council members that if they should have a report for the annual report, to get it turned in to Pat Hansen by January 12th so that it can be printed. Pastor then gave the council members many important items for our calendar. January 13th we will receive 9 new members to the St. Mark's family, with a potluck meal to follow. Jan. 16th the Bible Study "Bad Girls of the Bible" will resume. Jan. 17th Pastor will attend a meeting of the synod "Outreach Table." He will participate via his computer instead of travelling to Omaha. Jan. 19th is the WELCA Retreat at St. Paul's in Grand Island.

Pastor will lead the devotions for that retreat. Jan. 20th he will install the officers of WELCA. Jan. 26th there will be a Synod Training in Lincoln. (No services that Saturday evening.) Sunday, Jan. 27th Annual Meeting after worship with a potluck meal to follow. Feb. 2nd "Hope in the Heartland" will be held in Holdrege, from 10 am to 4:30 pm. All Council members are encouraged to attend, as this meeting is especially for those congregations of 100, or fewer members. Feb. 6th is the St. Mark's Soup Supper, from 5-7 pm. We will need many volunteers to help with the soup and bake sale. Feb. 16th there is a fund raiser at the Civic Center for GCA Days which is held in July. Pastor is serving on the GCA Committee and hopes that many will attend. We are planning to offer babysitting at the church for those couples with children that would like to attend the activities uptown. The Confirmation Class will be assisting others in the babysitting, with funds raised being used to send the class to confirmation camp. All volunteers to help with the babysitting will be appreciated. The hours will be 6pm to 11 or 12 pm. Shorter shifts would be scheduled. March 6th is Ash Wednesday and services will be held at 6:30 pm. Lenten Services will follow each Wed. during lent and there will be a meal at 5:00 pm each Wed. March 13th, 20th, 27th, April 3rd and 10th. Holy Week services will be held April 18, 19, 20 and Easter is the 21st. May 5th is Graduation and May 12th is Mother's Day. May 19th will be the Graduation at Wartburg Seminary. Pastor and his family plan to take vacation May 15-22 so that they can attend the graduation at Wartburg and visit with friends there.

### **COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

**TRUSTEES:** The Christmas tree and decorations in the sanctuary have been put away as well as the outside nativity set. A gentleman was here to complete an Energy Audit of the church as well as the parsonage. When the written report arrives Pastor will meet with all of the Trustees to determine what we need to do, to make things more efficient. Pastor also would like to do a 'walk through' at the parsonage with the Trustees.

**CARE COMMITTEE:** Ruthie reported that they are planning on something special for the congregation to participate with, during Lent. They will let us know soon.

**STEWARDSHIP REPORT:** Judy Johnson reported: December fifth Sunday offering was collected for ELCA Good Gifts. A reminder was placed in the newsletter for members to consider taking a step up in their giving with the new year. The Stewardship Committee will resume meeting in January. Judy also reported that she will be packing the makings of 156 pairs of denim shoes and shipping them this week.



**WELCA:** Barb Lepper is the new President of WELCA and she reported that the Soup Supper is being planned for Wednesday, February 6th. They look forward to everyone assisting with the soup and other things for the meal, as well as items for the Bake Sale. The women will also be hosting the potluck meals this month, on the 13th and the 27th of January.

**PARISH EDUCATION:** Linda Schacht reported that the Sunday school / Midweek school children presented their Christmas program during worship on December 16, 2018. We also decorated a tree at the Civic Center for the Fantasy of Trees event with the midweek / Sunday School children making ornaments for the tree. Sunday School continues for both children and adults. Confirmation is held most Wednesday evenings for 3 confirmation students. Midweek / Sunday School will begin again on 1/9/19. We continue to use the Rotational program and will be studying the "Prodigal Son" for the next 6 weeks. Wonderful assistance for midweek and the Christmas program was given by Janet Elstermeier, Carol Leth, Linda McKnight and Margie Townsend. Pastor Steven directs/sponsors the youth/teen group. Lois and Esther women circles meet each month. Christy Nelson is leading a Bible Study; "Bad Girls of the Bible". We continue to study, learn and sing. Linda is also asking for volunteer SS teachers.

**OLD BUSINESS:** The new vinyl sign was made by Tonya and Erik and was just hung tonight, by the spruce tree. It looks very nice. Erik reported that he is working on a wooden frame that the signs will be fastened to, and they won't be blown around and ruined. The new microphone that Pastor wears for services has been received. It is working well and will be paid for with memorial money. We do have 3 of the devices that members can use to allow them to hear the Pastor better, during worship services. We discussed replacing them, but it is felt that they are working OK now. Everyone needs to remember to turn them off after they have been used. There are usually extra batteries available if needed. The hole has been cut and the metal frame inserted in the wall, for the heater in Pastor's office. It is a heat pump and will be used for heating and cooling the office. Bryan Robinson will install it and Gene Killinger will install the electricity.

**NEW BUSINESS:** At the last Council meeting a vote was taken to accept the updated Constitution for St. Mark's. Pastor will explain the updates at the Annual Meeting and the congregation will need to vote to accept it. A discussion was held about the snow removal after the last snowstorm. It was felt that we did not receive a completed job. Some of the sidewalks were not scooped at all and other sidewalks still had 2+ inches of snow on them. Also, the pile of snow from the parking lot was pushed just north of the sidewalk on the empty lot. We've had experience with that before. As the snow melts, it runs onto the sidewalk and refreezes, making it almost impossible to walk on that sidewalk. Frank Beck pushed the pile further north, so that should help. There are several groups of students from the school that have to walk from the school to the former Nursing Home, for the after school program, so our sidewalks need to be cleaned well. Frank Beck had been hired to do our snow removal so the Trustees will talk to him and relay our concerns. It may be necessary to have one person do the sidewalks and another person to clean the parking areas. Pam Wells will make some phone calls and get this straightened out.

The council meeting was adjourned at 8:35 p.m. and we closed by praying the Lord's Prayer in unison.

Respectfully submitted,

Janet Elstermeier, Council Secretary

President Michael Bockmann

### OCTOBER STEWARDSHIP REPORT

***To model and encourage a life of faithfully sharing the Gospel through stewarding God's gifts of our time, talent and treasure.***

2018 was a busy year for the Stewardship Committee. I so appreciate Les Bockmann, Robin Elstermeier, Barb Lepper, Christy Nelson and Jan Anderson joining Pastor and me on the committee.

Their ideas and hearts for stewardship have been impressive. We developed a mission statement: "To model and encourage a life of faithfully sharing the Gospel through stewarding God's gifts of our time, talent and treasure" and use this to guide our committee.

Together we are sponsoring a child in Indonesia through Compassion International and encourage others to do the same.

We provide suggestions to the council for 5th Sunday offerings. In 2018, \$790 was raised for the St. Mark's Outreach fund to help provide utilities assistance to those in need in our community and \$1460 was donated for the Sole Hope Project. Together with the kit purchased, we were able to send 156 pairs of shoe pieces to help our brothers and sisters in Uganda. In addition \$385 was collected for the After School Program and \$490 was donated for ELCA Good Gifts. These are above and beyond our members weekly giving. Thank you for generous hearts!



To relay the message of St. Mark's impact in the world, we placed the "Walking with God" footprints in the fellowship hall and in the back portion the sanctuary showing the many ways we reach out to share the Good News. We have presented Mission Minutes at worship with various members telling why they do what they do to serve. We have read Stewardship Snippets during the offering as reminders of our many blessings. We have presented 30 second "because of you" event based thank-you's during worship to announce what we have accomplished together. We have placed special stewardship articles written by Reverend Bob Blezard, Assistant to the Bishop in the monthly newsletter in addition to our local stewardship articles. Pastor has signed and included thank you's with the giving statements. This past fall, we enlightened members through the "Because of God's Great Mercy" stewardship emphasis and challenged everyone to "take a step up" in their giving for 2019. We have begun to develop a yearly Stewardship calendar to keep us on track and we will work with the Care Committee to welcome visitors and new members. We will be meeting soon to begin our work and plan for 2019. Thanks to all of you for being good and faithful stewards!  
Judy Johnson, Stewardship Chair

### Care Committee

**PLEASE NOTE:** A new policy will begin January 1<sup>st</sup>. Pastor will read the entire prayer list on the first Sunday of every month. The rest of the month he will pray "for those who are home bound and on our prayer list".

**PLEASE NOTE:** Remember to issue a new prayer card – provided in pews- every 30 days for those you wish to be on or remain on the prayer list.

Ruthie Jacobsen.

### WELCA

Here we are at the beginning of a new year and our ladies here at St. Marks have hit the ground running. We "hosted" two potlucks in January. One honoring our new members on January 13<sup>th</sup> and one after the annual meeting on January 27<sup>th</sup>.

On January 20<sup>th</sup> the new WELCA Board was installed by Pastor Steven. The Board members for 2019 are President, Barb Lepper, Vice President Pam Switzer, Secretary Margie Townsend, Treasurer Barb Stefanowicz, Stewardship co-chairman Linda McKnight and Kaye Tomlinson and Secretary of Education Val Killinger. We still need to ladies to serve on the nominating committee. Pam, as Vice President, will chair the nominating committee but we need two more ladies on that committee. If you would be willing to serve, please let me know.

Remember the Sole Hope Project? A lot of our ladies (and a few husbands) did a lot of cutting of denim material and plastic for these shoes. Judy Johnson did a ton of work getting the material and plastic together and afterwards getting the shoes ready to mail. In January Judy sent off 156 pair of shoes to Lutheran World Relief. So, there will be a lot of kids in Uganda running around with shoes lovingly made by the members of St. Marks. Great job everyone!!

Esther Circle will meet on Monday, February 4<sup>th</sup> at 9:30a.m. at the Sweet Shop with Ellamae as leader.

Lois Circle will meet on Monday, February 11<sup>th</sup> at 4:30 p.m. (that's right 4:30!) at Barb Leppers with Linda Schacht as lesson leader.

Our annual soup supper and bake sale will be Wednesday, February 6<sup>th</sup> and we will be serving from 5:00 to 7:00. We will be meeting on Monday, the 4<sup>th</sup> at 9:30 to make the soup. We will be making three roasters each of chicken noodle and beef vegetable and two roasters of chili. We can use all the help we can get, both in making the soup and working at the soup supper itself. Our ladies will be asked to bring desserts and bread for the meal, as well as items for the bake sale. All the proceeds from the soup supper will go to missions, locally and abroad through the church.

On February 16<sup>th</sup> there will be a GCA Days pre-show at the Civic Center. Pastor Steven would like the WELCA ladies, along with the Confirmation class, to provide babysitting that night from 6:00 to 11:30. This will be a fundraiser for the Confirmation class. You will hear more about this closer to the date.

Keep saving your Best Choice UPC code labels and bring them to the church.

Looking ahead: The World Day of Prayer service will be Friday, March 1<sup>st</sup> at St. Peter and Paul Catholic Church.

Ash Wednesday will be March 6<sup>th</sup>.

The Spring Gathering will be Saturday, March 16<sup>th</sup> at Messiah Lutheran Church in Aurora.

Blessings, Barb Lepper



## Stewardship of loving relationships

**Jesus said, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” – Mark 12:31b**  
**Jesus said, “Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.” -- Matthew 5:43b**

Red hearts, roses and chocolates are everywhere, so it must be February – the month of love! There’s certainly nothing wrong with celebrating romance between you and a special someone, or love among family members, or best friends who are always there for one another.

But our inner-circle folks represent only a sliver of the people Jesus calls us to love. And let’s face it: they’re the easy ones to love. Jesus calls us to a higher plane of love; to love everyone. This means not just the people about whom we are ambivalent, but our actual enemies and those who persecute us.

Such love is a tall order, especially today, when hatred and demonization is rampant. Our political, media and social cultures encourage us to demean everybody with whom we disagree or who is different from us. Though it may be impossible to reach Jesus’ ideal, as stewards and disciples of Jesus, we can do better.

- ▯ Turn from hate. It may be too much to love our enemies, but we can start by turning from hatred. When negative feelings arise, refuse to marinate in them. Pray for guidance and strength.
- ▯ Remember that loving your enemy doesn’t mean approving of who they are, what they do, or letting them escape responsibility for their actions. It also does not mean you cannot protect yourself or others from harm.
- ▯ Imagine them as a broken, imperfect child of God (just like you!), who needs God’s love and mercy.
- ▯ Pray for them. Ask God to lead them, guide them, fill their lives with healing. Ask God to give them the kind of loving heart that you are hoping to develop in yourself.

If you do these things consistently, with God’s help you will have transformed your heart, your life and our world.

--Rob Blezard

Copyright © 2019, Rev. Robert Blezard. Reprinted by permission. Pastor Blezard serves as an assistant to the bishop of the Lower Susquehanna Synod and works as content editor for [www.stewardshipoflife.org](http://www.stewardshipoflife.org).



## **FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS**

**1<sup>st</sup>-Sally Meinecke  
DeraLae Klanecky  
Glen Hansen**

**2<sup>nd</sup>-Jack Meinecke**

**5<sup>th</sup>-Lisa Townsend**

**6<sup>th</sup>-Josey Wells**

**8<sup>th</sup>-Ellinor Neal**

**9<sup>th</sup>-Lynn Larsen**

**11<sup>th</sup>-Beau Paro**

**14<sup>th</sup>-Val Killinger**

**16<sup>th</sup>-Willie Powell**

**17<sup>th</sup>-Richard Nielsen**

**18<sup>th</sup>-Donna Jensen**

**21<sup>st</sup>-Shannon Boehle**

**22-Alexander Meinecke**

## **FEBRUARY ANNIVERSARYS**

**13<sup>th</sup>-Chad & Ramona Otto**

**14<sup>th</sup>-Brenda & Chad Wells**

**19<sup>th</sup>-Les & Barb Bockmann**

