



Disciples of Jesus, Connecting Our Community to Christ

Hello St. Mark,

Welcome! Please visit our website to find our Sunday livestream, worship videos, Sunday bulletins, audio bible, personal devotions, calendars and more.

Message from Our Pastor

Disciple Living in 2025

New year. New beginnings. Clean slate. Time to move forward. No turning back. Whichever phrase you prefer at the turn of a calendar year, we have a renewed hope in our future, anticipation of a better tomorrow, and an energy to live the way we dream. This usually manifests in New Year's Resolutions or goal setting. Sadly, we lose our way by February (or sooner). Our hope is shattered, tomorrow looks bleak, and we settle for "skating by" instead of living a full life.



If you follow these letters and participate in worship at St. Mark, 2025 will be different. How? These letters will give practical advice for how to live as a disciple of Christ. Our mission declares we are Disciples of Jesus, Connecting our Community to Christ. A disciple is one who follows a teacher, and a teacher teaches in order for their words to be implemented. Yet, there tends to be a disparity in our lives as Christians in the church and in the world. Therefore, our focus will be on how to live as a disciple of Jesus. First, be assured of the hope you have in Jesus: The Good News that God became human and sacrificed His life so that you may have life. Death has no power over you because Jesus conquered it for you, and on the last day He will come again to raise you and all believers to everlasting life. The turning of a calendar year does not produce true hope. That hope is in Jesus only.

Second, we don't need to anticipate a better tomorrow *because* it's a new year. In Christ, we know the best is yet to come. A new heaven and a new earth, where there will be no more sorrow, sickness, or death. (Revelation 21:4)

Lastly, there is something better than living your dream. It is living how God created you to be. "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them." (Ephesians 2:10) And He doesn't leave you to venture this path alone. "Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, 'This is the way; walk in it.'" (Isaiah 30:21) "The Lord makes firm the steps of the one who delights in him; though he may stumble, he will not fall, for the Lord upholds him with his hand." (Psalm 37:23-24) "But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come." (John 16:13)

This leads us to the question: what are the good works God has prepared beforehand for me to walk in? It's easy to point to the specific things Christians tend to do as an expression of their faith. For example, attend worship, pray regularly, study Scripture, give generously, care for the poor, love our neighbors, etc. However, when St. Paul says "*walk in them*," he means living a certain lifestyle. In other words, it's not about religious activities scattered through an otherwise secular life. Rather, the good works encompass our whole life, all that we do by God's grace for God's purposes.

To go a step further, your whole life is an interconnected series of good works offered to God, reflecting His glory. As the great theologian Winnie-the-Pooh once observed, "Wherever you go, there you are." And Pastor Greg Finke adds, "And wherever you are, Jesus is already working redemptively."

The essence of living as a disciple of Jesus is being who God created you to be. It begins at Psalm 46:10, "Be still and know that I am God," continues with the invite from Jesus as stated in the Gospels, "Come follow me," and concludes on the last day when Jesus returns to fulfill all His promises, which include life everlasting with Him. The next 11 newsletters will feature ways we can practically follow Him in every aspect of our life. God's blessings in this new calendar year!

Pastor Brad Urlaub

President's News

As we begin the new year, Christmas music is no longer played. Although we hear the song "The 12 Days of Christmas" for many weeks before



Christmas, what are the 12 days of Christmas? In the Christian faith, the 12 days of Christmas are known as the period between the birth of Christ and the three wise men's visit to baby Jesus. The 12 days of Christmas begin on December 25 (Christmas) and end on January 6 (Three Kings' Day). There are interesting theories that the lyrics to the song "The Twelve Days of Christmas" contain a hidden message about Christianity. But whether or not you believe the theories, we know that we are still in the Christmas season as we enter the new year.

At St. Mark, we joyfully begin the new year with a new pastor, renovations to the parish house, and a soon to be installed upgrade to the AV in the church that will improve the broadcasting and outreach abilities. Also, in the works are the cleaning up and updating of the St. Mark Facebook page and website. Church Council continues to meet monthly to stay on top of projects and address matters that arise. In December, Council held a meeting of the Voters' Assembly. A summary of that meeting is located in this newsletter. As a new year begins, we often reflect on the previous year as we look ahead to the onset of the new year. At this time, we will each experience our own epiphany of how we can be good stewards of what God has given to us and how as good stewards we can use our time, talents, and treasures to the glory of His name. Some of these opportunities are identified in this newsletter. As Billy Graham included in one his prayers: "We each have our hopes and expectations for the year that is ahead of us - but You alone know what it holds for us, and only You can give us the strength and the wisdom we will need to meet its challenges. So, help us to humbly put our hands into Your hand, and to trust You and to seek Your will for our lives during this coming year."

May you all have a blessed New Year,
Kristen Waterstram-Rich

Voters Assembly Summary: At the December meeting of the Voters' Assembly, Pastor and Sabrina Urlaub and Wendie Schulman joined the voting membership. Pastor opened the meeting with prayer and made opening remarks thanking everyone for the warm welcome they have received. The Trustee update noted that renovations to the Parish House were underway, e.g., installation of LED lighting, installation of new floors. It was also noted that the upgrade to the AV equipment was planned for January. The financial secretary provided an update on the giving over the past year, and the treasurer gave an update on the overall financial state of the church and reviewed the proposed budget. The proposed budget, which had been distributed to members prior to the meeting, was passed unanimously. The Elders report included comments on the end of the Call Committee and that the Elders have met with pastor and will meet with him again soon. Pastor commented that he will be talking with the Elders regarding communion distribution. He explained the meaning of communion and commented that the all-in-one communion packets will no longer be used during worship; Pastor will bring communion to anyone in the pew who is unable to come to the altar. The minutes for the meeting will be sent to members and posted in the Fellowship Hall later.

Opportunities to Serve at St. Mark

"As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace..."

Become engaged by participating in the activities of the church. Examples of roles in which you can be involved throughout the year are provided below.

Choir Member- If you are interested in singing in the choir, contact Monica Smith, church organist.

Church Property Project Participant (Trustee Projects): There are always projects in the queue (inside and outside the church and parish house). If you are interested in helping with different tasks and repairs around the church as needed, contact Jeff Lillie.

Coffee-time Host or Contributor – If you are interested in serving a rotation as host (setting up, helping with beverages, and cleaning up) or providing refreshments for the fellowship time between church and Christian Education time, there is a sign-up sheet in the Fellowship Hall.

Flower Provider - If you are interested in providing floral adornment for the altar, there are many Sundays available for which flowers on the altar are needed. You take the flowers home after worship. If you are interested, please sign up on the chart. If you have any questions regarding the process or price, contact Margie Heiss or Barb Done.

Greeter – If you are interested in providing a warm welcome to those who come to St. Mark to worship on Sunday, consider serving as a greeter. If you have any questions or want to volunteer, contact Barb Done.

Ladies Aid Member – If you are interested in participating in various service projects, helping to organize various collection opportunities, and having fellowship with women of St. Mark, come to the Ladies Aid meetings to learn how you can be involved. If you have any questions, contact Monica Smith, Nancy Connerton, or Georgette Peterson.

Usher - If you are interested in providing a warm welcome to those entering worship and want to participate by collecting the offering and helping to guide communicants to the altar to receive communion, consider serving as an usher. If you have any questions or want to volunteer, contact Chuck Bannister.

Donations

“Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.” 2 Corinthians 9:7 ESV

Below are some of the ways you can donate to St. Mark and the work of the church.

Tithes and Offerings – The work of the church and the carrying out of the mission of St. Mark can only be accomplished by your generous offerings.

St. Pauly Donations – If you are interested in making contributions to the mission of St. Pauly and raising money for the church, please donate **appropriate** items by placing them in an appropriate bag and putting them inside the designated shed at the end the church parking lot. The church earns money for every pound of items donated.

It is very important that you only put items acceptable to St. Pauly in the shed. If you have other items you want donate, please take them elsewhere or dispose of them. We do not take items to donation centers that St. Pauly cannot take and we should not put these items in the St. Mark trash. Thank you for being conscientious about your donations.

Thrivent Donations – If you are a Thrivent member and receive Thrivent Choice dollars, you can direct those dollars to St. Mark.

Honeoye Falls and Mendon Meadow Market Place Receipts – If you shop at Honeoye Falls and Mendon Meadow Market Place, save your receipts and put them in the labeled container on the piano in the narthex. The Marketplace donates a percentage of the receipts to the church.

Devotionals

If you have not already obtained a Portals of Prayers for January - March, please be certain to pick up your copy at the usher stand in the narthex.



Ladies Aid

As we look forward to a new year, here are some highlights of what our Ladies Aid accomplished in 2024:

- We had a card making activity.
- We packed care packages for our college student.
- We sponsored a potluck picnic and ice cream social.
- We sponsored the popular wine/cheese and chocolate extravaganza.
- We had a pound auction with the proceeds going to LWML mites.
- We had our annual luncheon at Flaherty's in September.
- We did mission projects, including collecting items and packing hygiene kits for the House of Mercy as well as for Operation Christmas Child shoeboxes.



It was a fun and busy year. We are beginning to plan for events for next year.

We will be having another planning meeting on **Saturday January 11 at 11am**. Please consider joining in on the fun and fellowship!

January Celebrations



Norma Helm 1/5
 Kenneth Hampson 1/7
 Liza Ward 1/9
 Scott Stranford 1/11
 Jonelle Coyle 1/12
 Nate Hampson 1/13
 Patty Potter 1/22
 Ralph Reimers 1/22
 Sally Hacker 1/23
 Amanda Bendschneider 1/24
 Lori Blythe 1/25

John and Sandi Lehning 1/6

January Calendars

January 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 	2 7pm Choir Practice	3	4
5 8am Worship 10:30am Bible Study	6 Bulletin Items Due	7 Epm Council	8	9 7pm Choir Practice	10	11 11am Ladies Aid
12 8am Worship 10:30am Bible Study	13 Bulletin Items Due	14	15	16 7pm Choir Practice	17	18
19 8am Worship 10:30am Bible Study	20 Bulletin Items Due 	21	22	23 7pm Choir Practice	24	25
26 8am Worship 10:30am Bible Study	27 Bulletin Items Due	28	29	30 7pm Choir Practice	31	

2025 Server Calendar

	January 5	January 12	January 19	January 26	February 2
Elmer	Chuck Bannister	Guenther Heits	Ted Veit	John Lehning	Chuck Bannister
Walters	Georgette Peterson & Scott Stranford	Chuck Bannister & Sally Hacker	Rod Amidon & Deb Bidlo	Peter Lehning & Ted Veit	Guenther & Margaret Heits
Greeter	Barb Done	Sally Hacker	Georgette Peterson	Kristen Waterstram-Rich	Barb Done
Altar Care	Marlene Hampson	Kristen Waterstram-Rich	Margaret Heits	Sharon Flaschetti	Barb Done
Office Help	January 3 Barb Mitchell	January 10 Marlene Hampson	January 17 Sharon Flaschetti	January 24 Kristen Waterstram-Rich	January 31 Barb Mitchell
Scripture Readings	1 Kings 3:4-15	Isaiah 43:1-7	Isaiah 62:1-5	Neh. 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10	1 Sam. 1:23-28
	Eph. 1:3-14	Rom. 6:1-11	1 Cor. 12:1-11	1 Cor. 12:12-31a	Heb. 2:14-18
	Luke 2:40-52	Luke 3:15-22	John 2:1-11	Luke 4:16-30	Luke 2:22-32 (23-40)



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Find us here

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