



ReMARKS, *March 2022*

Lenten Hope

Lent sometimes gets a bad rap. And I get it. There is enough darkness out there in the world, enough brokenness, that a somber Lent is not always something we're jazzed about. The penitential season of Lent can sometimes feel like the thing we have to suffer though to get to the Easter celebration we're really longing for. And self-reflection? Who has the time or the stomach for that?

But what if I told you that, at its core, Lent is all about life? Actually the word "Lent" itself comes from an Old English word for spring, the time when life breaks through the barrenness of winter. And in the life of the Church, Lent has long been a time of preparation for the new life of baptism. Historically, Lent is the time of preparing for new life in Christ. Lent is for preparing the ground of our hearts—doing the weeding, pruning, and clearing necessary to make way for the abundant life of God to flower and to grow. The whole season, and especially Ash Wednesday, calls us to dwell in the truth that everything we depend on apart from God will be insufficient to defeat the darkness and the brokenness. But there is one who can: Jesus, the resurrected Lord who promises to bring us with him through death to new life.



Lent is all about living into that new life in hope. As surely as the daffodils have pushed up again this spring, we will be raised to the new life of God. And Lent calls us to prepare for that life now. With disciplines of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving we reorient ourselves away from the things that cannot save us, and back to the God who does. Lent is an exercise of hope in the resurrection. So as pandemic impacts drag on, as we watch the heartbreak news out of Ukraine, we are bold to believe that this is not the life God intends for the world, and God will not let brokenness have the last word. The last word belongs to God, and it is life.

In that sure hope, I invite you to prepare the soil of your heart for the new life of God this Lent. We'll gather on Wednesday nights at 6:30 this year to sing, pray, and work on that soil. Small groups will gather to read scripture and pray for one another each week. Together we'll work to turn our lives toward that resurrection hope that has not faded across the generations.

Sustained by that hope,

Pastor Matt

The Ihsas Family
St. Mark's Circle of Welcome

“for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me”
Matthew 25 : 35-36

St. Mark's has welcomed the Ihsas family. The Ihsas family arrived in Asheville on February 2, a tired and hungry family of ten. They became our family. By the time we loaded them into three vehicles plus a truck to carry their belongings it was dark. They still had a 45 -minute drive to their new temporary home in Montreat. They were fearful of what they would find in a new place, knowing little English, knowing no one, and not knowing where they would get food nor sleep. They thought we had dropped them off in a forest, far away from people, and according to the caseworker surrounded by bears.



Let me stop here and give you a little background of our family. The Ihsas family was brought here by the Lutheran Services of the Carolinas. The family includes the father, the mother, and 8 children ages 3-16; 6 boys and 2 girls.

They had lived in a major city in Afghanistan. The father was a journalist and a broadcast reporter. He worked with our special forces. Then one day, their whole life was turned upside-down. Abdul was told to bring his immediate family to the base with few belongings. The next day, their home was bombed by the Taliban. They were placed on a plane to Qatar, then sent from there to Italy, and then to Ft. Dix in New Jersey. Six months later, they arrive in Asheville, North Carolina. Within a week after arriving here, the grandfather dies in Afghanistan and the family finds out that the Taliban are still searching for them even though they are in America.

The Ihsas Family
St. Mark's Circle of Welcome Cont.

The oldest son is the only one who speaks English. He had been learning English in school in Afghanistan. He has been continuing his study of English with his teacher in Afghanistan, by studying with him over the phone from around midnight till 2 in the morning. He then helps his family to learn English during the day as well as translating their needs to us. He is an amazing young man.

Hopefully, through the generosity of members of this church, along with families, neighbors, and friends of this church, we are helping to relieve some of their fears and trauma. You have all been unbelievable in helping our family with donations of time, transportation, food, money, gift cards, bikes, clothes, toys, books, home needs, etc. However, **we are just at the beginning of our journey**. They will continue to need our support as they start classes in English, purchasing necessities of daily life, the children going to school, getting a living wage job for the father, transporting the family, and finding a place to call home.

Please keep the Ihsas in your prayers and those helping them to become citizens of America.

“Let mutual love continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it.” Hebrews 13: 1-2

How can You Help?

The Circle of Welcome has enjoyed teaching the family how to shop at the local grocery stores. Thank you for those of you that have donated gift cards as this is a huge blessing. At this time, the Circle of Welcome is asking for *Ingles and Visa gift cards* only as these have been more easily used by the family due to transportation purposes. If you are able to donate a gift card to one of these locations, you can give it to Cindy, Pastor Matt, or bring it to the church office.

If you are interested in volunteering with the family or learning more about how you can get involved, contact Cindy Lauster at 317.435.8405 or cynthialauster@gmail.com.

LSC Housing

Now that the regular weekly arrival of Afghans has wrapped up in our area, Lutheran Services Carolinas (LSC) is focused on finding long-term housing for families and individuals. The rental market is challenging, especially for folks on entry level incomes, but LSC can guarantee rent for the first 6 months. Do you have rental property or know someone who does? Would you consider a below market rental rate for these folks who lost their homes and livelihoods because they supported US efforts in Afghanistan? Any leads can go to Laura Collins at lcollins@lscarolinas.net.

LSC Open House

On Sunday, February 13th LSC held an Open House and celebration of its New Americans Program office in Asheville at St. Mark's. LSC President, Ted Gains as well as other New Americans Program teammates, shared their efforts with the community. Thank you all for being gracious host.



LSC Phone Number

Lutheran Services Carolinas has a new phone number that will make it much easier to reach them on a normal basis. You can also pass this number along to others that might be inquiring about how they can get involved with the Afghan Resettlement program.

Contact Number: 828.404.3253

Visiting with Connie Koiner

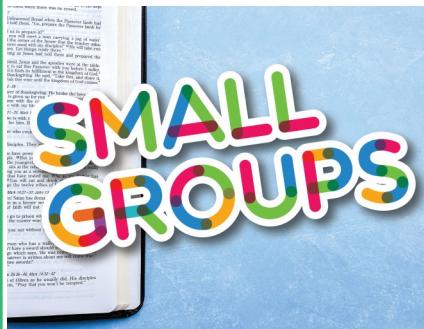
Connie Koiner is in good hands at home as her family is staying with her around the clock. If you would like to help support them, there are two daily shifts available: 12pm-2pm and 2pm-4pm. Please contact Judy McKay who is serving as the family-church liaison for Connie's family. If you would like to drop by for a shorter visit, please also contact Judy so that she can arrange the visitation schedule. Judy can be reached at 803.603.3244.

St. Mark's Faith Formation and Fellowship

For Questions regarding Faith Formation or Discipleship, Contact Deacon Katie

Adult Faith Formation—Lenten Small Groups

Sunday from March 6th-April 10th



During Lent, St. Mark's is having a congregation wide focus on small group ministry. These small groups will be meeting either at church on Sunday during the Faith Formation hour, or on Zoom throughout the week. For about 45 minutes to an hour these Small Groups will read scripture, discuss a weekly topic, get to know one another better through conversation, and pray with one another.

If you are visiting or new to our community and would like to join a small group, meet Deacon Katie in the Sanctuary at 9:45 and she will connect you with a group.

Landmarks

March 6th from 9:45am-10:45am

New to St. Mark's? Want to get to know the people here? Interested in getting involved with what God is doing in this place? LandMARKS is a monthly meeting with Pastor Matt and/or Deacon Katie that helps visitors and new members learn about the ministries of St. Mark's, get to know the staff and members, and ask questions about our community. *Meet us at the bottom of the main staircase at 9:45am to join!*

Lent, Holy Week, and Easter

Midweek Services during Lent

March 9, 16, 23, 30, and April 6 @ 6:30pm



Join us for Holden Evening Prayer at St. Mark's every Wednesday during Lent at 6:30 pm. During the services, congregation members will share personal faith stories related to the theme "From Everlasting to Everlasting." There will be no meal this year. If you are willing to be a greeter or an usher at any of these midweek services, please contact Danielle in the church office.

Holy Week and Easter

Holy Week and Easter is the highpoint of the church year, when we ponder anew the mystery of Jesus' death and resurrection. On Palm Sunday we celebrate his triumphant entry into Jerusalem; on Maundy Thursday we recall his washing of the disciples' feet and institution of Holy Communion; on Good Friday we hold a tenebrae service (service of light and darkness) as we commemorate his crucifixion. Finally on Easter Sunday we celebrate with unbounded joy his victory over death.

Plan now to attend all of these services so that you can get the "full story" of God's great love for us!



Palm Sunday: April 10, 8:30 and 11:00am

Maundy Thursday: April 14, 6:30pm

Good Friday: April 15, 8:00pm

Easter Festival Choir

You are cordially invited to sing in the St. Mark's Festival Choir for Easter! There will be four rehearsals beginning on March 24 at 7:00pm in the sanctuary. No previous experience or music reading ability necessary -- just a desire to have fun while leading God's people in worship on Easter Sunday. Contact Cantor David (cantordavid@stmarkslutheran.net) or the church office (admin@stmarkslutheran.net) for more information or to sign up today!

Easter Lilies

It is time to order the Easter Lilies. Please contact the church office or fill out the tear and share section in the back of your MARKings on Sunday mornings. When purchasing the lilies, please indicate if there is a special dedication to be noted. **Each lily will cost are \$6 this year.** Please note "Lilies" on your check. All orders must be submitted by March 27th.

Council Corner



Greetings from the St Mark's Congregation Council!

Here are some highlights from our February 2022 Zoom meeting:

- We are still awaiting final inspections before opening the CW Avery Learning Center.
- We will resume singing hymns and the liturgy on Transfiguration Sunday, Feb. 27.
- Deacon Katie is working on the curriculum for the small groups, starting in March. Please sign up!
- The National Youth Gathering in Minneapolis this summer has been cancelled, so the youth are considering other activities to do that week. They will help to support the youth in the Afghan family.
- The Council voted to allocate the approximately \$40,000 2021 surplus as follows:
 - \$15,000 to Lutheran Services of Carolinas Be the Light Campaign
 - \$15,000 for St. Mark's debt reduction
 - \$10,000 for a scholarship fund for Living Waters Lutheran Church in Cherokee.
- The 2021 Annual Report has been prepared.
- There will be a special Council meeting on Feb. 28 to begin a discussion of planning for the 2023 St. Mark's Centennial celebration.

Linda Kinsinger, Council President

Covid Update

Covid Update

With the change to the CDC's guidelines on 2/25/22, St. Mark's is updating our Covid protocols. Beginning 3/2/22, masks are no longer required for staff, visitors, or groups in the building during the week. This means that groups who wish to eat together may do so again. For the time being, please continue to wear a mask on Sunday mornings and for all worship services as we strive to remain welcoming to people of varied ages and health conditions.

Christian Action Team (CAT)

January Noisy Bucket

We sent \$1000 to ELCA Disaster Relief to help people who suffered with the tornadoes in the Kentucky area late last year. \$800 of that was from your generous giving to the January Noisy Bucket, and \$200 from Thrivent Choice Dollars. Thank you for your contribution!

Ash Wednesday and Midweek Lenten Services

During our Ash Wednesday and Midweek Lenten Services this year the offering will go to support the Circle of Welcome family that St. Mark's is assisting. The funds will go directly into the church's dedicated account for Afghan Resettlement.

Sandwich Makers Needed

It was almost two years ago that St Marks began a ministry of making sandwiches for the homeless, through the ABCCM Crisis Ministry. During that time, we estimate that our members made around 40,000 sandwiches, and chili. Wow! This need was especially important during this pandemic, and during the cold months of winter.

Unfortunately this need is still there--- so we are asking for your help. We need a few more St Mark's "Sandwich Makers"!

On Tuesday and Wednesday mornings (8:40-9am) we collect St Mark's sandwiches for delivery to ABCCM. Do you have a little extra time each week to make around 30 sandwiches (eg. tuna or chicken salad, Peanut Butter and jelly, ham or turkey and cheese... etc) for this ministry?

Need more information?

Call Dan Dudde at 828-683-9064 (starrdudde@bellsouth.net).

Lutheran Men in Mission

Lutheran Men in Mission

March 12th @ 8am

LMM will now be meeting at the IHOP on Tunnel Rd the second Saturday of each month at 8am.

New officers for 2022: President, Bob Mihara Vice-President, Bryan Short
Treasurer, Al Tenty Secretary, Chuck Kopp

If you have questions about this group, contact Chuck Kopp at 828-595-7606

Racial Healing Team

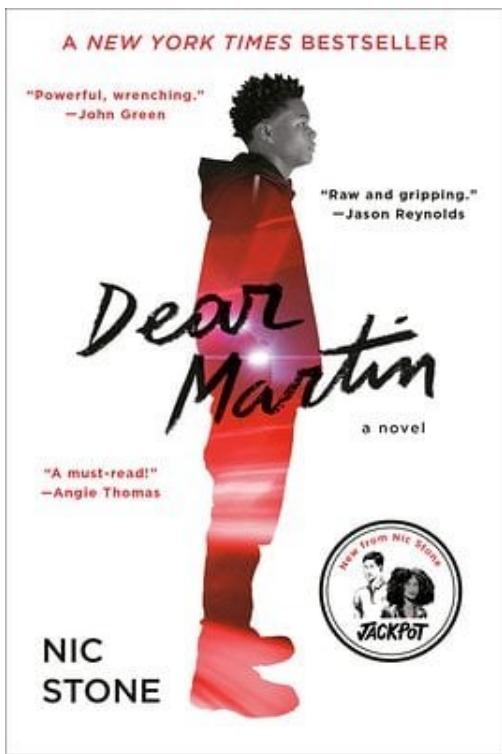
7 Clans Brewing is coming to Asheville



This majority-female indigenous owned brewery will be opening soon at 108 Sweeten Creek Rd. Their beer is currently available in a grocery store near you (Ingle's, for sure!), and is definitely worth a try! Check them out at 7clansbrewing.com.

Dear Martin by Nic Stone

This book has recently been banned by Tuscola High School in Waynesville. It is currently available on bookshop.org and the synopsis reads,



"Justyce McAllister is a good kid, an honor student, and always there to help a friend--but none of that matters to the police officer who just put him in handcuffs. Despite leaving his rough neighborhood behind, he can't escape the scorn of his former peers or the ridicule of his new classmates.

Justyce looks to the teachings of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. for answers. But do they hold up anymore? He starts a journal to Dr. King to find out.

Then comes the day Justyce goes driving with his best friend, Manny, windows rolled down, music turned up--way up, sparking the fury of a white off-duty cop beside them. Words fly. Shots are fired. Justyce and Manny are caught in the crosshairs. In the media fallout, it's Justyce who is under attack."

Folks on St. Mark's Racial Healing Team recommend this book and hope you take the time to find it and read it.

Stewardship

Financial Report

Below you will find January's financial report for both the Operating Fund and the Building Fund. Thank you for your continued contributions.

Financial Report

Operating Fund

subject to change from treasurer's report

Income budgeted

January	YTD
\$42,581	\$42,581

Gifts received

January	YTD
\$68,702	\$68,702

Expenditures

January	YTD
\$37,965	\$37,965

Surplus/(Deficit)

January	YTD
\$30,738	\$30,738

Financial Report

Building Fund

subject to change from treasurer's report

Income budgeted

January	YTD
\$5,351	\$5,351

Gifts received against Pledges

January	YTD
\$4,434	\$4,434

Loan Payments

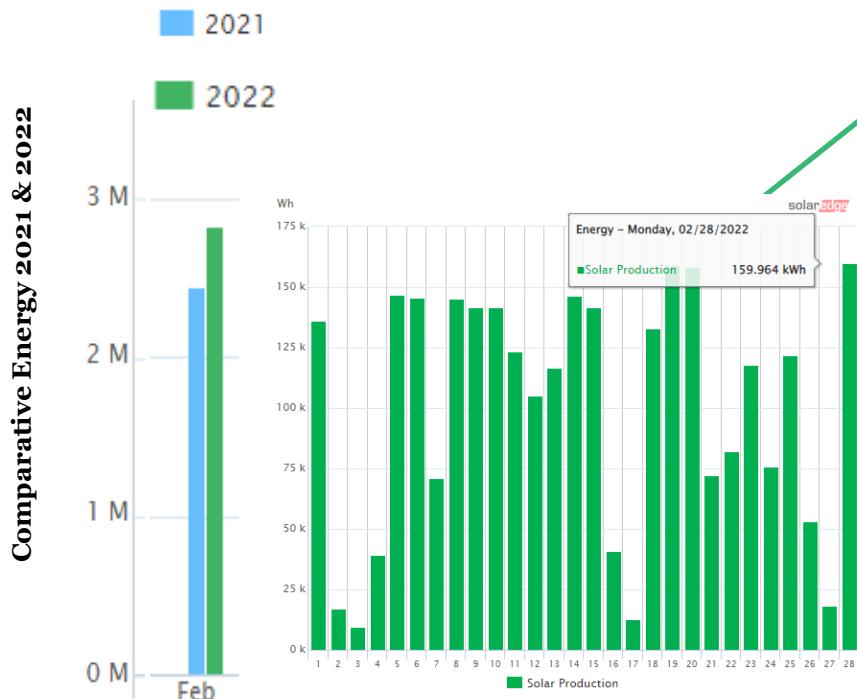
January	YTD
\$5,351	\$5,351

Surplus/(Deficit)

January	YTD
\$(917)	\$(917)

Caring for God's Creation

February Solar Report



February 28 was the top producing day this month @159.964 kWh

Environmental Benefits
From Install date of July 2020

Environmental Benefits



CO2 Emission Saved
101,895.04 lb



Equivalent Trees Planted
769.91

Sunday Calendar

March 6th- The First Sunday in Lent

Scripture Readings:

Deuteronomy 26:1-11; Psalm 91:1-2, 9-16
Romans 10:8b-13; Luke 4:1-13

8:30am.....Worship
9:45am.....Faith Formation
9:45am.....Landmarks
11:00am.....Worship

March 13th - The Second Sunday in Lent

Scripture Readings:

Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18; Psalm 27
Philippians 3:17--4:1; Luke 13:31-35

8:30am.....Worship
9:45am.....Faith Formation
11:00am.....Worship
12:30pm.....Youth Group

March 20th - The Third Sunday in Lent

Scripture Readings:

Isaiah 55:1-9; Psalm 63:1-8
1 Corinthians 10:1-13; Luke 13:1-9

8:30am.....Worship
9:45am.....Faith Formation
11:00am.....Worship

March 27th - The Fourth Sunday in Lent

Scripture Readings:

Joshua 5:9-12; Psalm 32
2 Corinthians 5:16-21; Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32

8:30am.....Worship
9:45am.....Faith Formation
11:00am.....Worship
12:30pm.....Youth Group

Midweek Lenten Service @ 6:30pm

March 9th - Holden Evening Prayer
March 16th - Holden Evening Prayer
March 23rd - Holden Evening Prayer
March 30th - Holden Evening Prayer
April 6th - Holden Evening Prayer

Birthdays

March 1	Carol Carlson, Beth Korb, Tim Owen
March 4	Alice Silver
March 7	Al Morgan, David Puthoff, Amelia Frisella
March 8	Charles Rector, Julia Rhodes
March 9	Diane Hughes
March 10	Matt Patton
March 12	Tracy Schmidt
March 13	Madeline Lawrence, Patricia Bumby, Patricia Kaufman
March 14	Erick Smith
March 16	Devika Penland
March 18	Roseanne Doane, Ali Schuetze, Miles Webb, Cindy Lauster
March 19	Jim Bassler
March 24	Susan Denne
March 25	Dorrit Matson, Gwen Messer, Scottie Miller
March 26	Dan Dudde, Wolfie Otto, Becky Sachsenmaier
March 28	Norm Richards, Christian Engelhardt
March 31	Louise Noland

Anniversaries

March 9	Walter & Carolyn Hitch
March 14	Bob & Katherine Laveck
March 15	David & Karen Puthoff

Worship Assistant Schedule

The Worship Assistant Schedule for March has been published. If you have a conflict, please first try to find your own replacement and then communicate this change with the church office. This way we will be prepared for worship on Sunday mornings. If you are unable to find a substitute, please contact Danielle and she will be happy to help you!

There are still a few positions available (marked TBD). If you are willing to volunteer please let Danielle know and she will update the serving schedule.

Worship Assistant Schedule	Date	March 6th	March 13th	March 20th	March 27th
	Greeters	8:30am (1)Dan Duddle (2) Mary Duddle 11am (1)Alice Silver (2)TBD	8:30am (1) Henry Ulrichs (2) Barbara Ulrichs 11am (1) Cindy Lauster (2) Bob Mihara	8:30am (1)J.D Slater (2)Linda Kinsinger 11am (1)Eric Van Tassel (2)Susan Van Tassel	8:30am (1)Tom Stewart (2)Brenda Stewart 11am (1) Cindy Lauster (2) Bob Mihara
	Usher	8:30am (1)Carolyn Bradley (2)Mike Bradley 11am (1) Katie Rivers (2)TBD	8:30am (1)Tom Stewart (2)Brenda Stewart 11am (1)Alice Silver (2)Katie Rivers	8:30am (1)Ronnie Shoe (2)Ken Clark 11am (1) Jason Jones (2)Josh Kersey	8:30am (1)Ken Lane (2)Ken Clark 11am (1) Scott Baumann (2) Anne Blackwell
	Altar Guild	8:30am Ken Clark 11am Paula Lindsay	8:30am Amy Zellers 11am Bonnie Richards	8:30am Debbie Layne 11am Donna Turnbaugh	8:30am Amy Zellers 11am Cindi Fridd
	Crucifer	11am Paula Bradt	11am Christian Wikoff	11am Paula Bradt	11am Eileen Cram & Erick Smith
	Acolyte	8:30am Lila Niedenthal 11am Bonnie Richards	8:30am Isa Slater 11am Eileen Cram	8:30am Liza Volk 11am Anne Blackwell	8:30am Eleanor Schreck 11am Bonnie Richards
	Assisting Minister	8:30am Amy Zellers 11am Randy Warren	8:30am Katie Rivers 11am TBD	8:30am Amy Zellers 11am Randy Warren	8:30am Katie Rivers 11am Dave Epley
	Reader	8:30am Dan Duddle 11am Eileen Cram	8:30am Barbara Ulrichs 11am Bonnie Richards	8:30am Diane Hughes 11am Donna Turnbaugh	8:30am Linda Kinsinger 11am Natalie Haynes
	Communion Assistant	8:30am Diane Hughes 11am Vickie Hauser	8:30am Connie Chaplin 11am Anne Blackwell	8:30am Linda Kinsinger 11am Susan Van Tassel	8:30am Mary Anne Allwein 11am Eileen Cram
	Live Stream	11am Bob Mihara	11am Trey Doss	11am Gloria Sainio	11am Cord Doss

St. Mark's Lutheran Church

*10 N. Liberty Street
Asheville, NC 28801*



Staff

Pastor:

Reverend Matthew Smith

Director of Discipleship & Faith Formation:

Deacon Katie Rivers

Cantor:

David Anderson

Parish Administrator:

Danielle James

Pastor of Caring Ministries:

Reverend Linda McHenry

Facilities Manager:

Steve Henry

Our Vision:

Making disciples by loving Christ, growing in faith, serving all people

Our Mission:

Transforming lives through God's grace as an inclusive, intergenerational congregation through Worship, Outreach, Learning and Fellowship

Contact Information

Physical and Mailing Address:

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828-253-0043

E-mail:

admin@stmarkslutheran.net

Website:

www.stmarkslutheran.net

Office Hours:

Monday—Thursday 8:30am-4:30pm

Friday 8:30am-12:30pm