



St. Mark Lutheran Church

CrossBeams

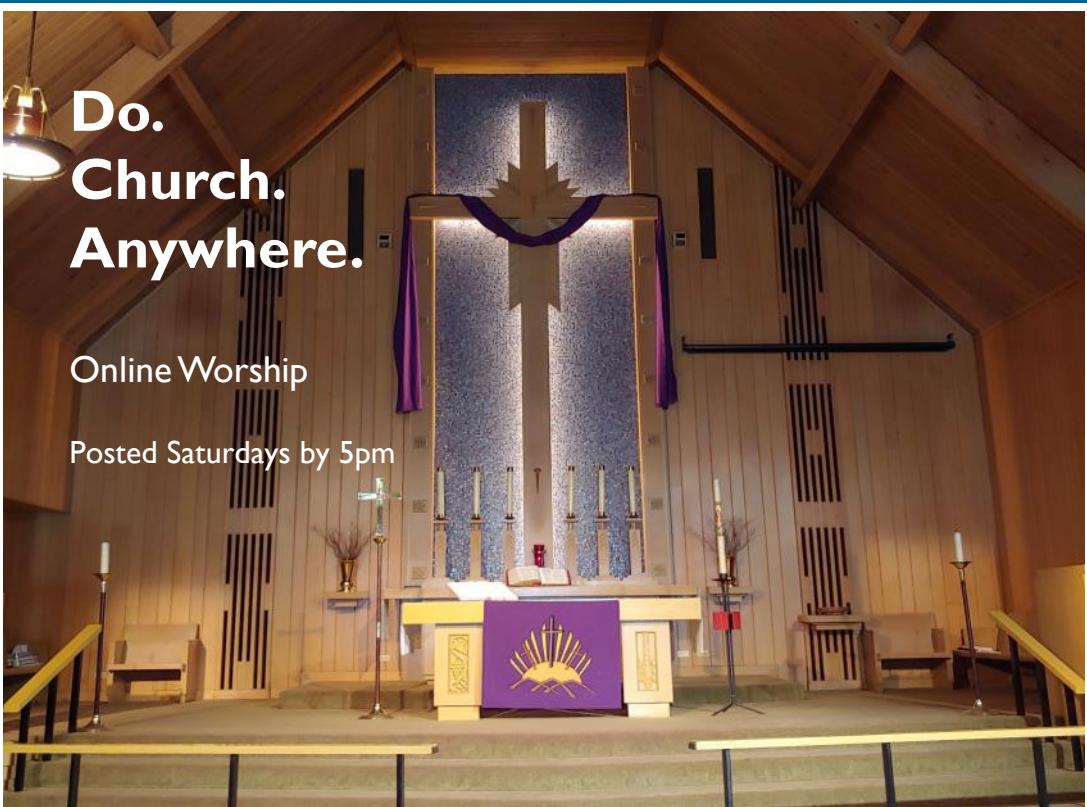
A publication of St. Mark Lutheran Church, Mount Prospect, Illinois

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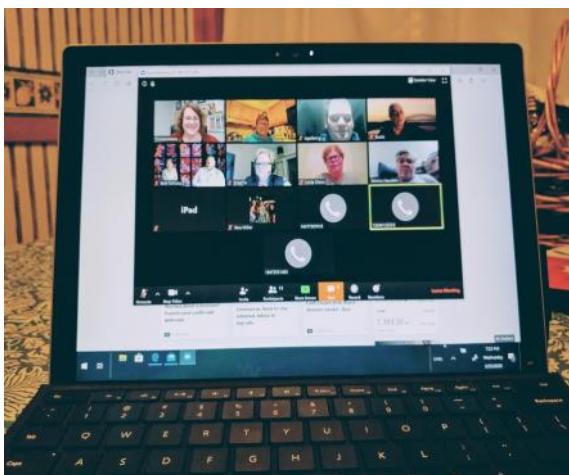
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Worship online with us. Visit our Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/StMarkLutheranIL/> as well as our YouTube Channel <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC7y01lbwvkQPTMwRALoFVHQ?app=desktop>.



Dessert Church: We've shifted our Midweek Lenten Lunch and Dinner Church to Dessert Church over Zoom. We gather on Wednesdays at 7pm. Watch for your current Enews to receive the meeting link for computers or the phone number to call in by phone. If you are not signed up to receive the Enews, send your email address to the church office at stmarkmp@stmarkmp.org.

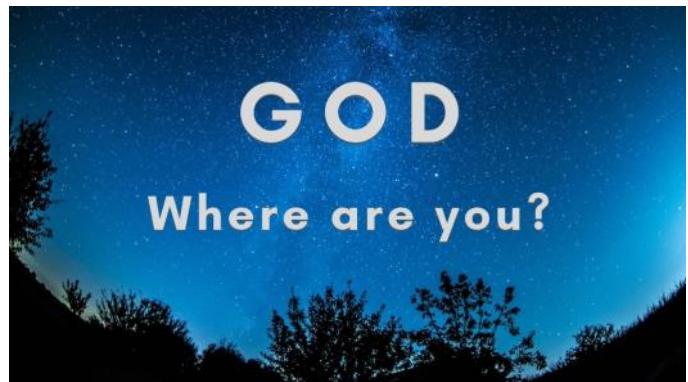


Thoughts in the midst of a pandemic

As I write this it is now day 13 of restrictions due to the COVID 19 Pandemic. We've never lived in a time of Pandemic. I've certainly never pastored in a time of Pandemic. Add this to the list of things they didn't cover in seminary. I don't know about you, but for me, the first week of restrictions was just so bizarre, and stressful and full of too many important and weighty decisions. I found I didn't have words, or thoughts to share about where God is in the midst of this. But, after a day of Sabbath rest at the end of that long first week, I found that I woke up with words, with theological ideas, with comfort and assurance of God even in the midst of this.

I found those words connected to the two gospel texts we find ourselves in the midst of in this time: the story of the man born blind and the story of the raising of Lazarus. First, the most profound question I find in the story of the man born blind in the ninth chapter of the Gospel of John is this question: "Who sinned, this man or his parents that he was born blind?" Might we somewhere within us find ourselves asking "Who sinned, that this pandemic is upon us?" Before we start blaming others, or pointing the finger, I want us to remember that Jesus tells those who ask this question: no one sinned! Friends, this pandemic isn't punishment doled out by God for some sin of a single human or many humans. It isn't a pestilence of punishment from an angry God. God is a God of mercy, a God who works over and over again for healing, wholeness, grace and freedom. While the spread of COVID 19 may have to do with the sins of greed, of ignorance, of willful disobedience, of not caring well for our neighbor as ourselves, I do not see this disease as God's punishment, nor are those who get it being punished by God for something they did. Evil, disease, it simply exists in the world.

So then where is God in all this? We find part of our answer in the story of Lazarus in the eleventh chapter of the Gospel of John, in the interaction between Jesus and Martha and Mary, who are lamenting their brother's death. "Jesus, if you had been here, my brother would not have died," say Martha and Mary. "Jesus, if you are here with us, this pandemic would not be happening," we are tempted to say. In other words, "God where are you?" But Jesus is here, just like he was there with Martha and Mary in their grief. Jesus didn't prevent it from happening, but he met Mary and Martha there in their despair. And he wept with them, and for them, and for Lazarus. Jesus meets us in our grief, our sorrow, over the things we've already lost, and the things we may still lose, our health, our life, the health and life of loved ones. Jesus meets us there, and weeps with us. In the midst of all that is happening, when we are weeping, Jesus is weeping with us. That is where God is in this.



And then, we watch in that story of Lazarus as Jesus deeply moved, calls to the dead Lazarus: "Come out! Unbind him!" Jesus weeps with us and then calls us out of our tombs, out of our bound states to Come out! Rise up! Be unbound! Which is to say, even in the midst of this pandemic we are called to be people of the resurrection. We are called to live new life even in the midst of death, fear, illness, bewilderment. We are called to hear God's voice call us out of the tombs we find ourselves in, and follow that call to live. Even in these difficult times, resurrection, new life, is still all around. People are

Thoughts in the midst of a pandemic—Continued

uniting in new ways. People are caring in new ways. People are stopping long enough to watch creation spring forth in new ways. Resurrection is happening.

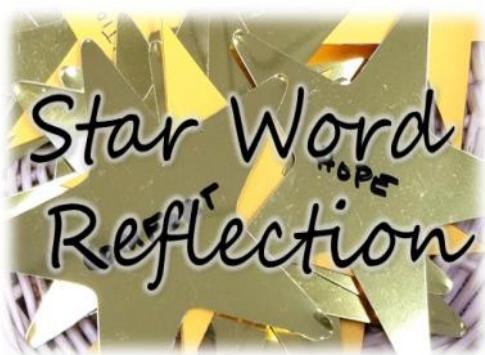
Which leaves me with this, dear people, a heartfelt note to you to say clearly this: God did not cause this pandemic as a punishment for something we or others did. And God is able to pull new life even out of this, just like God pulled new life out of the despair of the cross and the tomb. God weeps with us in our despair, and then gets to work, calling new life forth from us, from this, and calling us to work with God for new life for ourselves and our neighbors. I pray we get to work with God, practicing resurrection, even now, even in this.

Peace in Christ,
Pastor Christie

Thoughts from the Loft

One hymn we may refer to at this time is “Jesus Loves Me”. Its simple text and tune has withstood the test of time. The text was written by two sisters for a novel entitled *Say and Seal*. William Bradbury later read these words and set them to the well-known tune we use today. I am marveled by the comfort of these words and the tune which, I think, give us the certainty that God will take care of us no matter what. Christ’s death and resurrection won for us the Victory over sin and the devil. That’s something to sing about! I encourage each of you to sing “Jesus Loves Me” often, in your own way, as we face all that is ahead of us.

Peace,
Tim



★ Where do you find the hope and good news of the resurrection in/through your star word?*

*In January we received star words as part of our Epiphany Celebration. Each month a new prompt will be included in the newsletter.

Need a star word? Have a reflection you want to share? Contact Pastor Christie.

Holy Week Remotely

St. Mark family, as we progress in this time of pandemic it is looking more and more like we will be worshiping remotely for Holy Week. We have been hard at work dreaming and planning ways to create a meaningful experience of this holy time even though we can't gather in person. Here are some things you need to know:



Holy Week

- **Palm Sunday, April 5:** An online worship focusing on Jesus triumphal entry into Jerusalem will be posted on our YouTube Channel and Facebook Page by Saturday night. If you would like to have palms to waive during "All Glory Laud and Honor" there are three ways to make that happen. 1. Come and pick up a palm on Friday from St. Mark entrance. These will be laid out with rocks to hold them down separately and spread out by someone with face covering and gloves. Please stop by to pick them up and keep social distance from one another as you do. 2. Call the office or email stmarkmp@stmarkmp.org to say that you would like palms to be delivered to you. Also let us know if you are willing to be part of the delivery team. 3. Find a branch or a leaf at your house to waive, or create one from paper. Check this one out: https://illustratedmin.s3.amazonaws.com/weekly-resources/PalmColoring.pdf?fbclid=IwAR0ggzQGxULFU9SbQKiX8xBfitl7d7XJTN254W4gmxey_Q8Qg2bqmPF332I
- The Passion According to Matthew: A dramatic reading will be posted on Facebook and YouTube on Sunday, April 5. Alternately you are encouraged to take time to read the story of the Passion According to Matthew as we enter into Holy Week.
- **Maundy Thursday, April 9:** An at home ritual based worship will be distributed by email and letter early in the week, and a recorded worship to lead you through will also be posted online on Thursday. For this worship you will need a sink, soap, and lotion as well as juice or wine or another loved beverage, and bread, crackers, or another bread like substance.
- **Good Friday, April 10:** A contemplative service that follows the Passion According to John will be posted online on Friday. It will feature readings, songs, and artwork by St. Markers. An electronic copy and paper copy will go out earlier in the week for those without video capability. For this worship you are encouraged to gather 7 candles from around your house (even 7 birthday candles will do).
- **Easter Sunday, April 12:** The first Easter was a quiet one of great joy mixed with great fear. Ours may be similar this year, at least to start. We will post a celebratory service with music, a thanksgiving for baptism, a reading of the Gospel, sermon, a blessing of an Easter Feast, and great joy even in the midst of the fear of this pandemic. Know that when we are all able to gather again in person we will do it all again with the flowers, the trumpet, the feasts and the connected community.

Friends in Christ, it is in this time we need most this holiest of weeks, to remind us of God's transformative purpose, service, suffering, and resurrection. It will be different. And it will be meaningful. You remain ever in our prayers.

Peace,
Pastor Christie



Practicing Resurrection in the midst of a Pandemic

This Easter season we are focusing our attention on how we live resurrection as a spiritual practice in our everyday lives. Here are some ideas for how you can do that in your life today and in the days to come.

- Go for a walk - notice spring awakening around us
- Call an old friend and resurrect your friendship
- Take a deep breath and another and another. Isn't it amazing that we breathe!
- Sing
- Laugh
- Notice God's presence in the mist of your everyday life
- Create something! Bake. Craft. Develop a new idea. Try something new.
- Get up and watch the sunrise - take a nap later.

Join us Sundays for worship (be they online or in person) to hear the stories of the resurrection in people's lives.





PADS and Journeys | The Road Home: Update

Journeys | the Road Home, the umbrella organization through which we run PADS, is moving to housing our guests in hotel rooms in the midst of this pandemic. They need our help. Read below words from Mike Mokate, one of our St. Mark PADS Site Supervisors, and consider how you can help.

All -

Please review this note and pass it to all of the many people who support the PADS program at St. Mark and more generally have care and compassion for the homeless in our community during this challenging time.

As you may know, we have made the difficult decision to stop our Monday night PADS shelter program for the remainder of the season in order to comply with CDC guidelines and protect our many volunteers. Most of the other churches in this area have made the same decision. This leaves our homeless guests without daily shelter and perhaps even more vulnerable to the COVID-19 virus.

In order to address this need, Journeys (the umbrella organization under which all of the local PADS sites operate) has developed a short term plan to house the homeless in local motels. They have received a generous donation from the Clerics at St. Viator in order to begin this program. This initial donation will allow Journeys to shelter 60 guests for a three week period. Unfortunately, there are usually about 100 people in the program (currently including several families) and the need is likely to go beyond three weeks.

Hence, Journeys is seeking some additional funding.

Many of the PADS program sites, including St Mark, will be making contributions to this fund.

If you would like to make a personal contribution to this fund, the best approach is:

- Visit the Journeys web site - www.journeystheroadhome.org
- At the top of the page, click on the Get Involved Tab
- Within that tab, choose the Donation form option.

This form provides the option for contributions either by credit card or by check.

If you wish to make donations other than money, please consult the Wish List option (also on the Get Involved Tab) to find out the current pressing needs. Toiletries and clothing are not being accepted at this time.

St. Mark has signed up for Food Donations. Please contact Mike Mokate to donate toward the cost of food or to volunteer help.

If you have any questions, please contact Mike Mokate - mike.mokate56@gmail.com.

Thanks to each of you for your support for the homeless of our communities. Be safe and well.

Thank you
Mike Mokate

(Journeys | The Road Home has posted a COVID-19 Response on the Home page of their website)
www.journeystheroadhome.org



Prayer Practices for a Pandemic (or anytime)

Deacon David Webb



Labyrinth

During the church's history when "The People of the Way" couldn't go anywhere we utilized prayer walks or labyrinths. They are literally paths with one way in and one way out. They are paths meant to be walked, traced with your fingers, traced with your eyes, or simply just a metaphor of the journey we are all on together with God. In these days you might find some comfort and meaning in going for a circular walk and stopping in the middle to pray and recognize God, walking a labyrinth, tracing a labyrinth with your finger, or just thinking about this journey we are on together with the Creator. Sometimes making your own labyrinth to use or meditate on can be as fruitful as using one.

Here are two links with more ideas and ways for making your own labyrinths:

<https://www.asacredjourney.net/make-your-own-labyrinth/>

<https://www.labyrinthssociety.org/download-a-labyrinth>

Taking a Deep Breath

Just taking a deep breath is one of our most valuable prayers. Every prayer begins with a deep breath in and an exhalation out. It is a reminder of God's presence with us, God's life that sustains us, and the peace Jesus breathed on his disciples then and now (in the giving of the Holy Spirit).

Just taking a breath in and paying attention to the way it feels coming in and then breathing it out and noticing how it feels coming out your nose is as complicated as it has to be. If you want a little more, you can count them, or you can add in one of the other variations.

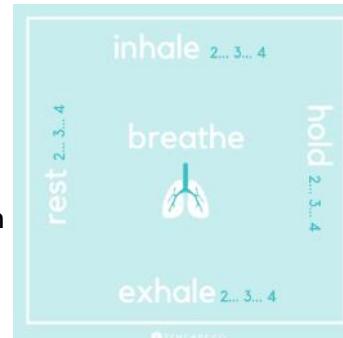
"Jesus Christ, Son of the Living God, have mercy on me."

For two thousand years Christians have used their breath and a sentence of prayer as a way of praying. Take a breath in and follow it and notice how it feels coming in your nose. As you start to breath out say silently in your mind: "Jesus Christ, Son of the Living God, have mercy on me." And repeat as many times as you like.

Square Breathing

Instead of just following your breath in and out you can inhale and count to four, hold your breath for four seconds, exhale and count to four, rest for four seconds then start

again! You can read more here: <https://blog.zencare.co/square-breathing/>





Guest Column

Submit an article for a future issue!
[we may have to edit for space and/or content]

A Reflection on Transformation

By: Julie Wenzel

I have been thinking and reflecting on the word and action of transformation, during the Lent season. As I look back throughout the years, I have gone through many types of transformations in my personal life as well as within my professional life.

At the helm, I mostly thought God was there, in the forefront of guiding me, helping me to make some of those changes as I look back and try to piece some things together. It might not have been “overnight”, but eventually, it all came together one by one through the years and still a work in progress with some. Now, today, I lean on God more and more to help me, guide me, change me and to be the person He created me to be.

The most important and most priceless transformation I have gone through is in regard to my relationship with my dad, and his relationship with me... and I believe ultimately, his relationship with God. Something we both shared together during the time he was sick and eventually his passing.

Many of you knew my dad Wally, as he was a member and part of this church for over 50 years. My mom Marilyn, still attends church every Sunday, same time, same pew.

Dad was very supportive in several ways, in helping where he could at church, as well as his love to share his jokes. He was certainly the very best at telling jokes. He loved to laugh, to have a good time and make others laugh. At dad's Celebration of Life service, Pastor Christie opened up with a joke of dad's which was just perfect and in honor of dad. He was smiling indeed, giving his thumbs up.

When my dad had bypass surgery and then went through all he had for the next 3 months, not being at home, in time, I started noticing an inward change to him. I prayed and prayed and talked to God so much during this time. More than I ever have consistently, in my life. I wanted dad to get well, to feel better, to come home and have a quality life for himself and with my mom and our family. I knew, it was all up to God, He was in control of dad's outcome and life. I was not ready to let go of him, I had things I wanted and needed to say to him, I wanted and needed time with him.

Thankfully, God graciously allowed dad to get better and to heal quite a bit. In time, perhaps a year and a half later, dad experienced some other medical issues which ultimately, God brought him Home.

During this time, I had the strong need to make sure dad and I were all good within our relationship. But, first and foremost, he was right with God. We never discussed religion, our thoughts and our beliefs. I know dad believed in God, he had to. He went to church most every Sunday for over 50 years, was involved with the church within different arenas, but we just never spoke about it.

Once dad got stronger, I came into Mt. Prospect almost every Sunday for roughly 1.5 years to visit he and mom, listen to the Cubs on the radio while sitting outside on the patio, or watch a movie which he selected from his library of VHS tapes and had dinner together. I so enjoyed our time because I was able to now with baby steps, openly talk to him, grow and nourish our relationship and feel closer to dad which I needed.

You see, after his surgery, he was different inwardly, his soft heart being exposed. He was more receptive to talking about how he felt about what he was going through, his thoughts of wanting and needing mom to be taken care of when he was gone, and some discussions here and there about God and other things. He became outwardly somewhat “mushy,” which I loved.

Dad used to say he did not like “mushy” cards for his birthday, he loved the funny cards. I know deep down, he did very much appreciate the “mushy” cards so I continued to give him those types of cards. It was a need I had so he would know how much I loved him, respected him and what a wonderful dad he was. I always wished I could share it all verbally which I could not always, to the extent I had wanted to. I was not comfortable enough, so cards and my actions would have to show him.

During all of this, from the start of his illness, to the end of his life, I prayed so much. I did everything I could to be there

A Reflection on Transformation (continued)

with him and mom, no matter where he was at, how he was feeling, what he was struggling with. God, please give us more time I would ask and pray.

The time came roughly 1 week before he passed, while he was in the hospital. He knew, we all knew his time was coming to journey Home, to be with God and Jesus. This day when it was mom, dad and me in his room at the hospital, I was able to open up and share all I wanted to share with him, to also thank him for the father, the husband he was to mom, and the man that he was. And what he said to me, I will never forget, I will always cherish. Mushy for dad!

You know, when I was staying with mom maybe a week just prior to dad's passing, dad would always call her before he went to bed, from the hospital or nursing home throughout his journey, as long as he could talk. I overheard as I was walking into the kitchen, mom and dad saying the Lord's Prayer over the phone. I was in awe, my heart just was so full and warm with thankfulness, I was all smiles inwardly. Mom told me later, it was dad who wanted to say the Lord's Prayer.

I had been there with mom many, many days and nights throughout the past couple of years staying with her. This was the first time I had heard mom with dad on the other end, praying the Lord's Prayer. Thank you God for your nudging, for your Blessings and Grace.

When dad was moved into Hospice care at the hospital, he was in a very good mood, at total peace. This is what we all wanted for dad. He had been on no medications for pain. I truly believe with all my heart, this was God, who comforted dad with His blanket of Peace and Love.

I remember dad joking with the Hospice nurse when they moved him into his room. The question of the day from his nurse was, how did you stay married for so long, 63 years? Dad said always tell the truth and have the same checking and savings accounts. The nurse wrote that one down!

As we left for the evening, after a very long day full of Blessings, my twin sister Jeanne stayed with dad until he was ready to go to sleep for the night. She was there while dad made his first call to mom and then he forgot to tell mom something about the Lane Tech quarterly luncheon he was in charge of for several years. He made his second call and told Jeanne, this will be his last call to mom. He hung up and both times, he said Amen before he hung up. A true God thing!

Right before Jeanne left for the evening, dad was speaking with "someone". We believe it was Jesus as He promises He will take each one of us Home. Dad said to Jesus, "but I will have to leave my wife and my children" (she does not know if he mentioned grandchildren, she thinks he did, as his voice was softer).

Early the next morning, my phone rang, my heart sank as it was 6:00 a.m. and I knew, dad had passed. We did not expect it this soon, but dad knew.

I know God's Hand, Grace and Will was directing and orchestrating each moment, each day through dad's journey from the very start until the very end. My prayers were answered in every way. I received the time I needed with dad, the talks we had, the sharing of our hearts. I remember him saying at the nursing home when I arrived one day out of many, mom was there with him, sitting in the hallway. My Prodigal daughter. I then knew, he and I were where I wanted us to be. I will never forget that moment.

Once dad passed, I started going to church with mom. I wanted and needed to be there for her, but yet for myself as well. For years I had gone from one church to another, here and there, but for the most part, stayed away. It was not until the journey I had with my dad, that the thirst and hunger to find a church was something I wanted and needed to do. Thankfully, in the later months of me attending St. Mark after dad's passing, where I grew up and was baptized and confirmed, God was pressing my heart to become a member again, which I did. I know I am home now, circling and finding my way back after roughly 40-45 years of being gone from the church.

I thank God for all of His Blessings, for watching over my dad, my mom, providing her with such incredible strength which helped me and our family... knowing what I needed with my dad and in finding my way to our church. I am forever Grateful for all of the pieces which fell into place, in God's timing, His answers to my prayers, creating a woven blanket of much Gratitude, Thankfulness and Peace. Thank you God, Thank you Jesus.



St. Mark Foundation Educational Gift Applications

Are you a graduating high school senior? Are you pursuing further education such as college? If you have not previously received a scholarship or gift from the St. Mark Foundation, we invite you to apply for a St. Mark Foundation Educational Gift. We will award a one-time gift to each student who has graduated high school and is pursuing further education. Applications will be available from the St. Mark website, www.stmarkmp.org, as of Monday, April 13. Applications are due by Monday, May 11, 2020 by 4:00 pm. Completed applications can be emailed to stmarkmp@stmarkmp.org.

Mount Prospect Food Pantry needs help!

Good Morning-



I hope this finds all of you and your families safe and well. I wanted to reach out to see if you can help us spread the word about the gift card donation drive we launched in an effort to assist our food pantry clients. We have increased our distribution frequency and are hoping to start providing families with gift cards, in addition to the packed bags of food, so that they can get perishable items from local grocery stores. I am attaching the link to the website page with information. Stay safe.

<https://www.mountprospect.org/Home/Components/News/News/7931/>

Thanks-

Julie Kane, LCSW
Director of Human Services
Village of Mount Prospect



St. Mark Lutheran Church is now on Amazon Smile!

AmazonSmile is a simple way for you to support St. Mark every time you shop, at no cost to you. When you shop at smile.amazon.com, you'll find the exact same low prices, vast selection and convenient shopping experience as Amazon.com, with the added benefit that Amazon will donate 0.5% of your eligible purchases to St. Mark. So go to smile.amazon.com and follow the prompts to sign-in (your amazon log in) and select a charity (searching for St. Mark Lutheran Church Mt Prospect IL) and then shop as you would normally do on Amazon.com, but now Amazon will donate to St. Mark as well. If you already shop on Amazon.com, switch to Amazon Smile and St. Mark will profit!

Need the current devotional?

If you are in need of the new Christ in Our Home or Portals of Prayer for April, May & June, please contact the church office: by phone—leave a message on the voicemail with your name and which devotional (or both) you would like; or by email at stmarkmp@stmarkmp.org—also with your name and which devotional you would like. We will send it to you. If you are at the Moorings and need a Christ in Our Home, please contact either Nancy Schmidt or Vivian Becker.





2020

All In-Person Worship, Activities and Meeting are canceled until further notice.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4
5 <i>PALM SUNDAY</i> On Line Worship on Facebook or YouTube	6	7	8	<i>Maundy Thursday</i> 9	<i>Good Friday</i> 10	11
12 <i>EASTER SUNDAY</i> On Line Worship on Facebook or YouTube	13	14	15	16	17	18
19 <i>2nd Sunday of Easter</i> On Line Worship on Facebook or YouTube	20	21	22	23	24	25
26 <i>3rd Sunday of Easter</i> On Line Worship on Facebook or YouTube	27	28	29	30		

