



ST. MARK CROSSINGS



St. Mark Lutheran Church

141 Kruger St., Wheeling, WV

304-242-3466

OCTOBER & NOVEMBER 2024

E-Mail: stmarkluth@gmail.com

www.stmarkwheeling.com

OUR MISSION: "LED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT, ST. MARK SEEKS TO GATHER GOD'S PEOPLE AND JOURNEY TOGETHER IN THE TRANSFORMING MISSION OF JESUS CHRIST."

For the Thanksgiving issue of the newsletter, it seems appropriate to write about blessings for which we are thankful. Each time I bow my head in prayer, I always thank God for the blessings He has given to me. These blessings are always at the top of my list: my family, my health, my church, my job, my home, and my pets. When the seasons change, I'm thankful for the beauty I see in nature. When the holidays arrive, I'm grateful for the opportunity to be with friends and family. We, indeed, should be grateful for our blessings, which are often the answer to our most fervent and heartfelt prayers. Here is a question for you though: Have you ever thanked God for "unanswered prayers?"

There is a beautiful country song by Garth Brooks that is entitled "Unanswered Prayers." It became very popular and reached No. 1 on Billboard's charts, so the lyrics must have been meaningful to many listeners. The chorus reads like this: Remember when you're talking to the man upstairs - just because He doesn't answer, doesn't mean He don't care; 'Cause some of God's greatest gifts are unanswered prayers." In this song, Brooks used a situation that actually happened to him. He ran into his high school sweetheart at a football game years after graduation. When he was a young man, Brooks thought he wanted to marry this girl and be with her forever. As he stands there reminiscing about high school, Brooks realizes that God's plan put him with his wife, whom he considers one of his life's most wonderful blessings.

We can all probably relate to this in some way. Maybe you pray for a job change, but don't understand why you don't have an opportunity that is lucrative. Maybe you pray for the health of a loved one, and you don't understand why he/she is not granted relief of an illness. Maybe you pray for financial stability or love or comfort or happiness. As human beings, it is difficult to wait. We have become a society that wants what we want when we want it. However, we shouldn't get mad or harden our heart when prayers aren't answered as quickly as we want them – or even if they are not answered at all. God answers our prayers in His own way, by His own means, and most certainly in His own time.

God has His own reasons for those "unanswered prayers." Maybe like Garth Brooks in his song, God has something better for us. Perhaps He is protecting us from unseen danger. Maybe He is teaching us that patience makes us stronger. Perhaps He is testing our faith, hoping that we learn to get closer to Him and rely on Him.

I think we can all agree that when life is tough, it's easy to lose our faith. We often don't understand why God doesn't help us with the things for which we pray. Why didn't he save our loved one, fix our marriage, help us financially, or solve other problems we might have? Life is not easy in 2024, and it is often a daily struggle to maintain faith in today's world of political divisiveness, a struggling economy, and issues facing our country, such as border control, drug abuse, homelessness, etc. It is difficult not to give up, but this is when we need our faith the most. This reminds me of different people in the Bible who never gave up. Think of Daniel in the lion's den. Or Elizabeth when she wanted a child so badly. God didn't abandon them, and He doesn't abandon us either. Whatever situation has us feeling down, we are not alone. No matter how badly we hurt, how scared we are, or how broken we might feel, we are not alone. Those unanswered questions and unanswered prayers test our faith and can make us stronger if we allow it. God is always looking out for us. We must trust that He knows best.

In Christ's Love, Carmen Heil

CALLING A PASTOR-IMPORTANT MEETING

The Call Committee along with Church Council of St. Mark is holding a congregational meeting on Sunday, October 6, 2024 for the purpose of calling a pastor. The pastor will preach and preside at both worship services on that date. Following each service, a vote will be taken as to offering a call to this pastor. Your attendance is requested.



INTRODUCING OUR NEW PASTOR Meet-and-Greet—There will be a Meet-and-Greet with hors d'oeuvres/finger foods on Saturday, October 5th in the Mendel Fellowship Hall from 4:00 p.m.— 6:00 p.m. Please join us to introduce our pastoral candidate and spouse.

THERE WILL BE A RECEPTION following the services on October 6th to meet and welcome both the **pastoral candidate and spouse**.



PASTOR'S SCHEDULE

October 6th—Pastoral candidate

October 13th—Bishop Dunkin—with Rev. Jason Felici

October 20th—Rev. Dr. John Harris

October 27th—Rev. Dr. John Harris

November 3rd—Bishop Dunkin

November 10th—Rev. Dr. John Harris

November 17th—Rev. Dr. John Harris

November 24th—Rev. Dr. John Harris

December 1st—Bishop Ralph Dunkin

December 8th—Rev. Dr. John Harris

December 15th—Rev. Dr. John Harris

December 22nd—Rev. Dr. John Harris



ALL SAINTS SUNDAY

November 3rd will be “All Saints Sunday.” We will lift up the lives of the saints from our St. Mark faith community who have passed into the Church Triumphant over the past year with a special candle-lighting rite during the Prayers of the Church.

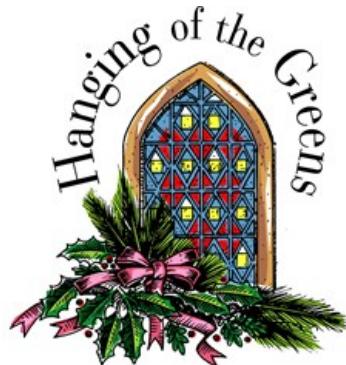
Thanks be to God for their lives and for the eternal life of Christ into which they and we have been joined!



HANGING OF THE GREENS

On Sunday, November 24th, following worship, all are invited to help with decorating and preparing the church building for the Advent and Christmas seasons.

This involves hanging pine and wreaths, putting up trees and lights, and having a most festive time.





WATER COLLECTION—On Sundays July 28 and August 4, the Saints of God at St. Mark's donated \$827 for water to assist Wheeling's Street Moms as they minister to the needs of Wheeling's homeless. We added an additional \$500 from the Pastors Discretionary Fund, creating a grand total of \$1,327 donated. Thank you for your generosity!

APPALACHIAN OUTREACH MINISTRY

October will be the beginning of the Appalachian Outreach Collection Ministry. We will kick off the collection on Sunday, October 6th. The collection will end on Sunday, October 27th. It's been a vital part of our outreach to others for many, many years and it will continue to be. Appalachian Outreach is asking that we collect regular sizes of shampoo, etc. and group all those like items in the same bin.

Boxes are on the church pew by the office.



Suggested items to donate:

shampoo	deodorant - men or women	shaving cream	razors
toothbrush	socks-male or female	toothpaste	combs
hair brushes	cleaning supplies	lotion	notepads
bar of soap	cream rinse	band aids	pencils

Apartment Move-In Kits

The Street Moms ministry of Wheeling has established an Apartment Move-in Kit. Their goal is to help the homeless move from being homeless to having a home and job, and help prevent people from becoming homeless. It is their hope to supply articles for when they move into an apartment. Please consider donating whatever God places in your heart. Financial donations may also be made in the form of checks made out to: Street MOMS (Memo: Move-in kits). This will be an ongoing collection. A list of items is located on the bulletin board.

Some items needed are: pots, pans, skillet, cooking utensils, broom, bucket, dustpan, mop, paper towels, pillows, twin sheets, light bulbs, bath towels, washcloths, soap, toilet brush, cleaning products, shower curtain, trash bags, dish towels, dish soap, etc.

CHRISTMAS FOOD BOXES

We will once again be collecting monetary donations for our “Christmas Food Boxes” this year. We will not be collecting non-perishable food items at the church. Monetary contributions help defray the cost of the grocery boxes which will be paid for by St. Mark's Christmas Food Fund. Please earmark any contributions toward this project Christmas Food Boxes and send to the church office, place in the offering plate, or with your e-giving. If you know of anyone who may need a Christmas Box, please let the office know. Thanks so much!!

Remember those
who are less
fortunate





In Memory of Lois MacDonald
Jim & Phyllis Holeczy



We received notice of Ann Rust's passing on September 16th at the Kensington Palace run by Lutheran Social Services in Columbus, Ohio. Please keep the Rust family in your prayers.

ALTAR FLOWERS

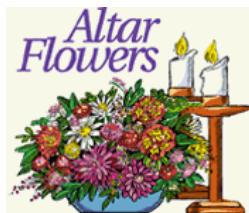
OCTOBER

6—Cathy & Art Schehl in memory of Cathy's parents, Les & Jane Cline on their October birthdays and Anniversary.

13—Bob & Carol Steele in honor of granddaughter, Shaylyn's Birthday (10/12)

20—Open

27—Carl Bowman in honor of Siggie Little's birthday. (11/1)



NOVEMBER

3—Bob & Carol Steele in honor of their 60th Wedding Anniversary (11/7)
John Harmon in loving memory of grandparents John & Marjorie Brown

10—Open

17—Shelley & Chuck Guthoerl in celebration of their 30th Wedding Anniversary.

24—Nancy Spindler in memory of husband, Dick Spindler on his birth date (11/23) & on their Wedding Anniversary (11/29)

CONSECRATION SUNDAY

Rev. Jason Felici, along with Bishop Dunkin, will lead both worship services Sunday, October 13th to begin our focus on Consecration Sunday. Our theme will be: "Because of YOU, St. Mark changes lives." **Consecration Sunday, will be celebrated November 10th** at both services.

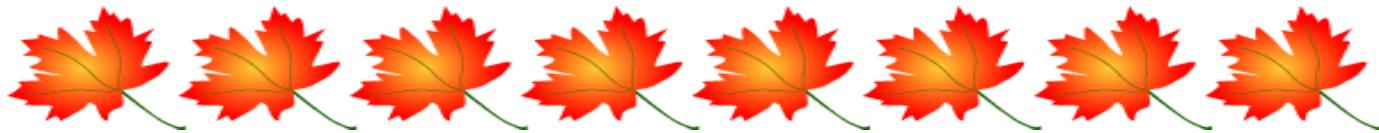
Promise cards will be distributed for all to consecrate their lives in writing.



REFORMATION SUNDAY

"Reformation Sunday" will be celebrated on October 27th. We will lift up the Reformation of the Church...past, present, and future and give thanks for the blessings of God which have sustained the church and its people for 2,000 years.





OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS

- 1—Megan Hoskins
- 2—Lucia Proch, Harley Bennett
- 3—Nancy Braden, Brandon Gast
- 4—Cheryl Stuntz
- 5—Dan Crews
- 6—Grant Parshall, Nicholas Parshall
- 8—Hunter Smith, Emy Auber
- 10—Megan Orosz
- 11—Lynne Ellison
- 12—Rob Schmidt, Randy Schmidt, Shaylyn Hooker
- 16—Loretta Hatcher, Mason Lapp
- 20—Owen Kennedy
- 21—Ken Kriner, Jr., Josh Marshall, Everett Aubrey
- 22—Kelly Ondrik
- 23—Alex White, Gregory Schultz, Brenton Naumann
- 26—Carl Burkland
- 27—Sharon Schweizer, Gina Minch
- 28—Jason Marshall
- 29—Ruth Ann Rinehart, Allison Roesser
- 30—Brittany Hillberry, Whittany Hillberry
- 31—Rob Naumann, Jim Taylor, Arianne Bennett

NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS

- 1—Ann Gyekis (97), Allyson Hatcher Kangisser, Karen Jarrett, Aiden McKenzie, Jaden Robinson
- 4—Preslie Prather
- 5—Jessamen Harsh
- 8—Brett Eberle, Peggy Glaser, Allison White
- 10—Sharon Lewis
- 11—Terrie Baker
- 12—Brian McKenzie
- 13—Doris Trabert
- 16—Laura Ellison Shimenga, Betty Swartz
- 17—Rosaleen Heil
- 18—Shelley Guthoerl
- 19—Monica Hannahs
- 20—Doug Boyd
- 21—Keifer Walton
- 22—Meredith Ferrell, Aryanna Hillberry
- 23—Harry Parshall, Susan West
- 24—Jennifer Braden VanZile, Amanda West
- 25—Elijah Henderson, Daniel Minch
- 27—Jamie Holeczky
- 28—Matt King, Gary Knollinger, Sr.
- 29—Elaine Hatcher Peace, Hannah Hlad
- 30—Carolyn Rose

OCTOBER WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES

- 6—Bruce & Loretta Hatcher
- 9—Mark & Tammy Robinson
- 18—Josh & Kelly Robinson
- 27—Jim & Phyllis Holeczky



*Anniversaries
and Birthdays*

NOVEMBER WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES

- 7—Bob & Carol Steele
- 12—Rob & Connie Schmidt Sean & Susan Nick
- 19—Chuck & Shelley Guthoerl
- 23—Chris & Catherine Bell
- 27—Larry & Jeneane Rumer



FAITH AND FINANCES: A DUET—NOT A DUEL

Published January 23, 2023 by Raymond Bonwell in *Faith+Lead*

There is a strong connection between faith and finances. I was classically trained in economics and spent twelve years in institutional investing and personal financial planning, *then* graduated from seminary and served four pastorates, a seminary, and a national churchwide organization.

When people find out about my backgrounds in faith and finances, often I hear a comment “Isn’t that like oil and water?”—or—“That’s an extreme switch from one perspective to another.” Normally I’ll smile, then comment that Jesus had a lot to say about stewardship, and even more about the Kingdom of Heaven. Instead of seeing faith and finances locked in a “duel,” I see them sharing a “duet.”

Finances inform faith—In congregations, there is a very real temptation to default to what is easily measured—the unholy trinity of income vs. expenses, attendance, and deferred maintenance (colloquially, “budgets, butts, and buildings”). We might say something like this: “If there is a 20% growth in attendance, then we can hope for a 15% increase in giving.” But, what might happen if we said, “For next year, we anticipate a 20% growth in personal prayer, and a 15% deeper individual connection with Christ?” I have seen robust growth when people apply intentionality around faith in the same way they are intentional about finances. Measuring one’s spiritual practices can lead to surprising outcomes. According to Acts 2, the early church focused first on faith: “They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers” (Acts 2:42).

What if we started measuring how much meeting time was spent on faith formation, spiritual growth, and building up the covenant community vs. the time spent on budgets, butts, and buildings (topics addressed by every other non-profit organization)? What if we create space and time for prayer in meetings, and intentionally record how the time was spent? One practice to try is the *Examen* (from the Latin “examination”). The Examen is an intentional examination for the presence of God in one’s day. It is like a spiritual financial statement—not meant to condemn, but to build awareness. What if congregational leaders focused on faith as intentionally as they focus on finances, and gave a larger space for the Holy Spirit to move and lead?

Faith informs finances—This duet also applies to faith-informing finances. What if we studied financial statements the same way we study scripture? Please bear with me—I appreciate that some people’s eyes glaze over when they read numbers (in budgets), and some eyes glaze over when they read Numbers (nestled between Leviticus and Deuteronomy). But what if we used analytical tools to read scripture—specifically the questions “Where is God, and, what is God doing in this?”

This approach with faith-informing finances has led to some fascinating discussions. When presented with this lens, I have heard congregational leaders observe “We say we want families to worship here, and Christian Education is important, yet the nursery assistant has been cut from the budget, and the Christian Education budget line is almost a generous rounding error. Something needs to change—we either need to change what we are saying, or literally put our money where our mouth is!” Where is God, indeed!

A duet, not a duel—It is my hope that faith and finances can harmonize—that church leaders can be as intentional in analyzing what happens when faith is formed as they are in analyzing finances. And tools of faith can also be applied to finances when you ask of both, “Where is God, and what is God doing?” My suggestion is this harmony applies to how Christians view the world—it is not a duel of faith or finances, it is a duet of faith AND finances. Per Psalm 40, what “new song” might you be called to share and sing?

UPCOMING MEETINGS/EVENTS



OCTOBER

Tuesday, Oct. 1st—Resource Management Meeting—6:30 p.m.
Sunday, Oct. 6th—Pastoral Candidate—Congregation Election
Tuesday, Oct. 8th—St. Mark Quilters—10:00 a.m.
Sunday, October 13th—Worship & Music Meeting—after 10:15 Service
Monday, Oct. 14th—Congregation Council Meeting—6:30 p.m.
Sunday, Oct. 20th—Reservations for Blood Drive begins
Tuesday, Oct. 22nd—St. Mark Quilters—10:00 a.m.
Sunday, Oct. 27th—Last Day for Personal Care Items, Consecration Emphasis continues

NOVEMBER

Sunday, Nov. 3rd—Worship & Music Team Meeting (following 10:15 Service)
Sunday, Nov. 3rd—All Saints Sunday (both services)
Tuesday, Nov. 5th—Resource Management Team Meeting—6:30 p.m.
Monday, Nov. 11th—Congregation Council—6:30 p.m.
Tuesday, Nov. 12th—St. Mark Quilters—10:00 a.m.
Monday, Nov. 24th—News for the newsletter due
Sunday, Nov. 24th—Hanging of the Greens
Tuesday, Nov. 26th—St. Mark Quilters—10:00 a.m.
Sunday, Dec. 3rd—First Sunday in Advent



Christmas Services this year will be at 1:00 & 7:00. Both services will be held in the Sanctuary.

ST. MARK BLOOD DRIVE

**WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 18TH FROM 1:00—6:00 p.m.
MENDEL FELLOWSHIP HALL**

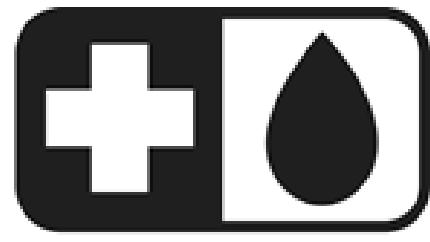
Please sign up and help save a life. A blood drive will be held at St. Mark in the Mendel Fellowship Hall on Wednesday, Dec. 18th from 1:00—6:00 p.m.

The number of blood donations collected each year in the United States is 15.7 million from an estimated 9.2 million donors.

Although almost 40% of the population is eligible to donate, less than 10% actually do each year. Blood cannot be manufactured and relies solely on generous donors. Someone is in need of blood every two seconds in the United States. More than 30 million blood components are transfused each year with the average transfusion being approximately 3 pints. There is a critical need for this time of the year. Your blood donation can help to save lives.

Call Cheryl Simon with any questions or to set up an appointment on December 18th. Cheryl's number is 304-280-7285. Thank you so much!

Be a blood donor, be a Hero – A real one.



**GIVE
Blood**

Give Blood—Give life.

REFLECTIONS OF ST. MARK by Kelly Myers

How many years have you been a member of St. Mark?

Almost 39 years—my whole life

What led you to become a member?

I was born into St. Mark; my dad's family (the Kriner family) had been attending church here since they moved to Wheeling. (when Dad was one year old). My parents had me baptized here as an infant, I made my first communion in the church, and Adam and I were married here. Now both of our children have been baptized here. I know that my Dad and grandparents would be happy that we continue to attend church at St. Mark and are bringing the kids to church. It's pretty cool to say that Lucas and Craig are 4th generation "Kriners" at St. Mark.

How have you been involved at St. Mark over the years?

Youth activities as a kid, helping with the Turkey Dinner, but I have more recently become involved now that my own children are old enough to attend Sunday School and nursery. I enjoy helping with the youth at St. Mark and I am happy to get my children involved, too. Both of my kids are always excited to go to church on Sundays.



As you reflect on your time at St. Mark, what are some of your favorite memories?

I think my most favorite memories would have to be my marriage and my children's baptisms. I also have fond memories of attending the Turkey Dinner and other meals/celebrations in the Fellowship Hall. It's nice to have a meal together as a church family and I have memories of this from my early childhood. I can still see the Fellowship Hall full and hear the buzz of everyone conversing over dinner. We are so incredibly lucky to have such a wonderful facility available to us. Our church is beautiful and such an asset.

What are some of your favorite services/activities either past or present at St. Mark?

The Christmas Eve Candlelight service was always a family tradition. I also really enjoyed the annual Turkey Dinner. Now that I have children, I enjoy taking them to the youth group outings – Boo at the Zoo, movie/pizza party in the youth lounge, Washington Wild Things baseball game, etc. I also really enjoyed the luncheons after the 10:15 service with music by Josh Garrett.

Why do you like coming to St. Mark?

The people – our church family, the traditions, and fellowship

What are some of the biggest changes you have witnessed in our church?

I would have to say COVID/dwindling attendance and Pastor Paul leaving. I know that these aren't positive changes, however it has seemed that our members are stepping up and working together over these last few months since Pastor Paul left. Hopefully, we can get more members (even new members) involved to allow our church to continue to be a place where we can worship God and enjoy our fellowship for generations to come.

Is there anything else you would like to add?

Just that St. Mark is like home. I've been coming here since birth and there are so many traditions and memories here. It's like my "other" home. The members are like family and it's nice to bring my kids "home." It even has that familiar smell. It sounds weird, but I can remember that as a kid, too. I love bringing my kids to church and showing them how important church is. If you don't show them, they won't know. It's comforting and it's where we belong; this is our church, our home.

A Little Bit about the Nursery at St. Mark

Each Sunday during the 10:15 service, the nursery is open to our church's youngest members. Here, they enjoy fellowship with their church friends in a safe environment and are well monitored by adults who have been trained to work with God's children.

The nursery is equipped with several different items for open play. From trucks and blocks to dolls and a mini kitchen, this area is stocked with many nice toys. Along with the toys, there is a wide variety of books for reading and a long table with small chairs, which is great for drawing or coloring.

A highlight of the day is the Pastor's Sermon. The children love to make their way from the nursery to the front of the church. The congregation loves the energy and enthusiasm of our little ones, as they listen to the pastor's message.

Some casual pictures of the children during Nursery time.





RALLY DAY CELEBRATION

Rev. Dr. John Harris and
Bishop Emeritus Ralph
Dunkin

Dottie Boyd and Carmen Heil



Ziggy Little & Carl Bowman



Elsa and Bane enjoying a
brownie.



The 3 Nancy's—Left to right: Nancy Braden, Nancy
Spindler, and Nancy Knoblich

Cheryl Simon
with Elsa and
Bane



Fran Braden chatting with
Dan & Sharon Lewis



Pat & Tom Freismuth with Fran
Braden





Alicia talking about
Camp Luther



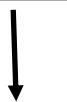
Amber speaking on her
experience at Camp
Luther



No food went to waste.
Leftover food from Rally Day was prepared and delivered to 42 people of Wheeling's Homeless.



Carla, Sarahjean, and Jolleen.



Jamie and the triplets enjoy a game of Foosball after Rally Day in the Ruth Fitzsimmons Youth Lounge.



October 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
6 8:00 & 10:15 Worship & Communion Pastoral candidate Congregation Meeting after both services	7 Resource Management—6:30 TOPS—5:00 p.m. 8 St. Mark Quilt Group—10:00 am Future's Group—6:30 p.m. TOPS—5:00 p.m.	1 Resource Management—6:30 TOPS—5:00 p.m. 8 St. Mark Quilt Group—10:00 am Future's Group—6:30 p.m. TOPS—5:00 p.m.	2 TOPS—5:00 p.m. 9 TOPS—5:00 p.m.	3 TOPS—5:00 p.m. 10 TOPS—5:00 p.m.	4 TOPS—5:00 p.m. 11 TOPS—5:00 p.m.	5 Meet & Greet Pastoral Candidate from 4-6 pm AA—Noon & 8:30 pm
13 8:00 & 10:15 Worship & Communion Rev. Jason Felici & Bishop Ralph Dunkin Worship & Music Ministry Team Mtg	14 Congregation Council 6:30 p.m. TOPS—5:00 p.m.	15 TOPS—5:00 p.m.	16 TOPS—5:00 p.m.	17 TOPS—5:00 p.m.	18 TOPS—5:00 p.m.	19 AA—Noon & 8:30 pm
20 8:00 & 10:15 Worship & Communion Rev. Dr. John Harris	21 St. Mark Quilt Group—10:00 am TOPS—5:00 p.m.	22 St. Mark Quilt Group—10:00 am TOPS—5:00 p.m.	23 TOPS—5:00 p.m.	24 TOPS—5:00 p.m.	25 TOPS—5:00 p.m.	26 AA—Noon & 8:30 pm
27 8:00 & 10:15 Worship & Communion Rev. Dr. John Harris	28 TOPS—5:00 p.m.	29 TOPS—5:00 p.m.	30 TOPS—5:00 p.m.	31 TOPS—5:00 p.m.		

November 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1		2
3 8:00 & 10:15 Worship & Communion Music & Worship Mtg	4 <i>Bishop Ralph Dunkin</i>	5 <i>Resource Management</i> —6:30 pm	6 <i>TOPS</i> —5:00 pm		AA—Noon & 8:30 pm	9
10 8:00 & 10:15 Worship & Communion	11 <i>Rev. Dr. John Harris</i>	12 <i>St. Mark Quilt Group</i> —10:00 am	13 <i>Congregation Council</i> —6:30 pm	14 <i>TOPS</i> —5:00 p.m.	AA—Noon & 8:30 pm	16
17 8:00 & 10:15 Worship & Communion	18 <i>Rev. Dr. John Harris</i>	19 <i>TOPS</i> —5:00 pm	20 <i>TOPS</i> —5:00 pm	21 <i>TOPS</i> —5:00 pm	AA—Noon & 8:30 pm	23
24 8:00 & 10:15 Worship & Communion	25 <i>Rev. Dr. John Harris</i>	26 <i>St. Mark Quilt Group</i> —10:00 am	27 <i>TOPS</i> —5:00 p.m.	28 <i>Office Closed</i>	AA—Noon & 8:30 pm	30

St. Mark Evangelical Lutheran Church
141 Kruger Street, Elm Grove
Wheeling, WV. 26003



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