



Glorify God, Grow in Grace, Go with the Gospel

St. Mark's Lutheran Weekly Newsletter

October 18, 2020

SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR OCTOBER 25:

2 Chronicles 30:1-5, 10-22

Romans 11:1-10

Matthew 22:1-14

PONDER THIS FOR A MOMENT:

"But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that."

1 Timothy 6:6-8.

AS YOU PRAY, KEEP IN MIND ...

Vicky Underwood undergoing further tests, pray progress continues ... Ron & Pam Harrison – Ron's dad is in hospice, their granddaughter has been diagnosed with a rare disease ... Those not able to be as active due to health complications and Covid ... How you plan to let your Jesus light shine this week

SUNDAY MORNING MINISTRY UPDATES

Worship time changes... For the month of October, the plan is to offer indoor 8:00 AM Sunday worship, following the protocols that we have been practicing for indoor worship; there will be an outdoor Service at 10:00 AM. If the weather is not conducive to outdoor worship, we will move the 10:00 AM Service indoors. *Streaming of the indoor worship will continue.* Links to the Bulletin, Weekly News, Study Guides, and more found on our website, and also sent out each week to those on our email list.

Bible Studies for school age children and adults are available online ...

SUNDAY MORNING Topic: 'Personalizing Salvation' --- the more 'we' get and appreciate

our salvation the more 'we' want to talk it up with others. So, how do we go about this? *Two options to be a part of this discussion: online as well as live indoors from 9:15 to 9:45 AM.*

WORSHIP RELATED NEWS

Regarding the annual area Reformation Service – we will not be having it this year; we will still be celebrating in the morning Service the truths which were preserved through the Reformation.

At this point in time mid-week Advent Services are still on the calendar, the first one being Wednesday, December 2, at 7:00 PM. A final decision has not been reached on our ability to have the traditional meals held before the Advent Services.

OTHER BIBLE STUDIES TO LOOK INTO

In addition to the Sunday discussion...

1st Thursdays at 6:30 PM, sign up for Zoom link or attend in person

2nd Monday Men's Study at 5:30 PM

3rd Monday Women's Study at 6:00 PM

Every Thursday at 9:30 AM the JOL (Women's Study

1st & 3rd Sundays Connect 20/30s Study at 5:00 PM (on campus)

RSVP NEEDED FOR LWMS

In place of a 'live' fall NorCal LWMS Rally at one location this year, the Rally presentation has been pre-recorded and sent out to the area churches. Our St. Mark's LWMS is planning to show the presentation on Saturday, October 31, at 10:00 AM on our campus. This presentation is open to the congregation. If attending, please

RSVP by Thursday, October 29 to Stacie at churchadm@stmarkslutheran.com.

MISSION BOX OFFERINGS

While we have not been able to hold our Lutheran Women's Missionary Society meetings or our Spring or Fall Circuit Rallies, the work of our missionaries at home and around the world continues. Our mission project offerings support their ministries.

Since we will not be meeting as a Circuit for the fall Rally, we will be sending in our local Mission Box Offerings on Oct. 20th.

Please bring your Mission Box Offering to worship on Sunday, Oct. 11 or Sunday, Oct. 18th.

If you prefer to write a check, please make the check payable to: LWMS Redwood Circuit and place it in the Mission Offering Box or give it to Ellie Ennis or leave it with Stacie Malone in the church office.

Thank you for your continued generous support of our missionaries through your offerings and your prayers. - Ellie Ennis, St. Mark's LWMS Treasurer

HONORING TEACHER RETIREMENTS

While 2020 in some respects is a year to forget, there are still many blessings to give our attention to yet this year. St. Mark's has been blessed with teachers who have been faithful in leading our classrooms with the Word of God. Two of our teachers earlier this year had announced their retirement from full-time teaching ministry, Greg Thiesfeldt and Julie Dushane. God has used these two teachers to enrich the lives of countless students. We at St. Mark's want to take the time to celebrate their ministries with a special presentation and gift at the end of an upcoming worship service. If you would like to make a financial contribution as a show of thanks, please drop off or mail your gift to the church before or on Sunday, October 25. Please specify who the gifts are for, so they go for the intended purpose; checks made out to

'St. Mark's.' We will announce the date of the presentation as soon as it is finalized.

MINISTRY FINANCIAL PLAN UPDATE

Offerings received since July 1: \$182,508
Need to receive July - December: \$344,300

RECAP OF THE SEPTEMBER CHURCH MTG

3 Sections

Fiscal Year 19/20 recap. Despite the significant challenges associated with the pandemic, our church offerings slightly exceeded MFP (budget) however school tuition fell short due to enrollment lower than projected. Combined expenses were lower than MFP as expenses were carefully managed. All this combined to produce a deficit that was lower than we had planned, but a deficit nonetheless. St. Mark's did apply and receive government stimulus funding of \$99,000, which was clearly noted to have no repayment requirement or "strings attached" other than that the money be used for specific expenses, especially payroll, which is exactly what was done. This stimulus funding offset most of the deficit for FY19/20.

Separate from the operating costs: As a result of much diligent work by the NWP team as well as by our members, we will, this Fall, be in a position to significantly reduce our mortgage obligation and reset our monthly obligation to a significantly lower level. Without question, FY19/20 was a year in which the Lord richly blessed and provided for St. Mark's through its faithful members who continue to carry out vital ministry work.

Fiscal Year 20/21 outlook. In the absence of the normal congregational meeting and voters assembly in June, the church council provisionally approved a spending plan, as announced in June. This plan anticipated offerings at pandemic levels and also a further reduced school enrollment as well as a reduced school staffing and cost model. The council also reluctantly approved spending cuts to called

worker compensation (froze wages at prior year levels), as well as a reduction in our CMO. The effect of this provisional spending plan was another year of deficit, although it should be noted that the two-year combined deficit (19/20+20/21) was still anticipated to be less than the original deficit planned for 19/20. Just ahead of the start of the school year we received very difficult news about enrollment. Instead of 80 students, we only enrolled 50. There were multiple reasons for this, as discussed at the meeting, which were mainly out of our school's control. The lost tuition income is very significant and produces a very large deficit in our annual budget. Our congregational leadership is united in our commitment to both our called workers and the families we serve this school year so we will not reduce staffing levels at this time. Holding to this commitment could come at the anticipated cost of using most all of St. Mark's financial reserves.

School and Child Discipleship viability plan. It was explained that the congregation simply does not have the resources to continue to subsidize our school at current levels of enrollment, tuition, and cost. To this end, our BCD (Board of Child Discipleship) has been pulling together teams to focus on our Early Childhood Education (ECE or JrK) ministry plan options for our children younger than Kindergarten as well as on the K-8 students. To clearly state the goal of these teams, it is to present to the congregation and voters viable options to serve our school aged youth, ideally by keeping our school in operation. With that goal clearly in front of it, the BCD and church council will work toward the following tentative timeline and deliverables. In November, the leadership will present options to the congregation with the goal of soliciting feedback on those. In December, the leadership will present its recommendation to the congregation and again receive feedback.

In January, the congregation will consider and ratify any actions requiring a vote. UPDATE ON THE NEXT CONGREGATION MEETING: SUNDAY, DECEMBER 6 following the late Service.

In summary, we have seen many times how the Lord has blessed us and continues to bless us, especially during these challenging times. Please pray for St. Mark's, specifically for the school families, the school workers, and also the leadership team as they undertake the challenging work ahead.

To connect to the auto giving option:



To online Connect Card:



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