



# November 2022 Newsletter St. Mark Lutheran Church



21 S. Baird Avenue, Rhinelander, WI 54501 (715-362-2470)

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## From the Pastor

Last year our congregation decided to do something about the struggles of the students at our St. Louis Seminary. We are contributing \$5,000 a year to the seminary to support the tuition costs. Shortly after receiving the funds the person who heads this program called me one night. To paraphrase him, he asked why a small congregation like ours would be able to contribute the large amount. My answer was that God had blessed us in order to be a blessing to others. Below is the most recent thank you we received from Brandon Johnson who is the recipient of those funds.

Dear St. Mark Lutheran Church,

Pentecost greetings and blessings in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus. Amen.

I bring you greetings from Our Redeemer Lutheran Church in Moorhead, MN. I began my Vicarage, or yearlong internship, at the end of June. Our Redeemer has welcomed me and my wife, Hannah, with open arms. As central Wisconsin natives, we are not too concerned about the winter and are looking forward to some snow (until March comes and then we will be complaining too).

It has been wonderful to become involved in the life of the congregation. I have been preaching approximately twice a month and leading Bible Study between services quite frequently. We have been studying the Augsburg Confession for the past few weeks. This document, present by the Lutheran Confessors in 1530 before the Holy Roman Emperor. I also have enjoyed visiting members of the congregation. I really enjoy hearing people's life stories and bringing a word of comfort. I have also enjoyed opportunities to guest preach at some of the rural churches in the surrounding area. Each church has slightly different customs and practices as they worship the same Savior. I appreciate all these opportunities as I learn and grow in my pastoral formation.

Hannah works for a company based in Eagan, MN named Prime Therapeutics. They are a pharmacy benefit management company. She does quality assurance for different pharmacy networks and certifies that they will function as intended and desired. She works from home and really enjoys the flexibility that working from home provides. In July we adopted a cat from a shelter in Fargo. Now Babette has been "helping" Hannah work each day. She enjoys laying in her bed next to Hannah's desk and also taking every opportunity to walk in front of the monitor as cats are prone to do. She has added some extra fun to our lives.

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# Business Old & New



I am extremely thankful for all the support you have given to me and Hannah. You have supported us with your thoughts, prayers, and financial gifts. The Lord is working mightily in His Church, and I am humbled to serve His people.

In Christ,

Brandon and Hannah Johnson  
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Moorhead, MN 56560  
johnsonb@csl.edu  
715-347-6126



## HOLY COMMUNION

If you need to have Holy Communion brought to you in the pew, please let an usher know. Pastor will be happy to accommodate you.

## THRIVENT CHOICE DOLLARS

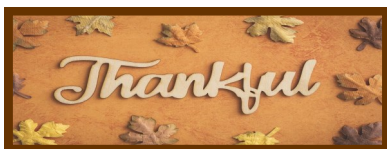
“Thank you” to all members continuing to participate in the “Choice Dollars” donation to St. Mark Church.

## ST. MARK QUILTERS

St. Mark quilters are busy again this year. They meet in the church basement on the first and third Tuesdays at 9:00am. As always all ladies are invited to join them in the making of quilts and the fellowship that goes along with the pleasure of doing good for others less fortunate.

## THANK YOU

Thank you to all the boards, committees and other special groups for everything that you have done this past year. All of the improvements to our church, all of the helping hands, all of the thoughtfulness, has not gone unnoticed. You all are what make this such an amazing, loving church family.



## LWML

There will not be a meeting for the ladies of LWML in the month of November. Regular meetings will resume on December 13th. LWML is open to all the women of St. Mark. I hope you will consider joining us. It’s good to gather together and give thanks. Bring your mites and help support all the wonderful mission projects that the LWML is supporting here in Wisconsin and around the globe. Questions? Please give me a call! Barb Scott 715-401-1670.

## FOOD PANTRY

The next time that St. Mark will work at the Rhinelander Area Food Pantry will be January 30th, 2023 which is a Monday. Workers are asked to be there at 2:45PM. There will be a sign up sheet in the fellowship hall. If you have any questions please call Anne Anderson at 715-362-5810.

## THANKSGIVING SERVICES

There will be a service for Thanksgiving on Wednesday, November 24th, at 6:00pm. This is in addition to our scheduled Sunday service for that week. Please call the church office if you would like to attend. The church office phone is 715-362-2470 from 9:00am until 1:00pm.



# Food for Thought



## Thankful for the Thorns Inspirational Christian Story

Sandra felt as low as the heels of her Birkenstocks as she pushed against a November gust and the florist shop door. Her life had been easy, like a spring breeze. Then, in the fourth month of her second pregnancy, a minor automobile accident stole her ease. During this Thanksgiving week, she would have delivered a son. She grieved over her loss. As if that weren't enough, her husband's company threatened a transfer. Then her sister, whose holiday visit she coveted, called saying she could not come. What's worse, Sandra's friend infuriated her by suggesting her grief was a God-given path to maturity that would allow her to empathize with others who suffer. "Had she lost a child? No - she has no idea what I'm feeling," Sandra shuddered. Thanksgiving? "Thankful for what?" she wondered. For a careless driver whose truck was hardly scratched when he rear-ended her? For an airbag that saved her life but took that of her child?

"Good afternoon, can I help you?" The flower shop clerk's approach startled her. "Sorry," said Jenny, "I just didn't want you to think I was ignoring you." "I . . . I need an arrangement." "For Thanksgiving?" Sandra nodded. "Do you want beautiful but ordinary, or would you like to challenge the day with a customer favorite I call the 'Thanksgiving Special?'" Jenny saw Sandra's curiosity and continued. "I'm convinced that flowers tell stories, that each arrangement insinuates a particular feeling. Are you looking for something that conveys gratitude this Thanksgiving?" "Not exactly!" Sandra blurted. "Sorry, but in the last five months, everything that could go wrong has."

Sandra regretted her outburst but was surprised when Jenny said, "I have the perfect arrangement for you." The door's small bell suddenly rang. "Barbara, hi!" Jenny said. She politely excused herself from Sandra and walked toward a small workroom. She quickly reappeared carrying a massive arrangement of green bows, and long-stemmed thorny roses. Only, the ends of the rose stems were neatly snipped, no flowers. "Want this in a box?" Jenny asked. Sandra watched for Barbara's response. Was this a joke? Who would want rose stems and no flowers! She waited for laughter, for someone to notice the absence of flowers atop the thorny stems, but neither woman did. "Yes, please. It's exquisite." said Barbara. "You'd think after three years of getting the special, I'd not be so moved by its significance, but it's happening again. My family will love this one. Thanks."

Sandra stared. "Why so normal a conversation about so strange an arrangement?" she wondered. "Ah," said Sandra, pointing. "That lady just left with, ah . . ." "Yes?" "Well, she had no flowers!" "Yep. That's the Special. I call it the "Thanksgiving Thorns Bouquet." "But, why do people pay for that?" In spite of herself, she chuckled. "Do you really want to know?" "I couldn't leave this shop without knowing. I'd think about nothing else!" "That might be good," said Jenny.

"Well," she continued, "Barbara came into the shop three years ago feeling very much like you feel today. She thought she had very little to be thankful for. She had lost her father to cancer, the family business was failing, her son was into drugs, and she faced major surgery." "Ouch!" said Sandra. "That same year, I lost my husband. I assumed complete responsibility for the shop and for the first time, spent the holidays alone. I had no children, no husband, no family nearby, and too great a debt to allow any travel." "What did you do?" "I learned to be thankful for thorns." Sandra's eyebrows lifted. "Thorns?"

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## Story continued ...



"I'm a Christian, Sandra. I've always thanked God for good things in life and I never thought to ask Him why good things happened to me. But, when bad stuff hit, did I ever ask! It took time to learn that dark times are important. I always enjoyed the flowers of life but it took thorns to show me the beauty of God's comfort. You know, the Bible says that God comforts us when we're afflicted and from His consolation we learn to comfort others." Sandra gasped. "A friend read that passage to me and I was furious! I guess the truth is, I don't want comfort. I've lost a baby and I'm angry with God." She started to ask Jenny to "go on" when the door's bell diverted their attention.

"Hey, Phil!" shouted Jenny as a balding, rotund man entered the shop. She softly touched Sandra's arm and moved to welcome him. He tucked her under his side for a warm hug. "I'm here for twelve thorny long-stemmed stems!" Phil laughed, heartily. "I figured as much," said Jenny. "I've got them ready." She lifted a tissue-wrapped arrangement from the refrigerated cabinet. "Beautiful," said Phil. "My wife will love them." Sandra could not resist asking, "These are for your wife?" Phil saw that Sandra's curiosity matched his when he first heard of a Thorn Bouquet. "Do you mind me asking, Why thorns?" "In fact, I'm glad you asked," He said. "Four years ago my wife and I nearly divorced. After forty years, we were in a real mess, but we slogged through, problem by rotten problem. We rescued our marriage - our love, really. Last year, at Thanksgiving, I stopped in here for flowers. I must have mentioned surviving a tough process because Jenny told me that for a long time she kept a vase of rose stems --- stems! --- As a reminder of what she learned from 'thorny' times. That was good enough for me. I took home stems. My wife and I decided to label each one for a specific thorny situation and give thanks for what the problem taught us. I'm pretty sure this stem review is becoming a tradition." Phil paid Jenny, thanked her again and as he left, said to Sandra, "I highly recommend the Special!"

"I don't know if I can be thankful for the thorns in my life, " Sandra said to Jenny. "Well, my experience says that thorns make roses more precious. We treasure God's providential care more during trouble than at any other time. Remember, Sandra, Jesus wore a crown of thorns so that we might know His love. Do not resent thorns." Tears rolled down Sandra's cheeks. For the first time since the accident, she loosened her grip on resentment. "I'll take twelve long-stemmed thorns, please." "I hoped you would, " Jenny said. "I'll have them ready in a minute. Then, every time you see them, remember to appreciate both the good and hard times. We grow through both." "Thank you. What do I owe you?" "Nothing. Nothing but a pledge to work toward healing your heart. The first year's arrangement is always on me." Jenny handed a card to Sandra. "I'll attach a card like this to your arrangement but maybe you'd like to read it first. Go ahead, read it." My God, I have never thanked Thee for my thorn! I have thanked Thee a thousand times for my roses, but never once for my thorn. Teach me the glory of the cross I bear, teach me the value of my thorns. Show me that I have climbed to Thee by the path of pain. Show me that my tears have made my rainbow.

-Author Unknown

### Let's All Just Take a Moment ...

Let us all take a moment to look back on this last couple of years and what everyone has been through and pray that the events made us all a little better person each day than we were the day before. Let us be grateful for every second of every day that we get to spend with people we love.

Life Is So Very Precious!





# MORE NEWS AND NOTES



## A Heartwarming Thanksgiving Story

As this teacher learned, some of the most moving lessons are taught by students.

When Mrs. Klein told her first graders to draw a picture of something for which they were thankful, she thought how little these children, who lived in a deteriorating neighborhood, actually had to be thankful for. She knew that most of the class would draw pictures of turkeys or of bountifully laden Thanksgiving tables. That was what they believed was expected of them.

What took Mrs. Klein aback was Douglas's picture. Douglas was so forlorn and likely to be found close in her shadow as they went outside for recess. Douglas's drawing was simply this:

A hand, obviously, but whose hand? The class was captivated by his image. "I think it must be the hand of God that brings us food," said one student.

"A farmer," said another, "because they grow the turkeys."

"It looks more like a policeman, and they protect us." "I think," said Lavinia, who was always so serious, "that it is supposed to be all the hands that help us, but Douglas could only draw one of them."

Mrs. Klein had almost forgotten Douglas in her pleasure at finding the class so responsive. When she had the others at work on another project, she bent over his desk and asked whose hand it was.

Douglas mumbled, "It's yours, Teacher."

Then Mrs. Klein recalled that she had taken Douglas by the hand from time to time; she often did that with the children. But that it should have meant so much to Douglas ...

Perhaps, she reflected, this was her Thanksgiving, and everybody's Thanksgiving—not the material things given unto us, but the small ways that we give something to others

## That Holiday Helping Spirit

The "holiday spirit" is a real thing, and we promise you, nothing will make you more grateful for what you have than sharing some of it with someone who has less.

# 2022 BUDGET VS ACTUAL

25-Oct-22

Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec

Actual \$  
Received  
Budget

15534	9517	13797	19445	11739	10823	16985	10653	11198			
12596	12596	12596	12596	12596	12596	12596	12596	12596	12596	12596	12596

