



February 2026 Newsletter

St. Mark Lutheran Church



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

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From Pastor Miller

We never know how God will use the various events in our lives. God can use even the small actions to glorify His name. St. Valentine is a case in point.

Valentine was both a Doctor and a priest who worked with Christians in his community at a time when Christians in his community were being persecuted. As a priest he secretly married couples in secret because Emperor Claudius forbade it.

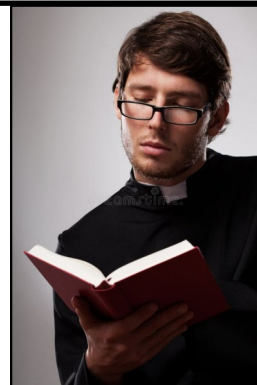
Eventually, he was caught and sentenced to death. Tradition suggests that, on the day of his execution, Valentine left a note for a child of his jailer written on an irregularly shaped piece of paper. The became a pattern for the many valentines that are still being sent today. I thank the authors of *Treasury of Daily Prayer*, my source for this information.

While this tradition is followed mostly by children today, perhaps we as Christians could use the occasion to write a note of comfort to someone that we know. The person who has recently suffered the loss of a loved one, or someone facing an uncertain future.

Update From Our Vicar

Greetings, St. Mark family! It's been busy and exciting in my world. I recently returned from another week on campus at the Concordia Seminary in St. Louis for our winter intensive course. While in St. Louis, I was able to share an Airbnb with 6 other guys from my cohort. It was great to be able to "talk shop" with them about their own ministry situations.

I'm currently working on the final project for that second Seminary course, PRA412: Introduction To Worship. It has been a deep-dive into the Lutheran theology of worship, the structure of worship, the history and background of our services, the function and role of music, and more. I have three papers to write, as well as designing three worship services from scratch with explanations for why I chose each element. While in St. Louis each of us had to preside over a communion service in front of the whole class and be critiqued for competency. That was a little nerve-racking, but it got me ready for leading worship at St. Mark!



Speaking of which, it was an honor to lead St. Mark in the entirety of worship and liturgy, on January 25th, while Pastor Miller and Pastor Trosien were both out. I thank you all for your encouragement on my first time out. And I look forward to doing it again, with the help of God.

After that, I should get a week or two off before the next class begins. That will give me time to get everything finalized for the upcoming Hodag Track & Field season, which Jayme and I will be coaching together again this spring.

Vicar Wyss

What is the significance of Ash Wednesday and ashes on the forehead?

"Other customs may be used, particularly the imposition of ashes on those who wish it. This ancient act is a gesture of repentance and a powerful reminder about the meaning of the day. Ashes can symbolize dust-to-dustness and remind worshipers of the need for cleansing, scrubbing and purifying. If they are applied during an act of kneeling, the very posture of defeat and submission expresses humility before God."

The use of ashes on Ash Wednesday is a more recent custom among most LCMS congregations, although some have done it for decades. The ashes are usually derived from the burned palms from the previous Palm Sunday. Experience will show, however, that in obtaining ashes this way, it doesn't take many ashes to "ash" a whole congregation. Like sin, they are very dirty and go a long way. One palm leaf will produce enough ashes for several years. Usually the pastor takes the ashes on the end of his thumb and makes the sign of the cross on the forehead of each worshiper, saying these words: *"Remember: you are dust, and to dust you shall return."* This follows most effectively prior (or as part of) the Service Corporate Confession and Absolution on pp. 290-291 of *Lutheran Service Book*.

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NEWS AND NOTES



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.

FELLOWSHIP LUNCH

The dates for the Fellowship Lunch are February 3rd at the Friendship House Restaurant and February 17th at CT's Deli. We meet at the restaurant at 12:00pm on these dates. Everyone is welcome. Give the office a call if you are coming so reservations can be made. We look forward to seeing you.

FOOD PANTRY NEWS

Part of the ministry at St. Mark is to help others that are in need. We are very blessed and thankful to all the people who help distribute food at the Rhineland Area Food Pantry. The many people that volunteer make the work easy and very rewarding. The next opportunity to volunteer at the food pantry is Monday, **March 30, 2026**. Please sign up on the list in the fellowship hall if you are available to help in March. Ten people are needed. You are asked to be there at 2:45pm and will work until 5:00pm. If you are interested in doing this kind of work please contact the church office at 715-362-2470.

ST. MARK QUILTERS

The ladies are being so productive and having so much fun doing it, that they meet nearly every Tuesday morning. If you enjoy sewing or tying knots, you are welcome to come and join in on these worthy projects. The joy these quilts bring to people all over the world and how grateful they are to receive them will bring comfort to your own heart knowing that this work is for the good of people less fortunate than you or I.

COME SEE WHAT IS NEW

There has been a lot happening in the basement level of St. Mark Church. Along with Sunday school classes and ladies quilting, the kitchen has been in the process of being remodeled. Thank you for the patience shown by the other groups with all the noise, mess, and moving things around that it has taken to keep this project on task. Cupboards and flooring are in. We are looking for the countertops to be installed around the 12th & 13th of February. It will then need a few more small jobs finished and we can go back to normal. We are looking at the possibility of having a Sunday (after service) potluck some time in March to give everyone a chance to enjoy the finished product. We will keep you informed as to the planning of that.

Thank you to all who helped with the demolition and especially to Dale Kinney, our project manager for all he has done. He has been a great asset to this project. When people work together, great things can be accomplished!

2025 BUDGET VS ACTUAL

28-Jan-26

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Actual \$ Received	13365	11560	16213	16507	20093	15487	17808	13739	15532	14714	16343	25415
Budget	14712	14712	14712	15878	15878	15878	15878	15878	15878	15878	15878	15878

(Figures reflect \$15K added to budget for SMP program)

