



Holy Cross—St. Mark

Newsletter

July 2024



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In this Issue:

- Devotional Thoughts—p. 1, 3
- Synod News—p. 2
- Dual Parish Update —p. 2
- St. Mark Council Update—p. 2
- Holy Cross Council Update—p. 2
- Who Can I Pray For? —p. 3
- Calendar —p. 4

Upcoming Events

- July 1: VBS Meeting at HC-6:30pm
- July 2, 9, 23: Midweek Bible Class
- July 8: SM Voters' Meeting-6pm
- June 18: HC Voters' Meeting-6pm
- July 26-28: Pastor Out of Town
- July 29-Aug. 1: VBS

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Devotional Thoughts

By Pastor Crass

“My pleasure.” These were the words I heard as the Chick-fil-A worker dropped off our food at the table. Those words didn’t surprise me. This young lady, like every worker in her company, had been trained to respond to “thank you” with this phrase “my pleasure.” But the tone she spoke with made it clear that it was not her pleasure. I don’t know what was going on in her life. I don’t know if she was just having a bad shift. But she was certainly not finding any pleasure in the service she was providing.

Is there pleasure in service? Well, it probably depends on the motivation for the service you are doing. A mom and dad love sitting on the couch in the living room as their kids sit on the floor and tear open packages with excitement on Christmas morning. A doctor has a smile on his or her face as the patient they’ve been treating for cancer over the last couple years rings the bell, signifying that they are done with treatment. There is certainly joy in serving, but your motivation to serve is what creates that joy.

This young lady didn’t find joy in her service because she was not motivated to serve. Maybe she didn’t feel like the money she was being paid was enough. Maybe she didn’t enjoy her co-workers. Maybe she wished she was anywhere but there. Motivation matters.

So, what about the motivation of Christians? Why do we come to church to give to God the worship due him? Why does Ladies’ Aid work hard to plan out meals and support missions? Why do the councilmen serve for years (sometimes even decades), sitting in meetings and wrestling with issues in the church when they could be at home with their families? Why do the “church mice,” those people who give of so much of their time to the church without nearly enough thanks, continue to serve in quietness? What’s their motivation?

(continued on page 3)

WELS News

2023 WELS statistical summary

An article written by Rev. Jonathan Hein, WELS Congregational Services coordinator.

Each year, WELS collects data from all congregations and schools. WELS Congregational Services compiles this data into a comprehensive statistical report and publishes a statistical summary and analysis.

The 2023 statistical summary shares some good news for which we give thanks to God. Last year, even though WELS total membership declined by about 5,300 (-1.6 percent), the number of WELS members participating in in-person weekly worship increased by almost 8,000 (+6.7 percent). Adult Bible study and Sunday school also saw large increases in participation. 2023 also saw WELS congregations blessed with almost 5,800 adult spiritual gains, the highest total in over a decade.

The statistical analysis for 2023 also digs into the shortage of called workers. In 2023, WELS congregations reported having 264,500 communicant members, a decline of almost 17 percent from the statistical high year of 1990. Yet, WELS has 46 percent more teachers today than in 1990 (about 970 total) and almost the exact same number of active pastors today as in 1990. So, the reality is WELS has more called workers active today than at any point in WELS history. So how can there be a high vacancy rate? The Lord has simply increased the gospel opportunities before us: to grow our local ministries (particularly school expansion), to start new congregations around the country, and to plant new outreach locations around the world.

The statistical analysis discusses the importance of strengthening our efforts to recruit people for gospel ministry as well as creating new pipelines by which one can enter ministry. It also reviews the growing challenge of those efforts in light of the fact that the need for called workers is growing at approximately 2 percent annually at the same time WELS membership is declining at approximately 1.3 percent annually.

You can find the WELS 2023 Statistical Summary and Analysis at welscongregationalservices.net/stats.

Dual Parish Update

- The joint meeting of the councils discussed the implementation of two programs to do better inreach to straying members and outreach to the unchurched in the community:
 - Inreach: There is a program put together by the synod called the Peter Plan. The purpose of the plan is to have certain milestones at which the pastor and council reach out to those who have not been in church in some time to encourage them to not neglect public worship (Hebrews 10:25) and express loving concern for their walk of faith.
 - Outreach: The outreach workshop a few of our members attended earlier this year put forward a plan to put together gift baskets and drop them off at the houses of visitors to our congregations and those who move into the area. To be aware of new residents, we will ask our members to notify us when they see a new family move into their neighborhood. A volunteer would then go and drop off the basket, thanking the church visitor(s) for coming or welcoming the new family to the area.

St. Mark Council Update

- The council has put forward a plan to purchase a new furnace system and install a TV in the sanctuary for WELS Connection and Bible Class.

Holy Cross Council Update

- The July voters' meeting will involve plenty of discussion on the programs listed above as well as the suggested changes from the district constitution committee on our 2023 revision.

Who Can I Pray For?

Below are some of our shut-ins that you can pray for, call, and even visit (please call ahead before any visits).

- Luella Dahlberg - (906)788-4228 - W4642 County Rd. 346, Wallace, MI 49893
- Carol Heydn - (906)788-4445 - W5744 14 Lane, Wallace, MI 49893
- Kristin Bates - (906)280-8276 - W6450 Cty. Rd. 358, Daggett, MI 49821
- Harold and Virginia Schlenvogt - (906)753-4326 - W5209 Cty Rd 348, Stephenson, MI 49887
- Evelyn Smith - (920)370-2361 - W3124 Cty Rd 366, Daggett, MI 49821 (currently living at Menominee Health Services in Menominee)
- George and Cheryl Bussler - (906)290-0881 - N222 Willow St, Stephenson, MI 49887
- Jim and Carlyn Lynch - (906)241-1488 - N10438 M-35, Cedar River, MI 49887

Would you like to be included on this list? Please reach out to Pastor Crass.

(continued from page 1)

It's the motivation of Christ's love for us. "We love because he first loved us" (1 John 4:19) is not just a clever passage we teach our kids and paint on our walls. It's the heart of service. Our service does not look toward what we might get out of it. Our service looks toward the cross. It looks toward Jesus standing victoriously on Easter day. It looks to the promises of sins forgiven and eternal life in heaven. This is why Christians serve. It's out of thanks.

Does that mean that we are always willing and ready to serve in whatever way is asked? Of course not. While we have been made new in Christ and are motivated and joyful about serving him, we also have the old sinful nature that continues to struggle against the new self. It's that old nature that seeks excuses to step back when it's time to serve. It's that nature that runs away from having to make any sacrifices so that God and his kingdom might be glorified.

Certainly, this can be seen in church service, but it can also be seen in serving the family or serving the community. It is not easy to be a spouse. It's not easy to be a parent. Both of those vocations involve sacrifice. And if that sacrifice is not motivated by the joy of the gospel, the people involved will feel just like that Chick-fil-A worker. They'll say, "my pleasure to be your spouse" or "my pleasure to raise these kids," but these words will be the farthest thing from the truth.

Find pleasure in serving. Why? Because your service, even if it has nothing to do with the church and feels like the furthest thing from gospel ministry, is ultimately service to God. He has placed you in that position. He has allowed you to serve others, and in doing so, to serve him. So, don't be afraid to serve. Find joy in it. And recognize that God is using you every day to bring him glory and to bring people nearer to him and his message of truth.

Member Announcements

Do you have any announcements you'd like shared in the church newsletter? Reach out to Pastor Crass.

July 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>8am Bible Class at Holy Cross 8:45am Worship at Holy Cross 10:30am Worship at St. Mark 11:30am Bible Class at St. Mark</p> <p>30</p>	<p>6:30pm VBS Planning Meeting</p> <p>1</p>	<p>1pm Midweek Bible Class at St. Mark 6pm Pre-Midweek Bible Class Supper at Holy Cross 6:30pm Midweek Bible Class at Holy Cross</p> <p>2</p>			<p>4pm Don and Joan Brown Memorial Service at St. Mark</p> <p>5</p>	
<p>8am Bible Class at Holy Cross 8:45am Worship at Holy Cross w/Communion 10:30am Worship at St. Mark w/Communion 11:30am Bible Class at St. Mark</p> <p>7</p>	<p>6pm St. Mark Voters' Meeting</p> <p>8</p>	<p>1pm Midweek Bible Class at St. Mark 6pm Pre-Midweek Bible Class Supper at Holy Cross 6:30pm Midweek Bible Class at Holy Cross</p> <p>9</p>				
<p>8am Bible Class at Holy Cross 8:45am Worship at Holy Cross 10:30am Worship at St. Mark 11:30am Bible Class at St. Mark</p> <p>14</p>						
<p>8am Bible Class at Holy Cross 8:45am Worship at Holy Cross w/Communion 10:30am Worship at St. Mark w/Communion 11:30am Bible Class at St. Mark</p> <p>21</p>		<p>1pm Midweek Bible Class at St. Mark 6pm Pre-Midweek Bible Class Supper at Holy Cross 6:30pm Midweek Bible Class at Holy Cross</p> <p>22</p>				
<p>Pastor Out of Town 8:45am Worship at Holy Cross 10:30am Worship at St. Mark 11:30am Fellowship at St. Mark</p> <p>28</p>	<p>5:30pm Supper (pre-VBS) 6pm VBS</p> <p>29</p>	<p>5:30pm Supper (pre-VBS) 6pm VBS</p> <p>30</p>	<p>5:30pm Supper (pre-VBS) 6pm VBS</p> <p>31</p>	<p>5:30pm Supper (pre-VBS) 6pm VBS</p> <p>1</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>3</p>

St. Mark
Altar: Tammy Eichhorn & Kathy Ludwig
Hostess: Connie & Sally Theuerkauf

Holy Cross	
Date	Ushers
7/7	Team 1: Trout/Kary
7/14	Team 2: Kuntze
7/21	Team 3: Kedsch
7/28	Team 4: Tauscher