



Holy Cross—St. Mark

Newsletter

April 2026



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Upcoming Events

- Apr. 2: Holy Thursday Worship @HC w/ Communion
- Apr. 3: Good Friday Worship at St. Mark
- Apr. 6-14: Pastor on Vacation
- Apr. 6: HC Ladies' Aid - 1pm
- Apr. 11: Puzzle Exchange @HC - 9am
- Apr. 11: LWMS at Grace, Crivitz - 9:30am
- Apr. 12: Budget Forum @HC - 9:45am
- Apr. 16: HC Voters' Meeting - 6:30pm
- Apr. 20: Little Lambs - 6:00pm
- Apr. 20: SM Voters' Meeting - 6pm
- Apr. 21-22: Pastor at Conference
- Apr. 26: SM Fellowship after Service

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Devotional Thoughts

By Pastor Crass

Who is responsible for your problems? Who gets the blame when screw-ups happen? I wonder if you've noticed the same trend I have in the way people talk over the last ten years. It seems that when people do wrong, we don't often talk about them having agency. The murderer gets spoken about with pity because his parents were dead-beats growing up. The scammer gets treated with the same sympathy as her victims because the "system is rigged" against her. Just look at the content we take in from Hollywood. How many classic stories have been retold through the villain's perspective, painting him or her as anti-hero, excused from all future misdeeds because of a broken home or a broken society.

This is not just a critique of modern media, because we think this way in our everyday lives too. I've heard lots of excuse making for sin. I've confessed my sins to other Christians, just for them to respond with excuses defending me. And I've done that same excuse-making for myself and others too. So here's the question of our day: Do we have agency for the bad things we do, or are we just products of our environment?

This question is hotly argued by Christians today. And it's really just another way of asking this: Are people basically good or bad? Instead of any of us starting the answer with "What I think..." or "What I observe..." Let's let the scriptures speak. Psalm 51:5 tell us we were conceived in sin. Sin stuck to us during those nine months of gestation. So, we were born sinful, inheriting that sin from our parents that they inherited from theirs. And Romans 3 tells us what we are and where we stand with God apart from Christ. Read verses 10-18. It describes the evil of sin and it tells us this applies to all. Verse 23 makes it even more clear.

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WELS News

God's work in Ukraine continues

Our sister church the Ukrainian Lutheran Church (ULC), along with all the citizens of Ukraine, has been experiencing the hardship and suffering caused by four years of a terrible and destructive war. Families have had to flee to safer locations, homes have been destroyed, and some pastors have had to relocate to areas away from the war zones.

When the war began, WELS members responded with their own personal prayers and with prayers in their congregations. They also responded generously with gifts and offerings. Those gifts, regularly forwarded to the ULC, have been faithfully used to provide food, fuel, transportation, medicine, and clothing. And the members of the ULC did not keep those gifts for themselves. They have responded to our generosity with generosity of their own, making needed supplies available to many people in their communities who have been affected by the brutality and scarcity of war.

Vyacheslav Horpynchuk, the bishop of the Ukrainian Lutheran Church, tells the story far better than I can. This is what he writes: "Here the fifth year of the full-scale Russian invasion began. Thanks be to God this winter is coming to an end. It has been the most severe winter in the recent decades: lots of snow, very low below freezing temperatures and very heavy bombardments of our electrical, heating systems and residential areas of Kyiv, Kharkiv, Odesa, as well as smaller cities and villages. Lord, have mercy. I would like to thank all the brothers and sisters in WELS who came to help us. Many people did not have any extra warm blankets, and some people requested some help to survive that cold. We provided all our congregation members in need with extra warm blankets to survive the cold in apartments with no heat or with very little heat. We also continued to provide all the needy with thermal wear. All of them send their gratitude to all in WELS for your generous help. Thank you very much!"

Yet even in these terrible times, God finds ways not only to bless his people but also to create opportunities for God's people to carry out his mission. Through the works of love done by the members of the ULC, God has brought many non-Christians into contact with Christian love in action, but more important, with the saving gospel of Jesus and the comforting power of his Word. Many have begun to worship regularly in ULC congregations, and dozens of people have been instructed and confirmed.

Roger Neumann, our WELS liaison to the ULC, adds some of his observations: "While the war rages on and people deal with the elements of nature, the gospel ministry is not stopped. I'm very thankful to our Lord for the faith he has given our brothers and sisters in Christ in Ukraine. The ULC pastors continue to preach the gospel, help those who are in desperate need, and offer encouragement and friendship to many people. So many people suffer from depression and anxiety, not certain if they will survive this ordeal or what their futures will be like. The pastors bring them the reassurance that the Lord loves them and will continue to bless them. They also encourage the people to pay more attention to the spiritual blessings that they have in Christ and not focus on the physical needs that are lacking at this time. While most ULC churches have lost members who have fled from the war and taken refuge in neighboring countries, there are, nevertheless, four new mission sites. Pictured below is mission work being done in one of those sites in Snihurivka."

People in those towns have welcomed pastors to share the gospel with them. In addition, a number of ULC members have taken refuge near Poznan, Poland. Bishop Horpynchuk will be making a trip there, and it's hoped that a new mission can be started. God is certainly opening new doors and opportunities, despite the war and adversity. God be praised!

I want to thank all of you who have already responded to this need in Ukraine with your generous gifts and prayers. With the end of the war still not in sight, the need continues. Learn more about the Ukrainian Lutheran Church and how you can support it at wels.net/ukraine.

*Serving with you in Christ,
WELS President Mark Schroeder*

Dual Parish Update

- For the first time in 6 years, both churches plan to send a lay delegate to the biennial WELS Northern Wisconsin District Convention.

St. Mark Council Update

- Council discussed upcoming maintenance projects that will need to be looked into the summer. It was decided that the siding should be looked at first, then the electrical inside the building.

Holy Cross Council Update

- A number of memorials have come in recently. Council is working with families donating them to honor the faith the Spirit worked in those who rest in heavenly bliss.
- Sean Troutt will be leading an open forum after church on April 12 to get feedback on what we can do to shrink the planned budget deficit.

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).

- Carol Heydn - (906)788-4445 - W5744 14 Lane, Wallace, MI 49893
- Kristin Bates - (906)280-8276 - W6450 Cty. Rd. 358, Daggett, MI 49821
- Harold Schlenvogt - (906)753-4326 - W5209 Cty Rd 348, Stephenson, MI 49887
- Evelyn Smith - (920)370-2361 - 1191 Pawn Dr, Green Bay WI 54313 (Menominee Health Services)
- Elizabeth Grille - (906)792-6060 - W4728 County Rd. 338, Wallace, MI 49893 (Menominee Health Services)
- 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
- Judy Hamblen - (715)923-5661 - 2006 Lake Park Dr, Room 203, Marinette, WI 54143 (The Cottages)
- Bob and Betty Burie - (906)863-9088 - 1801 8th Ave. Apt. 420, Menominee, MI 49858

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

(continued from page 1)

The Bible states plainly that we are sinners by nature, and that sin shows itself in the self-centered nature of everyone—from children to the elderly—and in the very human instinct to protect our own interests.

We can feign surprise about this. We can continue to make excuses for our own sin and tell ourselves the lie that bad behavior is taught and is not innate to our very nature, but examples of it are all around. Did mom and dad teach the preschooler to rip the toy they wanted out of their classmate's hand? Did they sit their teenager down and teach them to look down on and bully those who were different than them? No. God's word tells us we are sinful by nature, and the best example that shows us that we know it deep down is the fact that we are never surprised when bad news plays on TV. Maybe it upsets us. Maybe it leads us to ask why. But it never surprises us that crime continues.

When we make excuses for the sins of others, we are not just lying to them. We're lying to ourselves. And what danger to we risk if we refuse to credit sin to sinners? We remove Christ the Savior from the picture. Because if I'm not to blame for my sins—and instead I'm just a product of my upbringing or a victim of an unfair society—then I don't need Jesus' blood to save me. I just need better circumstances. I just need a life that is more fair or a rewind button to undo all the terrible things that made me this way. But as we know, fairness in this world is a pipe-dream promise peddled by those who often speak about equality for all, while raising themselves to be "more equal" than the rest. This doesn't mean the quest for a fairer society is a useless one, but if our salvation from the brokenness of sin only comes once full equality is realized, our deeply sinful and flawed world will only be filled with forever-victims who continue to point the blame at everyone but themselves.

Take accountability for your sins. Admit that you are a sinner and don't get defensive when you screw up. Because—whether you want to admit it or not—your sins belong to you and you are accountable to God for them. But that's where the cross begins to shine. Your greatest friend Jesus came not to excuse your sins and blame them on society or your parents. He came to carry your sins in his body and pay for those sins with his life. So I'll tell you this: If you want to find yourself closer to Jesus, stop lying to yourself about sin. I promise that when you do that, you will see Jesus' love and sacrifice for you in a way you never have before. Because you'll no longer see him as a life advisor or law giver, but as your Savior from sin. What a weight lifted! Sin has been removed and destroyed in him. Amen.

Member Announcements

Thank you to the five men who served as readers during our Lenten services and shared with us God's word.
- Pastor Crass

April 2026

Unless otherwise noted, the Lord's Supper will be celebrated on the 1st and 3rd Sunday of the month.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
29 8am Bible Class at St. Mark 8:45am Worship at St. Mark 10:30am Worship at Holy Cross 11:45am Bible Class at Holy Cross	30 1pm Midweek Bible Class at St. Mark 6:30pm Midweek Bible Class at Holy Cross	31 1pm Midweek Bible Class at St. Mark 6:30pm Midweek Bible Class at Holy Cross				
5 8:45am Easter Worship at St. Mark 9am Easter Breakfast at Holy Cross 10:30am Easter Worship at Holy Cross	6 1pm Holy Cross Ladies' Aid Pastor On Vacation	7 Pastor On Vacation	8 Pastor On Vacation	9 Pastor On Vacation	10 Pastor On Vacation	11 Pastor On Vacation 9am Puzzle Exchange at Holy Cross 9:30am LWMS Rally at Grace in Civitz
12 Pastor On Vacation 8:45am Worship at Holy Cross 9:45am Budget Forum at Holy Cross 9:45am Sunday School at Holy Cross 10:30am Worship at St. Mark	13 Pastor On Vacation	14 Pastor On Vacation	15 3:30pm Catechism Class	16 6:30pm Holy Cross Voters' Meeting	17	18
19 8am Bible Class at Holy Cross 8:45am Worship at Holy Cross 9:45am Sunday School at Holy Cross 10:30am Worship at St. Mark 11:45am Bible Class at St. Mark	20 6pm Little Lambs 6pm St. Mark Voters' Meeting	21	22 3:30pm Catechism Class	23	24	25
26 8am Bible Class at Holy Cross 8:45am Worship at Holy Cross 9:45am Sunday School at Holy Cross 10:30am Worship at St. Mark 11:30am Fellowship at St. Mark	27	28 1pm Midweek Bible Class at St. Mark 6:30pm Midweek Bible Class at Holy Cross	29 3:30pm Catechism Class	30	1	2

St. Mark
 Altar: Kathy Peggy Grille & Carol Rye-Lindberg
 Hostess: Lois Pfitzer

Holy Cross		Counters	
Date	Ushers		
4/5	Team 2: Kuntze	Team 1: Jerry Karry & Kristin Sivula	
4/12	Team 3: Kedsch	Team 2: Ken Hacker & Terri Sivula	
4/19	Team 4: Sivula	Team 3: Sean Troutt & Jeff Hacker	
4/26	Team 5: Anderson / Lynch	Team 4: Marie Anderson & Mary Sivula	