



Holy Cross—St. Mark

Newsletter

January 2026



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Churches



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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

Jan 6.: Compline Worship Service @HC - 6:30pm
Jan. 7: 20's & 30's Group @HC - 5:30pm
Jan. 10: Puzzle Exchange @HC - 9am
Jan. 12: Little Lambs @HC - 6pm
Jan. 12: SM Voters' Meeting - 6pm
Jan. 26: Little Lambs @HC - 6pm
Jan. 27-28: Pastor at Conference
Jan. 29: HC Voters' Meeting - 6:30pm

Devotional Thoughts

By Pastor Crass

An old year is gone and a new year has arrived. With that change comes an accounting of what the last year has brought and planning for what the coming year will bring. Are there successes that you want to bring with you into 2026? Are there regrets you want to leave in 2025? Oh so much to contemplate!

Maybe your health is at the top of mind. You're happy with some of the strides you made last year to get more healthy, eating well and working out more consistently. The medical appointments you went to brought a lot of encouragement that your ailments were improving. Or, maybe you've been discouraged by the state of your health and have resolved to make the next year of your life one of dedication to your physical well-being.

Maybe your finances are front-and-center. You're happy with the work you put in and the wage you made. You're pleased with the state of your savings account or retirement assets or housing situation. Or, maybe you feel less comfortable. You plan to put in more hours at work or find a new job. You decide that you need to slow down spending on needless things and focus on self-control with the plastic cards in your wallet. You feel like you're lagging behind on your retirement plans and hope to put your head down and play catch-up.

Maybe your focus is on relationships. You're pleased that you've been able to rekindle a friendship that was flickering out. You're marriage has grown stronger. You have the best relationship with your kids you've had in a long time. You feel like you've been able to grind off some of the sharp edges of your personality. Or, you hope that this upcoming year brings personal change, where you are able to stifle vice and foster virtue. You hope to mend the fences with those you've pushed away and let patience and love overrule arrogance and selfishness. *(continued on page 3)*

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WELS News

Our synod has set a strategic plan for the next ten years of our shared ministry. This is the fourth and last installation of that four-part plan. You can find more resources at christthroughus.net.

Commission

Our goals in bringing Christ to the nations

More than 6.5 billion people (more than two-thirds of humanity) live in places where Christ's name is barely known. This is why God has commissioned us to be his ambassadors—to proclaim the gospel to every nation. As we reflect on 175 years of grace, we pray Christ will continue to work through us to reach lost souls with his saving Word.

Forge a borderless support network

God calls every person and every nation to share his Word. By fostering international ministry partnerships, we will expand the gospel's reach. Through this strategic plan, we will nurture robust mission collaboration with confessional Lutheran church bodies in full doctrinal fellowship with WELS, equipping pastors and congregations worldwide to thrive as Christ's ambassadors.

Equip a global missionary force

Historically, WELS has dispatched stateside workers to plant the gospel, but a world ripe with harvest calls for more workers. Training pastors and evangelists from global sister churches unlocks a boundless force to proclaim God's saving grace where we alone cannot reach. We will strive to empower global leaders with Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions, fostering a borderless network proclaiming our Savior.

Establish confessional Lutheran seminaries

A strong church depends on well-trained shepherds who proclaim Christ's reconciling love. As the gospel spreads globally, emerging Lutheran church bodies recognize this need for seminaries grounded in Scripture. We will establish confessional Lutheran seminaries in key global locations, empowering a worldwide movement that shares God's saving grace faithfully in their own contexts.

Expand multi-language mission efforts

The rise of mission churches worldwide offers rich opportunities to share the good news with others. While many nations lack Lutheran resources in their native languages, we will work to expand our multi-language mission efforts to ensure God's Word is accessible across the globe. Trusting the Holy Spirit, we aim to empower believers worldwide with tools to grow in faith and proclaim the gospel boldly in their own languages.

Pioneer missions in high-risk and unreached areas

While we continue to plant new missions around the world, there are still unreached areas where God's grace cannot be safely shared. We pray that the Holy Spirit works through us to reach those lost souls in need of Christ's reconciling love. Our goal is to pioneer WELS missions in high-risk and unreached areas, identifying and crafting strategies fitted to these tough contexts as we faithfully preach the gospel where it's least known.

Dual Parish Update

- In March at Holy Cross and April at St. Mark, each church will hold an open forum to seek out the congregations' opinions and guidance as we look to implement a structured program to pursue and encourage straying members. The goal will not be to "clean the books," but to reconcile with those who have felt wronged in the past and stress the importance of public worship.

St. Mark Council Update

- Joey Starzynski has volunteered to be nominated as the next treasurer. He has begun learning the system that Doug Toupalik uses.

Holy Cross Council Update

- A new bad weather policy was approved. Unless Holy Cross is without power on Sunday morning, we will have worship even amidst bad weather. Council also wants to emphasize that if you do not feel comfortable or safe on the roads any day, please don't feel compelled to come.

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 and Virginia 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)
- Shirley Wetthuhn - (906)639-2236 - 2006 Lake Park Dr, Room 114, Marinette, WI 54143 (The Cottages)

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

(continued from page 1)

I'm sure there are many other hopes for this year that you have, but can I suggest one more? 2026 might be a year invested in health or finances or relationships, but maybe 2026 would be best served investing in the kingdom of God. But what does that mean?

Investing in the kingdom of God is not doing things to gain God's favor. It's not saying, "I'm going to try hard to be a good Christian." Because the truth is, your place in God's kingdom is not decided by how much you do for God. It is decided by the faith God has worked within you to trust not in yourself, but in him. So, maybe you would say that investing in the kingdom of God is not trying to make 2026 a radical improvement over 2025. Rather, maybe you'd say investing more in God's kingdom in the new year means finding more rest in him and the blessings he showers down on you like rain from the sky. Maybe it's finding more time for worship and devotion, not to "earn points" with God, but because the promises he offers have more staying power than a clean bill of health or a full retirement account or even a happy marriage.

What wonderful timing that we end one year and enter into another on the heels of Christmas. Because Christmas shows us what the kingdom of God is all about. It's not about us coming for him. Quite the opposite. He comes to make peace with a people that did not know him and did not want him. And instead of focusing on healing or enriching or reconciling people to each other, Jesus focus was to heal souls for eternity, to pour out the riches of heaven to those who don't deserve them, and to reconcile a fallen race to God.

Your new year's resolutions certainly have value. I pray that your 2026 does look better than your 2025 in terms of health, wealth, and relationships. But remember that those things are all a means to an end, and in the scheme of eternity, they matter little. So, invest in something more permanent. Stay invested in the kingdom of God. Let drawing nearer to Jesus and his cross be your resolution as you exchange the old calendar for the new one. A happy and blessed new year to you all!

Member Announcements

Christa, Reuben, and I would like to thank you for all the Christmas cards and gifts you've showered us with. But especially, we want to thank you for lifting our family to the Lord in your prayers. - Pastor, Christa, and Reuben Crass

January 2026 (Draft)

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
28	29	30	31	1	2	3
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	5 6:30pm Compline Worship Service at Holy Cross	6 3:30pm Catechism Class 5:30pm 20's & 30's Group	7 3:30pm Catechism Class	8 9am Puzzle Exchange at Holy Cross	9 9am Puzzle Exchange at Holy Cross	10 9am Puzzle Exchange at Holy Cross
8am Bible Class at St. Mark 8:45am Worship at St. Mark 9:30am Sunday School at Holy Cross 10:30am Worship at Holy Cross 11:45am Bible Class at Holy Cross	12 6pm Little Lambs 6pm St. Mark Voters' Meeting	13 1pm Midweek Bible Class at St. Mark 6:30pm Midweek Bible Class at Holy Cross	14 3:30pm Catechism Class	15 6:30pm Holy Cross Voters' Meeting	16 6:30pm Holy Cross Voters' Meeting	17 6:30pm Holy Cross Voters' Meeting
8am Bible Class at St. Mark 8:45am Worship at St. Mark 9:30am Sunday School at Holy Cross 10:30am Worship at Holy Cross 11:45am Bible Class at Holy Cross	19 1pm Midweek Bible Class at St. Mark 6:30pm Midweek Bible Class at Holy Cross	20 3:30pm Catechism Class	21 3:30pm Catechism Class	22 6:30pm Holy Cross Voters' Meeting	23 6:30pm Holy Cross Voters' Meeting	24 6:30pm Holy Cross Voters' Meeting
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St. Mark			
Altar: Sue Blake & Lois Pfizer			
Hostess: Peggy Grille			
Holy Cross			
Date	Ushers		Counters
1/4	Team 4: Sivula/Tauscher		Team 4: Marie Anderson & Mary Sivula
1/11	Team 5: Anderson, Walcher, Lynch		Team 1: Jerry Karry & Kristin Sivula
1/18	Team 1: Trout/Karry		Team 2: Ken Hacker & Terri Sivula
1/25	Team 2: Kuntze		Team 3: Sean Trout & Jeff Hacker