



Holy Cross—St. Mark

Newsletter

February 2025



Facebook:

Holy Cross & St. Mark Lutheran Churches



Website:

holycrossandstmark.org

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

- Feb. 3: HC Ladies' Aid - 1pm
- Feb. 10: SM Council Meeting - 6pm
- Feb. 20: HC Council Meeting - 6pm

Devotional Thoughts

By Pastor Crass

How long did it take? How long did it take after Adam and Eve were created by God for them to fall? On that fateful day in the Garden of Eden, when they and the world God gave them to inhabit were without sin, along came the serpent. He came with the face of a friend, but the heart of a foe. And what were his first words to Eve? “Did God really say...?” It sounded helpful, a voice to help remember the important words that God had said. But the question wasn’t asked to bring to mind the command of God. The question was asked to create doubt. And that doubt did come. Eve was pushed off balance as she tried to remember what God had commanded, only for the second time the serpent speaks to completely knock her over. He contradicts God. “You certainly will not die,” he said. Then he told her that God was keeping her from her true potential. This was a lie, a lie meant to pull Eve and Adam down into sin and separate them from God. Sadly, Eve believed the lie, and she ate the forbidden fruit. Then, Adam fell into the same lie, taking the fruit from Eve and eating it himself.

Lies, lies, and more lies. But this is how Satan works. This is the most dangerous weapon he uses to drive sin and unbelief. So, let me ask you: What are the lies that the devil likes to use on you? What are the lies that you struggle against which make you doubt God and his goodness?

The devil might whisper in your ears with lies of pride. He might convince you that you are without sin, or at least without sin in a matter in which you bear guilt. These lies bolster arrogance, where men and women are unwilling to take accountability for their own faults. And what’s the result? Jesus does not seem all that important to the person who sees no fault in him- or herself.

(continued on page 3)

Pastor Crass Contact Info:
 (309)798-0610 - text or call
pastorcrass@gmail.com

WELS News

Annual informal talks with The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) held

For the last 12 years, representatives of WELS, the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS), and the LCMS have been involved in informal doctrinal discussions. An informal doctrinal discussion is one that addresses matters of doctrine and practice but does not imply that doctrinal agreement and a restoration of fellowship is imminent*. The most recent meeting took place in early December 2024.

Over the years, these discussions have proven to be beneficial and productive. We have spent much time identifying the many areas in which all three synods are in perfect agreement. For example, we are agreed that the Bible is the inspired, inerrant, and infallible Word of God. We are in agreement that the Lutheran Confessions are a true and faithful summary of the teachings of Scripture. We all stand firmly on the four great “alones” of the Reformation: salvation by grace alone, by faith alone, by Scripture alone, by Christ alone. All three synods officially confess that Communion is to be “closed Communion,” shared only with those who confess a common faith. We all believe in the sanctity of human life, in God’s design for marriage and sexuality, and that God has directed that only men serve as pastors. The list could go on.

We have also had the opportunity to dispel caricatures and false assumptions that we have had about one another’s doctrinal positions and how those doctrines are applied and practiced.

Another benefit has been that these talks have opened lines of communication between our synods that were not open before. We have spoken publicly with one voice about the principle of religious freedom. Our mission boards speak to one another about plans and provide advice on specific issues. A procedure has been put in place as to how to communicate with each other when a pastor or teacher decides to leave one synod and join the other.

And there are, of course, discussions about the several doctrinal issues in which we are not in full agreement. We have spent much time talking about church and ministry, fellowship, and the role of men and women in the church. While we have found that the differences in some of these areas are not as great as we might have thought, we still recognize that differences remain.

We all pray that God would use these talks to bring about full unity someday. Until then, there are many good reasons to continue these discussions.

Serving together with you in Christ,
WELS President Mark Schroeder

**WELS and the ELS share doctrinal fellowship with one another, but do not share fellowship with the LCMS.*

Dual Parish Update

- This year for Easter, we will again have postcards to help our members invite others to join us for Easter worship.
- The Lenten schedule has been set. More information on service times and locations will be in the March newsletter.

St. Mark Council Update

- The council has located and is looking to purchase a bookshelf for the cry room.
- The year-end Treasurer’s report showed that this year we had three large capital projects that put us in the red for the year. Because of the generous giving of our members, the net losses for the year were cut in half. If you would like more information on these projects or the financial standing of St. Mark, please feel free to talk to Doug Toupalik.

Holy Cross Council Update

- The 2025 budget has been approved by the voters. Copies of the budget should be available soon.
- The purchase of a set of Lenten banners to hang on both sides of the altar was approved.
- The Easter breakfast was approved and is being planned. A freewill offering will be taken at the meal to support VBS this summer. If you would like to help preparing the meal, talk to Sean Troutt.

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)
- 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)

The devil might come from the opposite direction too. As you come to lay your sins at the cross of Christ, he will follow behind, warning you that your sins did not stay there, that they have followed you, like a dog tethered to you by a leash. And he will accuse and accuse and accuse you of those things you've done in the past. He will again whisper that Christ is far from you, not because you don't need him, but because the sins you've committed are just too far beyond forgiveness.

Let me share one last lie with you, because this is one of the lies that has taken hold most destructively in our present age. God tells us that faith is created and strengthened by hearing God's word (Romans 10:17). He commands us not to stop gathering together around this faith feeding word (Hebrews 10:24-25). But how often do we really need to hear it? The devil wants us to answer that question with "rarely" or "once in a while." And he uses our busy schedules, the weather, or our own laziness as tools to lull us into a complacency. It only takes a while for this disconnect from God's word to begin to starve the Christian and push Jesus aside in favor of a faith of work-righteousness, where the freedom Jesus has won is taken away and people once again live under the law, a law that will ultimately faith them and leave them with nothing but death and hell.

There are many more lies that Satan uses to rip you away from your God. Brothers and sisters, be aware that the roaring lion waits in the bushes, pounces when you least expect him, and can snack on your soul without you ever noticing. How do you go to war against the great liar? Ground yourself in the truth of the word. See in scripture who you are by nature, how great God's love for you is, and the lengths he went to in order to bring about a change in your life.

Member Announcements

Thank you so much for the thoughts, prayers, and love you have showered us with as our family grows. The baby shower decorations were beautiful, the food was delicious, and the gifts you poured hours into handcrafting and care into purchasing are blessings to us. We are so thankful that you are our church family and that we get to share this wonderful new chapter with you. Your families will be examples to us as we navigate the ups and downs of Christian parenthood.—Christa, Pastor, and Baby Crass

If you have any announcements you would like shared with our church family, please reach out to Pastor Crass.

February 2025

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|---|------------------------------|---|------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------|--|
| 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | 1 |
| 8am Bible Class at St. Mark 8:45am Worship at St. Mark w/Communion 9:30am Sunday School at Holy Cross 10:30am Worship at Holy Cross w/Communion 11:30am Bible Class at Holy Cross | 1pm Holy Cross Ladies' Aid | 1pm Midweek Bible Class at St. Mark 6:30pm Midweek Bible Class at Holy Cross | 3:30pm Catechism Class | | | 10am Bible Information Class at Parsonage Office |
| 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| 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 11:30am Bible Class at Holy Cross | 6pm St. Mark Council Meeting | 1pm Midweek Bible Class at St. Mark 6:30pm Midweek Bible Class at Holy Cross | 3:30pm Catechism Class | | | 10am Bible Information Class at Parsonage Office |
| 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 |
| 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 11:30am Bible Class at Holy Cross | | 1pm Midweek Bible Class at St. Mark 6:30pm Midweek Bible Class at Holy Cross | | | | 10am Bible Information Class at Parsonage Office |
| 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 |
| 8am Bible Class at St. Mark 8:45am Worship at St. Mark w/Communion 9:30am Sunday School at Holy Cross 10:30am Worship at Holy Cross w/Communion 11:30am Bible Class at Holy Cross | | 1pm Midweek Bible Class at St. Mark 6:30pm Midweek Bible Class at Holy Cross | 3:30pm Catechism Class | 6:30pm Holy Cross Council Meeting | | 10am Bible Information Class at Parsonage Office |
| 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 1 |
| 8am Bible Class at St. Mark 8:45am Worship at St. Mark 9:45am Fellowship at St. Mark 10:30am Worship at Holy Cross 11:30am Bible Class at Holy Cross | | 1pm Midweek Bible Class at St. Mark 6:30pm Midweek Bible Class at Holy Cross | 3:30pm Catechism Class | | | 10am Bible Information Class at Parsonage Office |

St. Mark

Altar: Sandy Toupalik & Amy Peterson
Hostess: Kay Keefer & Christa Crass

Holy Cross

Ushers

| Date | Ushers | Counters |
|------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 2/2 | Team 3: Kedsch | Team 4: Marie Anderson & Mary Sivula |
| 2/9 | Team 4: Sivula | Team 1: Jerry Karry & Kristin Sivula |
| 2/16 | Team 5: Anderson, Walcher, Lynch | Team 2: Ken Hacker & Terri Sivula |
| 2/23 | Team 6: Catechism Students | Team 3: Sean Trout & Jeff Hacker |