



Holy Cross—St. Mark

Newsletter

March 2025



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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

- Mar. 3: HC Ladies' Aid - 1pm
- Mar. 5: Midweek Lenten Worship Begins (See Calendar)
- Mar. 10: SM Council Meeting - 6pm
- Mar. 20: HC Council Meeting - 6:30pm

Devotional Thoughts

By Pastor Crass

The month, we will begin a series of devotions based on Jesus' parables. As you may know, Jesus uses these earthly stories with hidden heavenly meaning. He takes an idea that our limited human minds cannot understand, and puts it into a picture that they can. The first parable that we will meditate on is the Parable of the Sower in Matthew 13:1-23.

Jesus tells us that a man went out to sow seed. And he's not very choosy about where he throws it down. In fact, the seed falls in four very different locations. The first location is along the path. Of course, the soil here is hard and trampled down. Before it has a chance to settle into the soil, the birds come and take it for their lunch. Jesus later explains what he's really talking about: "When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the Evil One comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart." Some hear the word of God, but they don't listen to it. The words are going in one ear and out the other, and they are not even taking them into consideration. These are those who immediately reject the word of God outright when it is shared with them, refusing even to wrestle in their hearts with what God has to say. They let the devil rob them of this because they see it as foolishness or a restriction on the way they want to live their life.

The second location of the seed is on rocky ground. The seed finds some soil there, and springs up. But because the seed had little room to spread its roots, the midday sun scorched and killed it. About this group, Jesus says, "The seed that was sown on rocky ground is the person who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy, yet he is not deeply rooted and does not endure. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, he immediately falls away. This is the person who hears the word and believes. *(continued on page 3)*

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WELS News

Financial blessings continue

God continues to open the hearts of his people to provide generous support for the work that we do together as a synod. Congregation Mission Offerings (CMO) for the month of December 2024 amounted to \$3.53 million, which was up 4.1 percent (\$138,000) from December 2023 and was 4.9 percent (\$166,000) higher than the projection for the month of December 2024.

On a calendar year-to-date basis for 2024 the total reported CMO was \$23.91 million, up 2.2 percent (\$511,000) over the prior year and up 3.0 percent (\$707,000) from projected receipts. On a fiscal year-to-date basis, which began July 2024, total reported CMO through December (six months) was \$12.91 million, up 2.5 percent (\$314,000) from the prior year (\$12.60 million).

This is now the fifth straight year WELS has reached a new level of calendar-year reported CMO and the third calendar year in which reported CMO exceeded \$23 million. These annual increases have been very encouraging and have decreased the impact of the high inflation rate during the last four years.

Read about all the amazing ways God has blessed the mission and ministry work of WELS, made possible through congregations' CMO contributions, in the 2025 annual report, *Your gifts, God's blessings*. Read the digital version online or order your own complimentary print copy from Northwestern Publishing House.

We join in thanking God that he continues to bless our synod with growing financial resources that support our synod's mission and ministry. To him be the glory!

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

Dual Parish Update

- *Nothing for this month.

St. Mark Council Update

- Council is moving forward with collecting bids for a new sign and a new planter box.

Holy Cross Council Update

- The congregation was able to offer financial assistance to a family who lost their home to a fire and a couple men who were in need of fire wood.

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 - 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)

He becomes very zealous for the promises of Jesus, but quickly finds out that living by faith is not easy. His expectation was that struggle would leave his life as he began to follow Jesus, but then the realities of carrying crosses for Christ hits him. Because his faith is shallow and not deeply rooted in God's promises to work even pain for the good of his people, it quickly burns out.

Then comes location three. These seeds fell among thorns. Anything that grew was choked out by the invasive thorns. Jesus says about these, "The seed that was sown among the thorns is the one who hears the word, but the worry of this world and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, and it produces no fruit." This person is preoccupied with the things of this world. She may grow in her faith for a while, but God's love for her, shown in Jesus, is never the driving force of her life. She thinks joy will come from a bigger house or a prestigious promotion. And when she accomplishes those things, she's unfulfilled, so she moves on to the next thing. Maybe joy will come if her kids get into good colleges or her husband finally gets the boat he's been wanting. These things come. Still emptiness though. All the while, she's distanced herself from God. Her faith has been slowly choked out by all the thorny temptations of the world.

Let's go on to the last location. Some seed is sown on good ground. This seed grew strong and produced all kinds of fruit. Jesus concludes by saying, "But the seed that was sown on the good ground is the one who continues to hear and understand the word. Indeed he continues to produce fruit: some a hundred, some sixty, and some thirty times more than was sown." Some hear the word of God and let it form deep roots. They stay connected to that life-giving message of salvation, and it shapes everything they do. And the things they produce in their lives are beautiful fruits in God's sight, because they are done not for personal gain, but out of thankfulness to be part of God's kingdom.

Friends, maybe our takeaway from this parable is twofold. One, we should give thanks that the word has taken root in our hearts, and never take for granted every opportunity we have to be fed by that word. And two, we should remember that while God has called us to spread the seed of his word, we cannot choose the type of ground the seed will land on. Those who reject it or take it lightly bear all the blame for their unbelief. But thanks be to God the Holy Spirit, who works on even the hardest of hearts, just like yours and mine were, to lead them from the bad ground of the path, the rocks, or the thorns to fertile ground. He creates faith. As we work in his fields, we are not concerned with where the seed falls. We just keep sowing. Amen.

Member Announcements

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

March 2025

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

St. Mark
Altar: Kathy Ludwig & Kay Keefer
Hostess: Kathy Ludwig

Date	Ushers	Counters
3/2	Team 1: Trout/Karry	Team 4: Marie Anderson & Mary Sivula
3/9	Team 2: Kuntze	Team 1: Jerry Karry & Kristin Sivula
3/16	Team 3: Kedsch	Team 2: Ken Hacker & Terri Sivula
3/23	Team 4: Sivula	Team 3: Sean Trout & Jeff Hacker
3/30	Team 5: Anderson, Walcher, Lynch	Team 4: Marie Anderson & Mary Sivula