



Holy Cross—St. Mark

Newsletter

March 2026



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Upcoming Events

- Mar. 2: HC Ladies' Aid - 1pm
- Mar. 9: SM Council Meeting - 6pm
- Mar. 14: Puzzle Exchange @HC - 9am
- Mar. 4: Lenten Supper & Worship @SM - 5:30/6:30pm
- Mar. 11: Lenten Supper & Worship @HC - 5:30/6:30pm
- Mar. 18: Lenten Supper & Worship @HC - 5:30/6:30pm
- Mar. 19: HC Voters' Meeting - 6:30pm
- Mar. 22: SM Fellowship after Service
- Mar 22: 20's & 30's Group at Parsonage - 4:30pm
- Mar. 25: Lenten Supper & Worship @HC - 5:30/6:30pm

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Devotional Thoughts

By Pastor Crass

I watched a YouTube video a few weeks ago where a couple shared their “financial journey to being millionaires.” What struck me from the video, though, was not how they had made their million plus dollars. They had worked incredibly good jobs and had a no-frills spending habit. No, what was interesting to me was the beginning of their story. This husband and wife had made a fair bit of money already when they went on a humanitarian mission to Africa. There they helped build houses and storage sheds. It was on that trip that they were forced to compare what they had back home with what these people had to live off of. When they went home, they sold everything they had and became minimalists for a while.

I’m guessing very few readers of this devotion have ever gone to that extreme, downsizing to a tiny house and getting rid of all but a few pairs of clothing. But that same thought this couple had has probably crossed your mind at some time. You’ve probably felt guilty about what you have and others don’t. Somebody verbalizes it every Thanksgiving in a prayer: “Lord, we thank you for all we have. But we know there are those who don’t have what we have.” We point to the starving children in Africa, imploring our children to finish their carrots and peas. We point to the woman in the wheelchair, whose sees stairs as a challenge, and a sense of shame washes over us that we have what others don’t.

The worldly response is to beat ourselves up over our blessings and advantages. It’s to hide the things the Lord has blessed us with and downplay the talents he’s given us. It’s a sense of schadenfreude (happiness in others’ pain) and jealousy that leads us not to rejoice when someone is rich in family or skill or wealth and instead see those things as unfair advantage, things that a person has no right to put to use for their own good.

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WELS News

The WELS National Conference on Lutheran Leadership, one of the largest gatherings of WELS and Evangelical Lutheran Synod members, was held Jan. 19–21 in Chicago. The event was a huge success, with attendees offering many positive comments. Jonathan Hein, coordinator of WELS Congregational Services, provides the following reflections on the conference:

The 2026 leadership conference centered on the theme of WELS' recently adopted long-range plan, "Christ through us." The aim was to draw people back to the heart of Christian leadership: not what we accomplish through Christ, but what Christ continues to do through his people. Some highlights included the following:

- Four keynotes touched on major cultural needs for ministry efforts: courage, character, critical thinking, curiosity, and better collaboration between all God's people—men and women. (About a third of attendees were women.) One congregation president said, "The final day's emphasis on critical thinking—paired with a serious call to better recognize the ideas and gifts of women—will force us to ask different questions about whether our structure really encourages the full body of Christ to serve together."
- Sixty-nine breakouts allowed participants to examine "best practices"—tactical approaches to ministry around WELS that the Lord seems to be blessing. Breakouts on leadership development were especially popular. One lay leader shared, "What struck me was how many breakouts focused on growing as leaders, not growing numbers. The emphasis on character and collaboration was refreshing and deeply needed." Also popular were breakouts on revitalizing congregations and schools. A pastor noted, "After a tough few years in ministry, this was encouraging in the best sense. Seeing what the Lord is blessing elsewhere didn't make me feel behind. It reminded me that he's still building his church, and that faithful work—even in small places—matters."
- One in ten attendees was under the age of 24. This was an intentional effort, not just to equip the next generation of leaders but also to hear their insights on how to better reach and disciple people their age. One high school-aged attendee wrote, "It was encouraging to know that our perspectives mattered. It felt like my church was inviting us to help shape ministry now."
- Worship was inspiring and encouraging, grounding everything else in the forgiveness and peace Christ provides. Music was led by 20 students from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wis. The three preachers represented different aspects of leadership: in the parish, in the synod, and in training future workers. Twenty area pastors helped with distribution of the Lord's Supper to the 1,600 WELS attendees.

Rather than minimizing current challenges in congregational life, the conference addressed them openly. Declining participation in some contexts, leadership fatigue, and cultural change were named honestly—yet always in light of Christ's ongoing faithfulness to his church. One leader shared, "I appreciated the honesty. No one pretended ministry is easy right now. But the focus kept coming back to Christ's promises instead of our anxiety. That kind of clarity gives you courage to keep serving."

With that confidence, leaders returned to their congregations, schools, and ministries reminded that the future of the church does not rest on perfect plans or flawless leadership but on a faithful Savior who continues to work through his people.

*Thanks to Rev. Hein for his summary and to all who planned, presented, and attended this conference.
Serving with you in Christ,
WELS President Mark Schroeder*

Dual Parish Update

St. Mark Council Update

- The transition between Doug Toupalik to Joey Skarzynski has been moving forward. Collin Hauser has also been elected as our second Trustee.

Holy Cross Council Update

- Sean Troutt has written a letter to update the congregation about both the vacant treasurer position and the expected budgetary concerns for 2026.

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.

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This is not to say we should brag about our privileges. Jesus makes clear that the danger of wealth isn't the wealth itself, but the pride that often accompanies it. Likewise, St. Paul is given unnamed suffering to keep him from conceitedness over his vision of heaven. Everything God's given you has not been given to you in order to glorify yourself. It's easy for the teenager to use his basketball talents for his own popularity or for the middle-aged man to find renewed identity in the sports car he can finally afford. Maybe we could call them the status symbols of life, all the stuff and accomplishments that social media and every ad we see try to tempt us with.

But did God give us talents we were meant to hide? Did he give us money as a trap to lead us into greed? If God has given you much in any area of life, don't be ashamed of it. Use it the way God intended. If God has given you talents, use them to serve him. And I'm not just talking about donating your time to church in the avenue of your specialty. Go and work your job and make money, but do good work to serve your neighbor as use those talents. If God has blessed you with wealth, don't walk around guilty and embarrassed. Live generously, not just with offerings at church but as you care for your family and your community. And if you have been blessed with academic talents as a student, don't hide them to fit in. Use them to study hard, so that whatever field you go into, you will be best-equipped to be a blessing from God to the people you serve.

Enough with feeling guilty for God's gifts! If you rightly feel shame because you've made these blessings into idols and they have become curses for you, don't drain the bank account or bury your talents. Selling your house and minimizing your life will not take care of the problem of guilt. Instead, go back to the cross and lay your sins of arrogance or greed on Jesus. He has made the payment for them. He has made you right with the one who gave those gifts, even after you've misused them. Then, instead of throwing the gifts he's given you in the trash, go and use them to strengthen his kingdom, serving God and serving your neighbors.

"Instruct those who are rich in this present age not to be arrogant or to put their hope in the uncertainty of riches, but rather in God, who richly supplies us with all things for our enjoyment. Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and willing to share. In this way they are storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life." - 1 Timothy 6:17-19

Member Announcements

If you have an announcement you would like shared with everyone at church, please let Pastor Crass know.

March 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
<p>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</p>	<p>1 1pm Holy Cross Ladies' Aid 2 6pm St. Mark Council Meeting</p>	<p>3 1pm Midweek Bible Class at St. Mark 6:30pm Midweek Bible Class at Holy Cross</p>	<p>4 5:30pm Lenten Supper at St. Mark 6:30pm Lenten Worship at St. Mark</p>	<p>5 3:30pm Catechism Class</p>	<p>6</p>	<p>7 9am Puzzle Exchange at Holy Cross</p>
<p>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</p>	<p>8 6pm St. Mark Council Meeting</p>	<p>9 1pm Midweek Bible Class at St. Mark 6:30pm Midweek Bible Class at Holy Cross</p>	<p>10 5:30pm Lenten Supper at Holy Cross 6:30pm Lenten Worship at Holy Cross</p>	<p>11 3:30pm Catechism Class</p>	<p>12</p>	<p>13 9am Puzzle Exchange at Holy Cross</p>
<p>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</p>	<p>15 6pm St. Mark Council Meeting</p>	<p>16 1pm Midweek Bible Class at St. Mark 6:30pm Midweek Bible Class at Holy Cross</p>	<p>17 5:30pm Lenten Supper at Holy Cross 6:30pm Lenten Worship at Holy Cross</p>	<p>18 3:30pm Catechism Class</p>	<p>19</p>	<p>20</p>
<p>8am Bible Class at St. Mark 8:45am Worship at St. Mark 9:30am Sunday School at Holy Cross 9:45am Fellowship at St. Mark 10:30am Worship at Holy Cross 11:45am Bible Class at Holy Cross 4:30pm 20's & 30's Group at Parsonage</p>	<p>22 6pm St. Mark Council Meeting</p>	<p>23 1pm Midweek Bible Class at St. Mark 6:30pm Midweek Bible Class at Holy Cross</p>	<p>24 5:30pm Lenten Supper at Holy Cross 6:30pm Lenten Worship at Holy Cross</p>	<p>25 3:30pm Catechism Class</p>	<p>26</p>	<p>27</p>
<p>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</p>	<p>29 6pm St. Mark Council Meeting</p>	<p>30 1pm Midweek Bible Class at St. Mark 6:30pm Midweek Bible Class at Holy Cross</p>	<p>31</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>3</p>

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

Holy Cross		Counters	
Date	Ushers		
3/1	Team 2: Kuntze	Team 4: Marie Anderson & Mary Sivula	
3/8	Team 3: Kedsch	Team 1: Jerry Karry & Kristin Sivula	
3/15	Team 4: Sivula	Team 2: Ken Hacker & Terri Sivula	
3/22	Team 5: Anderson, Walcher, Lynch	Team 3: Sean Trout & Jeff Hacker	
3/29	Team 1: Trout/Kary	Team 4: Marie Anderson & Mary Sivula	