

ST. MARK LUTHERAN CHURCH, ELCA

1900 Cape LaCroix Road • Cape Girardeau / 573-334-5852

E-mail: stmarkcape@charterinternet.com/ Web: www.stmarkcape.org

Sunday School 8:45 a.m.

Worship 10:00 a.m.

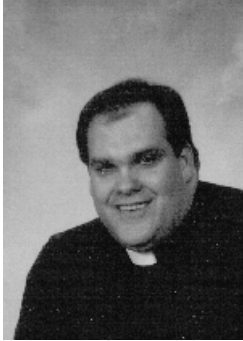
December, 2008

Issue 155



OUR MISSION: To celebrate God's Word and respond to human needs:

Through worship, education, encouraging one another in Christian fellowship,
and spreading the Word of God through word and deed.



As I wind up another quarter at the University of Chicago, I do so looking forward to spending more time at home in the winter quarter. I will have to physically be present in the classroom for just one seminar class during the winter quarter which means that I will be in the classroom from 3:00-6:00 PM on Thursdays. There will be exceptions, but for most of the weeks in the winter, I will be taking the train up on Thursday mornings and returning on the train on Friday mornings.

It seemed important this month to update you with regard to my progress at Chicago. I have made a substantial change in my program. My new schedule reflects that change. I have decided to forfeit my substantial advantage in petitioning to the Divinity School. I have made that decision in favor of opening myself to broader opportunities that will be available when I earn my PhD through a history program.

If you are a regular reader of this newsletter, then you are well aware of the challenges this congregation and I have faced (and sadly continue to face) through the ongoing effort of those whom you asserted were and are trying to hurt us badly through an unhealthy sense of church ownership. Moreover, you also know that from the very beginning your council and I appealed repeatedly to our bishop for support. Our bishop repeatedly rejected our pleas, and then chose to ignore his fiduciary responsibility to me and to us in order to intervene on behalf of those whose defamatory efforts, which continue in the present, are efforts to hurt us...pathetic. That is all old news, the details of which we do not need to re-visit in this forum at this time.

I only raise this ongoing defamatory behavior in order to say that the change in my program at Chicago also reflects what I must finally acknowledge: My reputation has been damaged. Part of the silver lining in this cloud, however, is that in the near term I will be at home more. While I perceive that I have been forced to make a change in my program, giving up advantages I have earned, as always. I will pursue the imposition of my new course with vigor. You and I have learned to persevere together and we will press on in joyfully fulfilling the call of our mission and ministry.

While I am still a student in the Divinity School, and although I will graduate with a degree from the University of Chicago, I am now engaged in taking courses in the Division of Social Sciences. I am finishing my work in three history courses. One of my three courses this fall has been a seminar that is normally part of the core curriculum for PhD students. The course is really a two-course sequence. The first course is a seminar filled with substantial readings (200-300 pages per week) and a short reaction paper due each week. The first part of the course culminates with the approval of a research proposal.

The second part of the course involves writing a 50-70 page research paper. The department grades the paper, not the instructor. The grade on the paper is the grade for both courses. In the quarter when the paper is written, students who take this required two-course sequence are only allowed to take one other course. The paper serves as the masters thesis for students in the Division of the Social Sciences.

The research for the paper must be from primary sources. It is highly preferential that the primary sources be procured through archives and that they be in a language other than English. My approved research proposal will attempt to answer the question, "Why was the Tuebingin Stift founded as a separate institution that is in relationship with the University of Tuebingen?" An alternative way of stating the question might be, "What issues of resistance did Duke Ulrich of Wurttemberg face as he sought to advance the Reformation through the training of teachers and pastors?"

I would be interested to know if you think I can get 70 pages out of answering my question. In the meantime, I will be traveling to Germany in January to study documents in the archives in Wurttemberg. When I return from Tuebingen I will be writing. My paper is due at 5:00 PM on March 20, 2009.

As 2008 is passing, I remember the words of St. Paul as written in what we know as his second letter to the church at Corinth. I was recently talking with a member of our congregation and reflecting on all that has happened in 2008. Indeed, a lot has happened in 2008. On the one hand, we reached the conclusion of a year and a half long process that was exceeded in its injustice only by the inexplicable and unjust decision perpetrated upon this congregation.

We endured that process, which never should have been initiated, and the resulting decision after two prior years of unrelenting and unjustified defamatory attacks on my reputation. For three and a half years we were subjected to maltreatment by those who sought hegemony over the expressed (and once considered sacred) will of our congregation. Though their ongoing behavior is outside the congregation, we continue to face the consequences that our bishop has never supported me or this congregation according to his duty to do so. Indeed, there is no evidence our Record on Appeal was even read.

All of this, and yet in my aforementioned conversation with a member of St. Mark, we were able to remember what a peaceful and deeply satisfying year this has been for our congregation. Despite all that we faced, despite our loss in membership resulting from both the ongoing behavior and the complete lack of support of our Synod, we have been able to celebrate the Word of God and respond to human need in deeply satisfying ways. Our experience in 2008 reminds me of these words from Paul's second letter to the church at Corinth:

*We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; ⁹ persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; ¹⁰ always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our bodies. ¹¹ For while we live, we are always being given up to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus may be made visible in our mortal flesh. ¹² So death is at work in us, but life in you. ¹³ But just as we have the same spirit of faith that is in accordance with scripture-- "I believed, and so I spoke"-- we also believe, and so we speak, ¹⁴ because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus, and will bring us with you into his presence. **2 Corinthians 4:8-14***

As I look forward to 2009, I have other words of encouragement from scripture in mind. I am thinking of the epistle to the Hebrews. The King James Version usually includes the title of Hebrews as, "The Epistle of Paul to the Hebrews". The fact is that we are not sure who wrote Hebrews. We do know that the message of Hebrews is consistent with the message of the Gospel.

I want you to notice something else: Paul, when he writes, usually loads up a word like "therefore" with all kinds of weight...usually "therefore" carries the weight of both law and gospel. What follows "therefore" is usually profoundly oriented to the Gospel. I hear this "therefore" containing all that we faced and persevered through in 2008, the joy we experienced together and the hopefulness of our future. You have frequently acknowledged that I have faithfully honored your call to me as your pastor. I want you to know how dear you are to me as I continue with you into 2009 in mission and ministry.

Therefore**, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, ² looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God. ³ Consider him who endured such hostility against himself from sinners, so that you may not grow weary or lose heart. **Hebrews 12:1-3

May the peace that passes all understanding guard your hearts and minds as we continue our race in 2009.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Pastor Mike

ST. MARK LUTHERAN CHURCH E.L.C.A.

Ministers All the Baptized People of God
Pastor Rev. Mike Malone 334-5852 (Office)
Church Secretary Ellen Robinson 334-5852 (Office)
Music / Choir Director..... Dr. Chris Goeke 335-2906
Musician / Organist.....Diane Wicker 335-8040
Council President.....Margaret Waterman 335-2820
Council Vice President Frank Nelson 335-1939
Council Secretary.....Sharon Schmidt 334-5604
Other Council Members:
 Evangelism.....Nancy Berry 243-6332
 Fellowship Pat Hennig 243-8668
 Music & Worship..... Fred Grabel 334-2529
 Social Ministry..... Steve Hoffman 335-2820
 StewardshipWende Pruden (573) 472-2761
 Building & GroundsMike Berry 243-6332
 Education/YouthPatti Pitman 270-1223
Financial Secretary..... Wende Pruden (573)-472-2761
Treasurer Brad Tuschhoff 334-4928
Sunday School Superintendent.....Patti Pitman 270-1223



DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

1-Al Lowes
 Ruth Schlegel
 2-Michael Miller
 4-Terry Pruden
 6-James Brown
 10-Lindsay Nelson
 11-Diane Wicker
 12-Kathy Grabel
 14-Lydia Cameron
 Maggie Schmucker
 16-Bryan Austin
 19-Josh Haynes
 Rodney Norder
 21-Alex Anderson
 23-Mike Berry
 Virginia Crawford

TREASURER'S REPORT – November 2008

General Checking - October 2008

Beginning balance 9/30/08	\$ 411.92
October Receipts	\$ 15,156.11
Available funds	\$ 14,744.19
Disbursements	\$ 14,532.30
Checking Balance 10/31/08	\$ 211.89**

****Includes**

- ◆ Memorials: Nothdurft - \$5,297.18; McCabe-\$50.00
 Jedan - \$12,053.02; Brown \$145.00
 Schlegel-\$2035.00, Weber-\$150.00; Williams-\$45.00
- ◆ General Fund-(-\$263.49)



Our church email address is: stmarkcape@charterinternet.com...thank you for using this address and keeping us informed!! Check out our website at: www.stmarkcape.org

OFFERINGS AND ATTENDANCE

<u>DATE</u>	<u>WORSHIP</u>	<u>ATTENDANCE</u>	<u>OFFERING</u>	<u>MISCELLANEOUS OFFERING</u>
11/2		77	\$2101.00	
11/9		64	\$2216.00	
11/16		52	\$2752.00	\$2398.44
11/23		69	\$2536.00	
11/30		57	\$1064.00	



Upcoming Events at St. Mark...

Noon Shiners...Meet the Third Thursday of each month...



Come join us for good food, fun, and great fellowship!

Next Noon Shiners: Thursday, **December 18,** 12:00 noon at St. Mark Church.

WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY

We will not meet in December. We will resume our study of John in January.



December Altar Flowers

Flowers have been ordered in honor of the following people for the month of December. 12/7-In honor of Terry Pruden's Birthday.

The 2009 flower chart is now ready for sign ups.

If you would like to order flowers to recognize an occasion or someone special, please sign up on the 2009 flower chart in the narthex.



SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS

Sunday School has gotten off to a great start! A very special thanks to Rhonda Bramlett, Diane Higgins, Jeanine Lively, and Kathy Malone for teaching our students. This year we are focusing on the miracles of Jesus. We have covered the story of the Lame man, Jesus raising Lazarus, and Jesus calming the sea. Our focus during December is the Christmas story. As we begin the new year, we will be studying Jesus heals ten lepers, Jesus heals the blind and beggars, Jesus turns water into wine, and Jesus walking on water.

As a reminder, there will be no Sunday School on December 28.



St. Mark Knitting Group meets every Monday morning at Susie Dodd's house. Please join us if you are interested. Call Susie at 335-3025 for more information. We have many available shawls to share with those in need. If you know of anyone in need, please contact Susie.



St. Mark Spirits Club

We will brew on Sunday, December 7 at 2:00 pm at Fred Grabel's house and bottle on December 21 at 2:00 pm. This beer will be ready to drink on New Year's Eve. We will brew Russian Imperial Stout and Micro Pale Ale.



Thank You and Announcements...



- *Thank you to Kathy Langenfeld for hosting our November Sweet Sunday. If you would like to host a Sweet Sunday event, please let Pat Hennig know or sign up on the sheet on the bulletin board.*

The Altar Guild would like to thank everyone who helped decorate the Sanctuary for the Advent and Christmas seasons. It looks wonderful! We would also like to thank those who helped make the Descending Dove Chrismons to add to the tree this year, and especially Bonnie Kipper and Jeanine Lively for making the lion's share. Finally, thanks to everyone who contributed to the Dessert Auction back in February. With the proceeds from the auction, we were able to purchase the parments for Advent.

CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

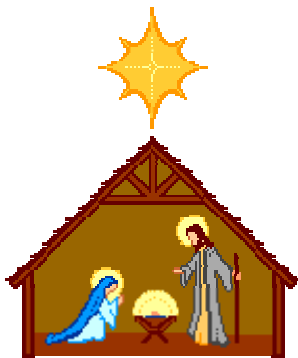
The St. Mark Sunday School and Youth will be providing a Christmas program on December 21 during the 10:00 am service.

After the program, the Fellowship Committee will be hosting a reception in the fellowship hall.

All are invited to attend.

Practice for the program will be held during Sunday School time starting on December 7, and tentatively the Saturday before, if needed.

For more information, please contact
Rhonda Bramlett



FAIR TRADE COFFEE PROJECT

Columbian Coffee For Sale at St. Mark

The Women of the ELCA (WELCA) are selling "Fair Trade" coffee, tea, hot cocoa mix, and snacks to benefit

Lutheran World Relief efforts to help struggling farmers in poorer countries. Coffee will be sold every Sweet Sunday at St. Mark.

Social Ministry

We will once again "adopt" two LFCS families for Christmas. Gift tags, along with gift ideas, will be made available and placed in the church narthex in December. Please consider participating in this ministry this Christmas season.



Besides gift giving, you may also give of your time in December by participating in **Meals on Wheels**. We will deliver meals to homebound individuals December 29-January 2. (None on Jan. 1) If you would like to drive and/or deliver meals, please see the sign up sheet in the narthex.

December 2008

Newsletter Deadline...

for January 2009 articles due by
Monday, December 22. Thank You!

Council News

Greetings Members of St. Mark,

Happy New Year! It's time for resolutions!

What?! It's not January 1st, or Rosh Hoshannah, or even Chinese New Year. OK, OK. But it is the beginning of the Church year. By the time you read this, we will be coming up to the second week of the church year, the second week of Advent.

What is Advent, really, I wondered. So I decided to look it up and what I found gave me a lot to chew on. Here is one definition from thefreedictionary.com

“ad-vent play_w2(“A0103200”) (ad'vent')

n.

1. The coming or arrival, especially of something extremely important: (e.g. the advent of the of the computer).
2. **Advent**
 - a. The liturgical period preceding Christmas, beginning in Western churches on the fourth Sunday before Christmas and in Eastern churches in mid-November.”

This part of the definition is interesting to me, that the lower case “advent” captures quite well one sense of “Advent” as we prepare for the extremely important arrival of Jesus (a bit more important than the computer's advent, wouldn't you say?).

What are we (me, you, St. Mark's congregation, all Christians) supposed to be doing during Advent? It's a fabulous gift we have been given, God made Man, Jesus, who suffered, died and rose again for the forgiveness of sins. It's exciting to think about celebrating the birth of Jesus. Here are some things we at St. Mark are doing during this Advent Season as we prepare to celebrate the Messiah's arrival.

- The church is decorated (Thank you to the multigenerational crew who contributed to that effort.)
- Advent candles are in use, counting off the weeks with their increasing light.
- New altar paraments are in place for the season (Thank you WELCA).
- Youth/Children's Christmas program is underway (Thank you Christian Education Committee.)
- Choir is preparing special music (Thanks to all of you musicians!)

In addition to these preparations for this extremely important arrival, we are preparing by thinking about our mission work and by carrying out that mission during this season.

- We continue to joyfully celebrate the word of God at St. Mark
- We are planning, through our Social Ministry outreach, to take care of some human needs
- Council is planning next year's missional work and using the stewardship pledges to develop the budget to support that work (It's not too late to pledge!)

News From Our Pre-School

December is a short, but busy month for our preschoolers. The classes will be working on the letters J and K and learning about all things Christmas. In addition, the children are learning some Christmas songs in preparation for their upcoming performances. The Pre-K class will be singing at Fountainbleau Lodge again this year and will be having a concert at 2:00 p.m. on December 19th in the Fellowship Hall. The Tuesday-Thursday class will have their concert on December 18th at 11:00 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall. Christmas break will begin December 22nd. We wish everyone a very merry Christmas and a blessed new year!

Kathy Malone
President, St. Mark Preschool Board



Christmas Open House

The Malone Family

Pastor Mike, Kathy, Sam, and Patrick

Invite You—The Members of
St. Mark Lutheran Church

To Our Home
146 Super Bowl Lane
Jackson, MO 63755

Sunday, December 14, 2008

1:00~3:00 pm



But is this enough? Does it capture all there is to Advent? Let's see what else the definition has to say:

“and observed by many Christians as a season of prayer, fasting, and penitence.

b. Christianity The coming of Jesus at the Incarnation.

c. Christianity See Second Coming”

Before you get ready to go on a big fast (probably not a bad idea between November and December holiday feasts) know that the Lutherans and Anglicans decided some time ago that fasting would not be a part of Advent (at least according to Wikipedia).

But Advent is a season of prayer and penitence according to this definition. Why prayer and penitence? Because it's not just a season to await/celebrate the first coming of Christ, as that sweet, helpless baby at the nativity (the Incarnation, part b). But it is also a time to anticipate and prepare for the coming of Christ at the last Judgement (the Second Coming, part c).

Hmmm. That makes Advent a pretty serious season, a complex season, embodying both celebration and prayerful reflection on God's gifts and how we use them.. This is where the “resolutions” part of Happy New Year comes in-as penitence.

I wish each of us a fulfilling season of waiting, preparing, anticipating the arrival of something extremely important. But don't make yourself crazy. Take time for peaceful reflection and resolution.

Joy to the world, the Lord is come!

Happy New Year.

Congregation Council President

Margaret Waterman



Evangelism News

A new guest book has been placed in the Narthex. Please encourage visitors to sign the book. Also, guest cards will be put in the pews for visitors to fill out. if you see someone you don't know at church, please greet them with a smile and let them know that St. Mark is a friendly church with much to offer them. Starting in January we will have new brochures about St. Mark that will be distributed throughout the community. Also, in January we will have greeters before each service.

Thanks to all who signed up for this important role, and if you would like to be a greeter, please contact me.

Nancy Berry

December 2008

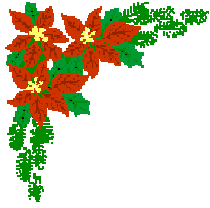
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3 7:00 pm Women's Bible Study Christmas Party	4	5	6 10:00 am WELCA Cookie Exchange
7 8:45-Sunday School Sweet Sunday Fair Trade Coffee 10:00 am Worship Service 2:00 pm Spirits Club	8 10:00 am Knitting Group	9 11:00 am Dorcas Circle Pot Luck	10	11	12	13
14 8:45-Sunday School 10:00 am Worship	15 10:00 am Knitting Group	16	17	18 12:00 Noon Shiners 7:00 pm Council Meeting	19	20
21 8:45-Sunday School 10:00am Christmas Program	22 10:00 am Knitting Group	23	24 7:00 pm Christmas Eye Service	25 10:00 am Christmas Service	26	27
28 8:45-Sunday School 10:00 am Worship	29 10:00 am Knitting Group	30	31			

**ST MARK LUTHERAN CHURCH ELCA
1900 CAPE LACROIX ROAD
CAPE GIRARDEAU MO 63701
573-334-5852**

**NON PROFIT ORGANIZATION
US POSTAGE PAID
CAPE GIRARDEAU MO 63701
PERMIT #584**

Return Service Requested





**REMEMBER:
SWEET SUNDAY IS
BRING A FRIEND SUNDAY!**



**CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT SERVICE
DECEMBER 24-7:00 PM**



**CHRISTMAS DAY SERVICE
DECEMBER 25-10:00 AM**

