

**St. Mark's Lutheran Church**  
302 East Pearl St.  
Wapakoneta, OH 45895

# St. Mark's Messenger, December 2025



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## **Pastor Doug's Carol's Letter**

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Merry Christmas. This month's pastoral letter was written by Pastor Carol Pretorius.

Peace,

*Pastor Doug*

Way back in 2007, I spent a year teaching first grade. I look back on that year with amazement that I got through it because it was a whole different way of teaching from what I experienced as a seventh and eighth grade language arts teacher. When I refer to that year, I often hear myself saying, "I had the gift of being able to see the world through first graders' eyes."

Those eyes of my first graders were full of wonder. Every season of the year that we celebrated was a big deal. I got to hear them excited about what they were going to be for Halloween. I especially heard lots of excitement about the coming of Christmas. There was this sense of wonder, especially when they thought about Santa and what he might bring them. There was certainly energy and excitement in the air.

As we enter the season of Advent, I wonder if we might take time to try to rekindle the "wonder" of God emptying himself to become a helpless baby given to the care of a young mother named Mary and her husband Joseph. To think that Jesus had the power to reign with God the Father and the Holy Spirit at the beginning of time and yet he accepted this seemingly crazy mission to come into our midst to grow up as he experienced being fully human and fully God. He emptied himself for you and for me to experience humanity. He gave us a glimpse of what God is truly like... a God of relationship that created us to love him and love others. He was baptized and received the power of the Holy Spirit to enable him to stay in close contact with his Father's wishes. He often commented that he only did what he saw his father doing.

Yes, we marvel and wonder at the beautiful outdoor lights, the Christmas trees, and the homes that are decorated to the max for the season, but do we truly take time to ponder and be filled with wonder at what it cost Jesus to come to us in the form of a tiny baby? Do we wonder that the Word who was with God in the beginning of the creation of the world and allowed the world to be created through him, willingly came to show us love? What an amazing gift!

This season, I invite you to be filled with wonder!

Happy Advent and Merry Christmas!

Love,

*Pastor Carol*

## **Cookies Needed**

Cookies are needed for Loaves & Fishes. St. Mark's is responsible for the Loaves & Fishes meal held on Thursday, December 4. We will need to provide 300 servings of dessert. Please see the signup sheet on the table in the entryway if you are able to help provide cookies or the like.



## **Advent Offerings**

Each Advent we take up an Advent Offering that is used to bless church members who are struggling financially. Advent Offerings were originally collected from families who dropped a quarter in a jar every time someone visited them in their home in December as a remembrance of the blessing that the magi gave to Mary and Joseph with their gifts. The envelopes are available on the entry way table.

## **Community Thanksgiving Dinner**



The Community Thanksgiving Dinner will be served at the St. Joseph Parish Life Center from 11 am to 1 pm. Boxed carry-out meals are served starting at 12:30 pm. If you are homebound and would like a meal delivered, please let Elaine in our church office know, and she will pass along your address.

## **2026 Budget**

The Annual Meeting to approve the 2026 Budget and to vote on council members will be Sunday December 7 at 11:15, immediately following the worship service. The budget is on pages 6 & 7.

## **Christmas Jubilee**

St. Mark's will again be participating in the Christmas Jubilee "Angel" Tree program. We have 75 tags to fill on the Christmas tree in the hallway outside of the sanctuary. How it works: pick a tag, buy and wrap a gift with tag attached, and return it to under the tree. The gifts will be picked up on Sunday, December 14. These gifts will be distributed to needy families this Christmas season.



## **Advent Suppers and Services**

Everyone is welcome to St. Mark's Advent Soup & Sandwich Suppers (6-7pm in the Fellowship Hall) followed by our Advent Services (7-7:30pm) beginning Wednesday, Dec. 3rd. Our Soup & Sandwich hosts will be the Worship & Music Committee (Dec 3rd), the Kitchen Committee (Dec 10th), and Church Council (Dec 17th). In this season of preparation, you are invited to hear how some special and humorous angels made preparations for Mary, the Shepherds, and the Wiseman.





Galaxy A42 5G

**Top Left & Right:** St. Mark's congregants gathered for the *Flight of Soups*. There were many types of soup for everyone to try.

**Middle Left:** The second annual *Muffins with Mom* gathering where all donations benefit New Beginnings Learning Academy organized by Maria Dodrill.

**Bottom Left & Right:** The Saturday night *Fall Festival*. Members are pictured enjoying some tasty food and delightful fellowship.



# Worship Services for December

Wed. Dec. 3

*Advent Midweek 1*

**Drama: Operation Anunciation**

*Serving Soup & Sandwiches: Worship & Music*



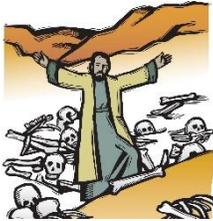
Dec. 6 & 7

**Ezekiel: Valley of Dry Bones** Second Sunday of Advent Communion

Ezekiel 37:1-14 Psalm 33:13-22 John 11:17-27

**Speaking Hope to the Hopeless**

On this second Sunday of Advent we prepare for Christ to come to us when we speak words of hope to the hopeless. Our Scripture story today is Ezekiel's vision of speaking life into the multitude of dry bones.



Wed. Dec. 10

*Advent Midweek 2*

**Drama: Operation Gold, Frank, and Myrrh**

*Serving Soup & Sandwiches: Kitchen Committee*



Dec. 13 & 14

**Word Accomplishes God's Purpose** Third Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 55:1-13 Psalm 119:1-8 John 4:13-14

**Speaking Life Into Being**

The ability to speak is a gift that most of us take for granted. We forget how long it took us to learn to understand language, to form sounds into words, and to develop a vocabulary. The ability to speak allows us the ability to reveal what we are thinking and feeling. Something even more profound happens when God speaks a word to us.



Wed. Dec. 17

*Advent Midweek 3*

**Drama: Operation Hark and Herald**

*Serving Soup & Sandwiches: Church Council*



Dec. 20 & 21

**Word Made Flesh** 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent Communion Youth Sun.

Psalm 130 John 1:1-18 **No Children's Sunday School**

**Be God's Grace in Action**

Throughout Advent we have heard God speaking to us, calling us to a vision of the reality of the kingdom of God being lived out in our midst. We have been invited to speak of the hope that is in us to a world that desperately needs to hear of hope and life. But it is not enough to just speak. We are called to be the love of God in action.



Dec. 24 **Birth of Jesus** Christmas Eve 5 pm & 7 pm Candlelight & Communion  
 Isaiah 9:2-7 Psalm 96 Luke 2:1-20

**God Trusts Us**

Tonight is Christmas Eve. We celebrate the birth of Jesus with songs and prayers, candles and communion. In the greatest mystery of all, God become one of us and entrusted his life to a poor but faithful young couple. In the same way he entrust himself to us.



Dec. 27 & 28 **A Voice in the Wilderness** First Sunday of Christmas

College Students **No Children's Sunday School**

Psalm 32 John 1:19-34

**The Sign**

We are in the midst of the 12 days of Christmas, that season of joy and festivities as we celebrate the difference Jesus birth means to us. Today we sing the great Christmas carols and hear the story of John the Baptist. Jesus was revealed to be the Christ (the Messiah) at his baptism when the Holy Spirit descended upon from heaven. This was the sign that God had given John.



**Thank You Notes Received**

Hey Pastor! I just wanted to let you know that I received my college care package today and I love it! I really appreciate you all thinking of me and the other students and putting this together for us. I'll definitely be putting the package to use.  
 -Kerrigan Lenhart

Hi Pastor,  
 I want to thank you for sending me a care package. I really appreciate it. If others were involved as well, please pass the message along. I am very thankful for all of your support and kindness. Hope to see you all soon!  
 Erika Lisi

We appreciate the many acts of kindness shown to us during the time of recovery from Mark's surgery. The meals were delicious and made mealtime much easier. Your help with transportation, especially while the kids were in school or working, was generous and we are grateful. Thanks for your prayers, cards, and best wishes during our recovery time. Thank you again for everything.  
 God Bless, Mark and Wendy Bauer

Dear St. Marks,  
 I wanted to say thank you for the college care package. You guys picked out some good stuff this year! It will ALL be put to good use!  
 Regards,  
 Collin Lenhart

MERCY UNLIMITED  
 MATTHEW 25

4) THANK YOU SO MUCH! We are grateful for the donation!

Check Date: 10/29/2025 Amount: \$500.00 Check Number/Cash: 14321

Sheryl Fordney  
 Sheryl Fordney  
 Executive Director

## **Auglaize County Local Food Pantries:**

### **Agape Ministries, St. Mary's**

Hours: Tues. & Thurs. Noon-4:30pm

### **St. Paul UCC, 119 N Franklin St., New Bremen**

Hours: Tuesday 5:30pm-7:30pm

Wed. & Thurs. 1-3pm

### **Mercy Unlimited, Wapakoneta**

Hours: Mon. & Wed. & Friday 9am-Noon

### **God's Store House, Wapakoneta**

Located at First English Church

Hours: Thurs.& Fri. 9am-11:30am

### **Trinity Lutheran Food Pantry, Moulton**

Open 24hrs. Located in the west parking lot

### **Calvary Campus**

510 E. Sugar St. Cridersville, OH 45806

419-645-4878 Hours: Wed. & Thursday 9am-Noon

### **Only Believe Ministries Food Pantry, Botkins**

1st & 3rd Saturdays 9-11am

### **West Ohio Food Bank Boxes at Auglaize County Fairgrounds**

3rd Saturday of the month 10am-Noon.

## **Free Hot Meals:**

### **Loaves and Fishes at First English Lutheran Church, Wapakoneta**

Pick up Thursdays 4pm drive thru. (567-204-6708) Call by Tuesday at 6pm to place your order.

### **Senior Meals at St. Paul UCC, Wapakoneta**

Thursdays and Fridays from 9am-Noon.

**Thanksgiving Day Meal Nov.27 at St. Joseph's Catholic Church, Wapakoneta 11am-1pm.**

**Grace Church 1001 Holly St. St. Marys Every Wednesday (Except 2nd Wed.) at 4pm.**

**St. Paul UCC 201 N Perry St. St. Marys Every Thursday (Except 1st Thurs.) at 4:30pm-6.**



## St. Marks Lutheran Church - 2026 Budget

Account #	Account Name	Actual 2025 Budget	Proposed 2026 Budget	25-26 % CHANGE	25-26 CHANGE
<b>INCOME</b>					
015-11-10-00	Cur Operating Envelope (w/Synod)	\$ 250,300	\$ 258,006	3%	\$ 7,706
015-11-10-01	Cur Operating Envelope (w/o Synod)	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	0%	\$ -
015-11-10-03	Sunday School	\$ -	\$ -		\$ -
015-11-10-05	Nursery Donation	\$ 11,700	\$ 11,700	0%	\$ -
015-11-10-06	Interest on Checking	\$ -	\$ -		\$ -
<b>TOTAL BUDGET - INCOME</b>		<b>\$ 272,000</b>	<b>\$ 279,706</b>	3%	\$ 7,706
<b>EXPENSES</b>					
<b>MISSIONS</b>					
016-30-10-01	ELCA/NWOS Support (3%)	\$ 10,012	\$ 10,320	3%	\$ 308
016-30-10-02	Filling Home of Mercy	\$ 500	\$ 500	0%	\$ -
016-30-10-03	Lutheran Social Services	\$ 500	\$ 500	0%	\$ -
016-30-10-04	Genecross	\$ 500	\$ 500	0%	\$ -
016-30-10-05	Oesterlen Services for Youth	\$ 500	\$ 500	0%	\$ -
016-30-10-07	Luther Home of Mercy	\$ 500	\$ 500	0%	\$ -
016-30-10-08	Wapak Middle Weekend Meals	\$ 500	\$ 500	0%	\$ -
016-30-10-09	Trinity Lutheran Seminary	\$ 500	\$ 500	0%	\$ -
016-30-10-10	Wapak Area Min. Assoc.	\$ 500	\$ 500	0%	\$ -
016-30-10-11	Mission Project	\$ 500	\$ 500	0%	\$ -
016-30-10-12	Mercy Unlimited	\$ 500	\$ 500	0%	\$ -
016-30-10-13	God's Storehouse	\$ 500	\$ 500	0%	\$ -
016-30-10-15	M/G/V(3% W/O Synod)	\$ 400	\$ 400	0%	\$ -
016-30-10-16	Special Benevolence. Project	\$ -	\$ -		\$ -
016-30-10-17	Auglaize County Crisis Center	\$ 500	\$ 500	0%	\$ -
<b>GLOBAL MISSIONS - Subtotal</b>		<b>\$ 16,412</b>	<b>\$ 16,720</b>	2%	\$ 308
<b>FINANCE</b>					
016-31-30-00	Pastor Base Salary	\$ 47,400	\$ 52,875	12%	\$ 5,475
016-31-30-01	Housing	\$ 35,000	\$ 35,000	0%	\$ -
016-31-30-02	Supply Pastor	\$ 1,600	\$ 1,600	0%	\$ -
016-31-30-03	Pastor Medical Reimbursement	\$ 4,800	\$ 4,800	0%	\$ -
016-31-30-04	Pastor S.S. Tax Allowance	\$ 2,678	\$ 2,678	0%	\$ -
016-31-30-07	Workman Compensation	\$ 350	\$ 350	0%	\$ -
016-31-30-08	Payroll Taxes-Compensation	\$ 8,024	\$ 8,509	6%	\$ 485
016-31-30-09	Cong. Stewardship Program	\$ 1,100	\$ 1,100	0%	\$ -
016-31-30-11	Office Supplies	\$ 4,000	\$ 4,000	0%	\$ -
016-31-30-12	Postage	\$ 1,500	\$ 1,900	27%	\$ 400
016-31-30-15	Pastor Retirement	\$ 9,888	\$ 10,545	7%	\$ 657
016-31-30-16	Pastor Benefits	\$ 900	\$ 439	-51%	\$ (461)
016-31-30-17	PastorContin.Ed/BookAllow	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	0%	\$ -
016-31-30-18	Pastor Auto Allowance	\$ 4,000	\$ 4,000	0%	\$ -
016-31-30-20	Electronic Transfer Charge	\$ 450	\$ 525	17%	\$ 75
016-31-30-21	Pastor Professional Expenses	\$ 750	\$ 750	0%	\$ -
<b>FINANCE - Subtotal</b>		<b>\$ 123,439</b>	<b>\$ 130,071</b>	5%	\$ 6,631

OUTREACH					
016-32-28-01	Outreach	\$ 500	\$ 700	40%	\$ 200
<b>OUTREACH - Subtotal</b>		<b>\$ 500</b>	<b>\$ 700</b>	40%	\$ 200
SOCIAL MINISTRY					
016-33-33-01	Social Ministry	\$ 200	\$ 200	0%	\$ -
<b>SOCIAL MINISTRY - Subtotal</b>		<b>\$ 200</b>	<b>\$ 200</b>	0%	\$ -
PROPERTY & MAINTENANCE					
016-35-51-00	Property Maintenance	\$ 12,000	\$ 12,000	0%	\$ -
016-35-51-01	Custodial Supplies	\$ 250	\$ 250	0%	\$ -
016-35-51-02	Insurance	\$ 9,300	\$ 9,500	2%	\$ 200
016-35-51-03	Gas	\$ 8,400	\$ 12,000	43%	\$ 3,600
016-35-51-04	Electric	\$ 5,750	\$ 5,750	0%	\$ -
016-35-51-05	Water	\$ 600	\$ 600	0%	\$ -
016-35-51-06	Sewer	\$ 750	\$ 750	0%	\$ -
016-35-51-07	Phone and Internet	\$ 4,000	\$ 4,100	3%	\$ 100
016-35-51-08	Refuse and Landfill	\$ 700	\$ 700	0%	\$ -
016-35-51-10	Office Copier Maintenance	\$ 4,500	\$ 4,500	0%	\$ -
016-35-51-13	Snowplowing	\$ 6,500	\$ 6,500	0%	\$ -
016-35-51-15	Maint Contracts	\$ 2,500	\$ 3,500	40%	\$ 1,000
016-35-51-16	Landscape Salary Contract	\$ 2,275	\$ 2,345	3%	\$ 70
016-35-51-17	Sexton Salary Contract	\$ 14,265	\$ 14,265	0%	\$ -
016-35-51-19	Cap.Improve1.5% Budget Income	\$ 3,905	\$ 4,020	3%	\$ 116
016-35-51-0	Landscape Supplies	\$ 500	\$ 500	0%	\$ -
<b>PROPERTY &amp; MAIN - Subtotal</b>		<b>\$ 76,195</b>	<b>\$ 81,280</b>	7%	\$ 5,086
ACTIVITIES					
016-36-01-01	Cong. Activity Events	\$ 750	\$ 750	0%	\$ -
<b>ACTIVITIES - Subtotal</b>		<b>\$ 750</b>	<b>\$ 750</b>	0%	\$ -
CHRISTIAN EDUCATION					
016-37-19-02	Christian Education	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	0%	\$ -
<b>CHRISTIAN ED - Subtotal</b>		<b>\$ 2,000</b>	<b>\$ 2,000</b>	0%	\$ -
WORSHIP & MUSIC					
016-38-28-01	Musician	\$ 14,500	\$ 14,500	0%	\$ -
016-38-28-08	Worship and Music	\$ 1,850	\$ 1,850	0%	\$ -
016-38-28-11	Hymnal Copyright License	\$ 1,750	\$ 1,750	0%	\$ -
<b>WORSHIP &amp; MUSIC - Subtotal</b>		<b>\$ 18,100</b>	<b>\$ 18,100</b>	0%	\$ -
CHURCH COUNCIL					
016-39-28-01	Synod Assembly	\$ -	\$ 300	#DIV/0!	\$ 300
<b>CHURCH COUNCIL - Subtotal</b>		<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 300</b>	#DIV/0!	\$ 300
STAFF SUPPORT					
016-40-37-01	Technology Coord Salary	\$ 6,720	\$ 6,925	3%	\$ 205
016-40-37-02	Administrative Assistant	\$ 22,000	\$ 22,660	3%	\$ 660
<b>STAFF SUPPORT - Subtotal</b>		<b>\$ 28,720</b>	<b>\$ 29,585</b>	3%	\$ 865
<b>TOTAL BUDGET - EXPENSES</b>		<b>\$ 266,316</b>	<b>\$ 279,706</b>	5%	\$ 13,390
<b>Income - Expense</b>		<b>\$ 5,684</b>	<b>\$ 0</b>		\$ (5,684)



Jacob Hicks	December 3	Kurt Doll	December 13
Kristi Fisher	December 4	Kelli Price	December 16
Kaylee Dickey	December 4	Pastor Doug Pretorius	December 17
Rod Metz	December 6	Howard Garber	December 18
Malia Johnson	December 9	Terri Zofkie	December 24
Marcia Quellhorst	December 11	Barb Anielak	December 24
Lucy Zink	December 11	Kent Welch	December 25
Carol Hume	December 11	Elisha Converse	December 30
Deb Regula	December 12	Terry Shoup	December 31
Jenna Presar	December 12	Carissa Mines	December 31
John Doll	December 13		

#### **St. Mark's Motto**

Be God's Grace in Action

#### **St. Mark's Mission**

St. Mark's Mission is to fulfill the Great Commission by extending God's Grace to all people.

#### **St. Mark's Vision**

St. Mark's will transform the Wapakoneta area and the world into a community of love by connecting the disconnected to God's grace and salvation.

We welcome, support, and care for all people.

<b>Pastor</b>	Doug Pretorius	<a href="mailto:PastorDougP@gmail.com">PastorDougP@gmail.com</a>	419-512-4491
<b>Administrative Assistant</b>	Elaine Hawkins	<a href="mailto:StMarksWapak302@gmail.com">StMarksWapak302@gmail.com</a>	
<b>Church Musician</b>	Melissa Grunden		
<b>Custodian</b>	Amanda Wilder		
<b>Technology Coordinator</b>	Dustin Jeanneret		

#### **St. Mark's Evangelical Lutheran Church**

302 East Pearl Street, Wapakoneta, OH 45895

Office Phone: 419-738-3122

Office Cell Phone: 567-356-6799

Website: [www.StMarksWapak.Org](http://www.StMarksWapak.Org)



# December 2025 – St. Mark’s Calendar



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2 9a- Preschool Chapel 12:15p- Preschl. Chapel	3 10:30a- Gardens 6p- Advent Supper 7p- Advent Service 7:30p- Choir Pract. 7:30p- Catechism	4 9a- Preschool Chapel <i>St. Mark’s Loaves &amp; Fishes</i>	5	6 8a- Men’s Bible Study 5p Communion
9a- SS for All 10:15a- Communion 11:15a- Annual Meeting	8	9	10 6p- Advent Supper 6:30p- Bells Pract. 7p- Advent Service 7:30p- Choir Pract. 7:30p- Catechism	11 10:30a- Otterbein Worship	12	13 5p Communion
9a- SS for All 10:15a- Worship Youth Sunday TSC Taping <i>Gifts Due</i>	15	16 9a- Preschool Chapel 12:15p- Preschl. Chapel	17 10:30a- Gardens 6p- Advent Supper 7p- Advent Service 7:30p- Catechism	18 9a- Preschool Chapel 6p- Council	19	20 8a- Men’s Bible Study 5p Communion <i>Private Party in Fellowship Hall</i>
21 9a- SS Adults Only 10:15a- Communion Youth Sunday	22	23	24 5p- Candlelight Service 7p- Candlelight Service	25 <i>Christmas Day</i>	26	27 5p Communion
28 9a- SS Adults Only 10:15a- Worship	29	30	31 <i>New Year’s Eve</i>			

# JOIN IN A MISSION TRIP TO:

# BACK BAY MISSION

strengthening neighborhoods, seeking justice, transforming lives

## JUNE 12—21, 2026



### Why a Mission Trip?

Mission has always been an important part of the Christian tradition. Early in his ministry, Jesus sent out the disciples to heal people and proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God (Luke 9:1-6). This was mission. Today, the Holy Spirit calls us to serve individuals, families, and communities at home and around the world. For generations, Back Bay Mission has been a leading mission site of the United Church of Christ. We are called to serve the poor and marginalized of the Mississippi Gulf Coast through our ministries here.



## COST: \$400/person

*(Minimum Age: 14)*

## ATTENDANCE FORM & DEPOSIT OF \$100 DUE: JANUARY 5TH

**TO REQUEST ATTENDANCE FORM OR  
MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:**

**ST. PAUL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

**419-738-2215**

**OFFICE@STPAULUCC.COM**

**108 W MECHANIC ST  
WAPAKONETA, OHIO 45895**

