

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

St. Mark's Messenger, March 2026



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Pastor Doug's Letter

2026
**THE WAY
OF LOVE**
1 JOHN 4:19



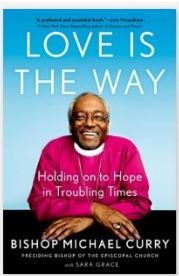
“We love because he first loved us.”

Beloved People of God,

Bishop Daniel Beaudoin has declared that the theme for the Northwestern Ohio Synod for this year is **The Way of Love**, and the theme verse is I John 4:19, “We love because he first loved us.” He invites us to explore what it means to love and to practice doing it. This is not new to us for we are informed by Jesus’ two great commandments:

1. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind.
2. Love your neighbor as yourself.

Hopefully, we love God and others every day. Bishop Beaudoin’s invitation is for us to go deeper into exploring the way of love and to forsake the ways of the world, that of violence, domination, and manipulation.



Bishop Beaudoin is a reader and so every year he invites us to read a book congruent with the theme of the year. This year’s book is **Love is the Way: Holding onto Hope in Troubled Times** by Bishop Michael Curry. I have been reading it devotionally every morning and am two-thirds way through it. Bishop Curry writes in an engaging style with lots of stories from his childhood and his ministry. His thesis is that love is not just a sentiment, but a powerful, active force that can heal personal and societal wounds.

If you are a reader, I encourage you to buy the book and read it too.

Peace,

Pastor Doug

Lenten Midweek Worship

The Worship and Music Committee invites you to attend our midweek Lenten Soup and Sandwich Supper from 6-6:45 pm in the Fellowship Hall followed by our Lenten services at 7:00pm. Each week during our Wednesday evening Lenten services, Boxbob and Boxesue will learn something new about Lent. In the spirit of each week's theme a different donation item is requested.

February 25th: Boxbob Learns About Lent: The Season (Lint versus Lent)

Soup and Sandwiches: Altar Guild

Boxbob: Karl Schlegel

Boxesue: Shelley Schlegel

Collecting: Clothing for Mercy Unlimited



March 4th: Boxbob Learns About Lent: Prayer

Soup and Sandwiches: Youth & Parents

Boxbob: Jacob Grunden

Boxesue: Melissa Grunden

Collecting: Prayer Requests to be tied onto the Lenten Cross

March 11th: Boxbob Learns About Lent: Fasting

Soup and Sandwiches: Property & Maintenance

Boxbob: Ron Lenhart

Boxesue: Karen Lenhart

Collecting: Food for Mercy Unlimited



March 18th: Boxbob Learns About Lent: Good Works

Soup and Sandwiches: Social Ministry

Boxbob: Ryan Schneider

Boxesue: Kara Schneider

Collecting: Cards for Shut Ins (Wapak Manor/Otterbein/The Gardens)

March 25th: Boxbob Learns About Lent: Good Friday

Soup and Sandwiches: Finance Committee

Boxbob: Dustin Jeanneret

Boxesue: Taryn Newman

Collecting: Pet supplies for the Humane Society



2026 Community Midweek Lenten Worship Service Schedule

Every Wednesday at noon at St. Joseph Roman Catholic Church for a brief worship service led by one of the community pastors. A meal provided by the church follows each worship service. The theme for the year is **The Beatitudes: Attitudes of the Heart Personally and Communally**. The schedule of participating churches is:

- March 4 Blessed are the meek...
Pastor Phil Jarrells, Salem United Methodist Church, and friends
- March 11 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness...
Pastor Lorenzo Thomas and First English Lutheran Church
- March 18 Blessed are the merciful...
Deacon Marty Brown, St. Patrick Catholic Church, Glynnwood,
and Buckland United Church of Christ
- March 25 Blessed are the pure in heart...
Pastor Melodi Hagen and Trinity Lutheran Church
- April 1 Blessed are the peacemakers...
Pastor Doug Pretorius and St. Mark's



Spring Fling:

Let's celebrate the beginning of Spring!! On Sunday, March 22, immediately following worship there will be a meal with games and prizes to follow! It will be held in the Gathering Space and in Room 1. Meat, drinks, and cake will be provided. Every third family is invited to bring a side dish to share. The sign-up sheet is on the entry table.

New Administrative Assistant Hired

DeLynn Epperly will be our new administrative assistant starting the first week in June. Elaine Hawkins has ended the secretarial part of her job but will continue to serve as the bookkeeper until she trains DeLynn in June. We are pleased to have DeLynn join our staff and to have Elaine to serve as the treasurer for the next three months.



**Order Easter Flowers by
calling the church office at
419-738-3122.**



Pictured below to the left is Jennings McEvoy, Jase Whetstone, and Emery Woehrmyer receiving First Communion. Pictured below to the right is them with their certificates.



From the Family of Janell Lochard:

A very special thank you to the members of St Mark's - to Pastor Doug for all your prayers and visits with our mother and family, especially during her last weeks, and for the meaningful memorial service. Thank you, Julie Miars Golden, for all the prayers, cards, and visits throughout the years and for providing the music at the funeral.

Thank you to Carol Garber and all those who donated food and helped provide the delicious funeral luncheon. Thank you to all who sent beautiful flower arrangements and attended the visitation and service, and everyone who offered prayers, sent cards, or stopped to visit: you are appreciated so much. If we have left anyone out it is unintentional.

We are truly blessed to have such a faithful and caring church family.

Blessings,

The Family of Janell Lochard



Worship Services for March

Feb. 28 & Mar. 1 **Jesus Washes Feet** Second Sunday in Lent Communion

Psalm 51:7-12 John 13:1-17

Uncommon Humility

Lent this year will tell the story of the Passion of Jesus. Each week we will hear a little more of the about his suffering prior to Jesus being taken (willingly) to the cross. Today we hear the story of Jesus washing the disciples' feet and his invitation to imitate his humble service.

He poured water
into a basin and began
to wash his
disciples' feet ...
John 13:5



March 7 & 8 **Peter's Denial** Third Sunday in Lent *Daylight Savings Starts*

Psalm 17:1-7 John 18:12-27

The Rooster Crowed



The passion of Jesus continues with his arrest and trial before the high priest. Peter follows him and while in the courtyard of the high priest he denies for the third time that he knows Jesus. And the rooster crowed.

March 14 & 15 **Jesus and Pilate** Fourth Sunday in Lent Communion

Psalm 145:10-13 John 18:28-40

What is Truth?

After Jesus is condemned by the religious authorities, his passion continues with him being handed over to Pontius Pilate. He is accused of treason, which is punishable by death. Jesus responds to Pilate with ambiguous answers which leads Pilate to ask the question, "What is truth?"



March 21 & 22 **Jesus Condemned** Fifth Sunday in Lent Youth Sun. Youth Bells

Psalm 146 John 19:1-16a

Scapegoat



Jesus' passion enters a more intensive phase as he is flogged, beaten, and rejected by the religious leaders who call for his crucifixion. Jesus is the scapegoat, the one on whom all the sins of the community are heaped and who is therefore driven away and killed.

March 28 & 29 **The Crucified Messiah** Palm/Passion Sunday Communion

John 12:12-27 Psalm 24 John 19:16b-22

A Grain of Wheat



Throughout Lent we have been hearing the passion of Jesus. Today is Palm Sunday. This is a flashback to Jesus' arrival in Jerusalem and his being praised as the King of Israel. However, as we have heard he is condemned by the religious and political authorities precisely because he is seen as a kingly threat. So, we conclude the passion story with the account of Jesus' death by crucifixion.

St . Mark's Lutheran Church Council - January 22, 2026 Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Nelson Golden, Corrin McBride, Jen Garber, Shelley Schlegel, Amanda Schmerge, Mark Swaney, and Pastor Doug. Richard Ault and Marguerite Wallen were excused from the meeting.

Devotional: Pastor Doug led the council in a devotional from John 3: 1-8.

Nelson Golden called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m. The council members read the **Motto, Mission and Vision Statements** aloud in unison.

Secretary's Report: The December 17, 2025 minutes were presented. Mark Swaney made a motion to accept the minutes as written. Pastor Doug seconded. Motion carried.

Financial Report: Shelley Schlegel reviewed the Treasurer's report. In December, income was \$36,610.90 with expenses at \$22,899.01 for a net income of \$13,711.89. Pastor Doug turned in \$774 worth of expenses that will be retroactively reimbursed. An expense of \$1,700 will be taken out of the Special Benevolence Project fund with \$850 going to Mercy/God's Storehouse/Good Samaritan and \$850 going to ELCA/NWOS support. Mark Swaney made a motion to accept the financial report as written. Amanda Schmerge seconded. Motion carried.

Social Ministry: The chili cookoff that was previously scheduled has been cancelled for now. There is a meeting scheduled for February 3, 2026.

Worship and Music: Amanda Schmerge presented the minutes from the Worship and Music meeting that was held on January 7, 2026. Pastor Doug made a motion to accept the minutes as presented. Jen seconded. Motion carried.

Property and Maintenance: The Property and Maintenance committee did not have a meeting in January. There were several things that will be brought to the committee's attention: It was reported that the sidewalk in the courtyard is uneven. There is a gutter leak in the front of the church and an evergreen in the courtyard that needs trimmed.

Pastor's Report: Pastor reported that Bev Cummins passed away January 6, 2026. Alex and Connie Rompilla moved and have transferred to St. John's Lutheran Church in Piqua. There is a one day Synod Assembly on May 30, 2026 at 9:00 a.m. We need to appoint delegates to attend. A few members of council are considering attending, but we will table this discussion until the next meeting.

Old Business: Loaves and Fishes - Laura Heitz completed 5 years of service as coordinator and has stepped down. No volunteers have been found to fulfill the role at this time. We will not be filling the position. We will continue to ask our members to donate cookies (since we do not have trouble getting donations for desserts).

New Business:

- The Sylvan Learning Center requested to use a classroom (Room 4) from 4-8 on Monday and 4-7 on Tuesdays and Thursdays. There would be one instructor and up to three students. Each student would be there for an hour or two. They would bring and take all their necessary supplies and they would also supply a camera for security concerns. Council discussed and voiced concerns. Mark Swaney made a motion for Sylvan Learning Center to use Room 4 three days a week according to the stipulations presented. Motion failed for lack of a second. Motion did **NOT** pass.
- Elaine Hawkins, our administrative assistant, has resigned. She will work until we find someone or until April 17, 2026. She has agreed to help train her replacement. Pastor Doug and Shelley Schlegel will interview applicants. We will check with other local churches and ask the congregation if anyone knows of someone who would be a good fit. We will put something on the St. Mark’s Facebook page to see if we get any interest. If in 2-3 weeks we have not found any applicants, we will look into places like Indeed to try to find someone.
- Installation of council members will be February 1, 2026

The next meeting will be on Thursday, February 19, 2026 at 6 p.m.

Nelson Golden made the motion to adjourn the meeting and Amanda Schmerge seconded; motion carried.

The meeting was closed with the Lord’s Prayer

Respectfully submitted,

Jen Garber

Attendance 2025						
Date	Saturday	Sunday	Live Stream	SS Adults	SS Children	SS Total
1/4/2026	20	48	124	10	N/A	10
1/11/2026	20	52	108	17	3	20
1/18/2026	21	51	126	8	4	12
1/25/2026	18	N/A	212	N/A	N/A	N/A
2/1/2026	12	61	113	16	8	24
2/8/2026	16	63	136	15	6	21
2/15/2026	20	107	125	14	6	20
2/22/2026	19	58	103	10	3	13

St. Mark's Lutheran Church Council - February 19, 2026 Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Nelson Golden, Corrin McBride, Jen Garber, Shelley Schlegel, Amanda Schmerge, Mark Swaney, Richard Ault, and Pastor Doug. Marguerite Wallen was excused from the meeting.

Opening Prayer and Devotion: Pastor Doug shared a devotion from Bishop Daniel Beaudoin: What is Love?

Nelson Golden called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Motto, Mission, and Vision Statements were read aloud in unison.

Secretary's Report: The January 22, 2026 minutes were presented. Mark made a motion to accept the minutes. Shelley seconded. Motion carried.

Financial Report: Shelley presented the treasurer's report. January income was \$14,127.56 and expenses were \$15,500.51. Richard made a motion to accept the report.

Worship and Music: Nothing new to report

Social Ministry: Corrin shared that we will be having a "Spring Fling" on March 22, 2026, after service. It will be held downstairs in the adult Sunday school room. The committee is planning a trip to the Do Good Restaurant in Osgood, Ohio sometime this summer. Their next meeting will be April 28, 2026.

Property and Maintenance: Mark reported that 4 of the air conditioner units in the sanctuary no longer work and need to be replaced. Rod Metz is going to get prices. The sidewalk in the courtyard is uneven and will be fixed sometime after May 23, 2026 once the New Beginnings Preschool is out of session for the summer. The wobbly railing in the courtyard will also be fixed at the same time as the sidewalk. The gutter at the front of the church will be fixed sometime this spring. Mark mentioned that the evergreen in the courtyard will either be trimmed or removed this spring or summer.

Pastor's Report: Janell Lochard passed away on February 5, 2026.

DeLynn Epperly has agreed to be the new administrative assistant starting on June 1, 2026. She would like to work two full days and one half-day. Her schedule will be finalized once she starts.

Elaine's last day will be February 27, 2026. She will continue to do financial secretary duties one day a week until DeLynn is trained. Pastor Doug will do the secretarial duties as needed until DeLynn starts.

In February, Pastor Doug authorized \$192 and \$325 to help cover rent for two individuals. This money came out of the Mission Wapak Fund. He also authorized \$300 towards a \$1,200 utility bill for a young man whose mother was killed in a car accident. The rest of the bill is being paid by CERT, Trinity and St. Paul.

Old Business: The Synod Assembly delegates are Amanda Schmerge and Nelson Golden. This will be on Saturday, May 30, 2026 from 9 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. at St. Mark's Lutheran Church in Bowling Green.

New Business: No new business to discuss at this time.

Next Meeting: March 19, 2026 at 6:00 p.m.

We adjourned the meeting with the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Jen Garber



Metz, James P. (JP)	2-Mar	Garber, Marcia L.	12-Mar
Golden, Norah	2-Mar	Wilder, Amanda R.	13-Mar
Waltz, Kim	5-Mar	Ault, Richard A.	14-Mar
Waltz, Tina M.	5-Mar	Srisongkham, Barb	18-Mar
Price, John M.	6-Mar	Rader, Jerri	20-Mar
Richardson, Carolyn	7-Mar	Martel, Chris	21-Mar
Nicol, Susanna	7-Mar	Lisi, Trent V.	27-Mar
Kinninger, Sophia	11-Mar		

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.

Pastor	Doug Pretorius	PastorDougP@gmail.com	419-512-4491
Administrative Assistant		StMarksWapak302@gmail.com	
Church Musician	Melissa Grunden	pridd16@yahoo.com	419-204-1420
Custodian	Amanda Wilder	corrinelyla@icloud.com	567-204-2726
Technology Coordinator	Dustin Jeanneret	djeanneret@flex-corp.com	567-319-0278

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

March 2026 – St. Mark’s Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 9a- SS for All 10:15a- Communion 6p Jr. Climbers	2	3 9a & 12:15p- Preschool Chapel	4 10:30a- Gardens 12p- Lenten Serv 6p- Supper 7p- Midweek 7:30p- Catechism 7:30p- Choir	5 9a- Preschool Chapel	6	7 8a- Men’s Bible Study 5p Communion
8 9a- SS for All 10:15a- Worship <i>TSC Taping</i>	9 7:30p- Property Meeting	10	11 12p- Lenten Serv 6p- Supper 7p- Midweek 7:30p- Catechism 7:30p- Choir	12 10:30a- Otterbein Worship	13	14 5p Communion
15 9a- SS for All 10:15a- Communion	16	17 9a & 12:15p- Preschool Chapel	18 10:30a- Gardens 12p- Lenten Serv 6p- Supper 7p- Midweek 7:30p- Catechism	19 9a- Preschool Chapel 6p- Council	20	21 8a- Men’s Bible Study 5p Communion
22 9a- SS for All 10:15a- Worship 11:15a-Spring Fling <i>Youth Sunday</i>	23	24	25 12p- Lenten Serv 6p- Supper 7p- Midweek 7:30p- Catechism	26	27	28 5p Communion

March Who Does What?

10:15am Sunday	1-Mar	8-Mar	15-Mar	22-Mar	29-Mar
Greeters, Pearl St	Heidi Lisi Kim Waltz	Devin & Corrin McBride	Jeanne Clark Kim Harter	Evelyn Oen Avery Newman	Cortney & Paul Rogers
Greeters, Seltzer St & Offering	Richard & Kay Ault	John & Kelli Price	Ron & Karen Lenhart	Landon Baeumel Jennings McEvoy	Ryan & Kara Schneider
Bulletins & Offering	Shawn & Celeste Rose	Susan John Carol Rogers	Bob & Doreen Kinninger	Jacob Hicks Ethan Dickey	Kevin & Meddy Ruck
Candle Lighter	Evelyn Oen	Ethan Jeanneret	Avery Newman	Marlow Johnston	Ethan Dickey
Cross Bearer	Ethan Dickey	Ella Price		Avery Newman	Kelsey Schneider
Reader	Collin Lenhart	JP Metz	Chad Doll	Evelyn Oen	Rich Garber
PowerPoint	Tina Waltz	Shelley Schlegel	Amanda Schmerge	Ella Price	Nelson Golden
Communion	Ashley Schmerge	N/A	Jen & Rich	N/A	N/A
Servers	Amanda Schmerge		Garber		
Song Leader(s)	Kristin Doll	Jen Garber	Jen Garber	Youth Cantors	JP Metz
Fellowship	Brittani McEvoy	Karen Lenhart		Kristi Fisher	Karen Numbers & Tracy Blake
Sound Tech	Chad Doll	Rich Garber	Nelson Golden	Blake Rogers, Trent Lisi	Rod Metz
Video Tech	Rich Garber	Dustin Jeanneret	Elaine Hawkins	Dustin Jeanneret	Elaine Hawkins
5:00pm Saturday	28-Feb	7-Mar	14-Mar	21-Mar	28-Mar
Greeter		Sandy Swaney	Marguerite Wallen	Laura Heitz	Barb Srisongkham
Bulletins	Laura Heitz	Mark Swaney	Dianne Knipp	Sandy Swaney	Marguerite Walen
Reader	Sue Jeanneret	Carol Pretorius	Laura Heitz	Mark Swaney	Melissa Grunden
Communion	Dianne Knipp	Sue Jeanneret	Terry Shoup	Dianne Knipp	Mark & Sandy
Servers	Laura Heitz	Betty Elsass	Barb Srisongkham	Carol Pretorius	Swaney
Singer	Carol Pretorius	Carol Pretorius	Carol Pretorius	Carol Pretorius	Carol Pretorius
Musician	Melissa Grunden	Melissa Grunden	Cindy/Linell	Cindy/Linell	Melissa Grunden
Altar Guild for the Month of March: Trish Miller, Karen Numbers, Carol Rogers					