



Lent, Easter & Pentecost 2024

Lion's Roar E-Newsletter

****Please note: if you cannot see all of this newsletter (to the end, where Amanda's contact information is) find a link at the bottom of your e-mail that will allow you to "view the entire message".****

Pastor's Corner - *Pastor Joel Neubauer*

Do two walk together unless they have made an appointment?

—*Amos 3:3*



An especially precious, utterly ancient memory — handed from generation to generation in sacred story and poetry and music — recalls how, once upon an all-but-forgotten time, the Holy One and humanity had made it a habit to walk together. It was paradise: shamelessly open and inviting. No dividing walls, but eye to eye and face to face and hand in hand and side by side: God measured our human stride, when “straight and narrow” was open and wide. The evening breeze was sweet. Still freshly fashioned from dirt and wind and bone and blood, Adam and Eve — our first parents — would rise up and walk with the God who came down to walk with them.

The way that beginning of human spirituality is remembered — the way that genesis of human religious experience is recalled — was by appointment. Not by an appointment we made with heaven, but following God’s appointed desire to create and cohabit life with us. God has called us from chaos to make this appointment for a walk, a journey, a pilgrimage together. God called us to keep this regular, standing appointment: that we, shame free, would always proceed with God.

So our spirituality is intentional. We don’t breathe by accident, but we have been appointed — formed — shaped — fashioned — through eons of generations, up from the earth of creation, to live by the endless march of wind — of breath — of spirit from the Holy One toward our hearts, from our depth of being to the openness of the divine expanse. Spiritual life is by appointment.

But in that ancient, biblical memory of our old daily constitutional with the divine, we find the appointment was all too soon postponed — or worse, canceled. God

came at the appointed time, to the appointed place. Eden's evening breeze blew beautifully through paradise as God met our appointment, but Adam and Eve — *but our humanity!* — flaked out on their friend, on their Lord.

Why? Why be a flake instead of a friend? Why break an appointment that has only ever been for our good? Why skip out on a walk with the One who has always led us in life's best directions? It was because they were, all of a sudden, ashamed. Ashamed of their own lives. Ashamed of their bodies. Ashamed of their history. Ashamed for what they believed was a wise reason, but was it?

Consider a soul who has a standing appointment for an annual physical with a skilled and patient and friendly and good physician. Now, this physician has cared for this soul for as long as anyone can remember. This physician knows this soul inside and out in ways that have always been safe and respectful, but are also intimate and vulnerable. As the annual appointment approaches one year, the soul in question considers itself: "How have I lived? What have I consumed? Where have I wobbled? When have I cheated? Why have I not followed through on Doctor's Orders?" What a shame, thinks that soul, to have to face the good physician and to offer a less than perfect report. So the soul flakes out, makes an excuse, tries to reschedule, tries to hide, cancels without notice. But the good physician shows up, and — *having that soul's contact information on record* — the good physician reaches out to follow up, to call back in, to reconnect, to take the next (and for the soul, the unavoidable) step. And this renewed appointment might include a moment or two where the soul gets a tough prescription to heal what needs to be helped, but not with shame. The good physician appoints the way, the walk to wholeness — not *to* or *by* or *for* or *in shame*.

This is faith's Lent and Resurrection gospel, echoing the oldest reveries of our ongoing human experience. Jesus calls us to follow, appoints us to walk with good news, steps into a pilgrimage with us that will journey with safety and respect even into the corners of life (and death) that are most vulnerable, most intimate. Jesus joins us with the refreshing breeze of the Holy Spirit to make paradise possible where we are people being people. But shame lurks. At least for me — as my soul considers its hows, whats, wheres, whens and whys — shame lurks. And I flake on my friend(s), my faith, my walk with Christ. I try to hide. I avoid the cross behind doors I lock for fear that I might suffer for what my neighbors might consider shameful in me. So I miss my appointed walk by God's side.

Praise be to God, then, that my spirituality is neither an accident nor by an appointment I'm expected to make with heaven. Just as God has mercifully found our ancestors, God comes in Christ to me. God makes an eternally standing appointment in the resurrection of Christ to dig up my contact information, to call me up from my ashes, to find me where I have flaked out, to come toward me where I'm in distress and to walk with me (even if I can't recognize who my Lord is). And whenever I finally realize I've been back at that walk, I'll realize this is the way it had to be: my (*our*) good physician simply doesn't accept cancellations.

Walking in peace, peace appointed by God to be our way of life,

Pastor Joel

Holy Week and Easter Worship Schedule

Palm Sunday

March 24

9:00 & 11:00am
Divine Service of
Holy Communion
with Palms & Passion Narrative



Maundy Thursday

March 28

7:00pm
Holy Communion Service
with washing of feet.



Good Friday

March 29

12-3:00pm
Reading of the Gospel
with Organ Meditations

7:00pm
Good Friday Worship



Easter Sunday

March 31

6:46am
Easter Sunrise Service
in our Chapel of All Saints

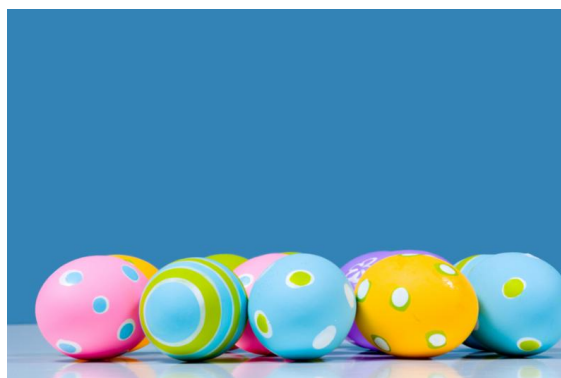
9:00am & 11:00am
Festive Eucharist Worship Service



Dorcas Circle



Dorcas Circle



Easter Sunday Celebrations!

St Mark Sunday School will be hosting an intergenerational celebration on Easter Sunday from 10 – 11am! There will be an Easter egg hunt, crafts,

Dorcas Circle will meet:

- Tuesday, March 12th
- Tuesday, April 9th
- Tuesday, May 14th

at **1:00pm** in the Library at St Mark.

If you are interested in joining Dorcas Circle, or would like more information you may contact Stephenie Gregg. (sfmgregg@outlook.com)

Trio Niche

Sine Nomine Presents...Trio Niche. Everyone enjoyed this concert on February 3!



activities and snacks! All are welcome for this joyous event!

We would love donations of candy, stickers, and small fun items to place inside Easter eggs. If you are interested in donating items, please place them in the basket outside the office by March 24th.

Thank you and we look forward to celebrating Easter together!



SAVE THE DATE

The Adopt a Child Sponsorship will be on Sundays, April 21 and 28, 2024. Those members, who wish to sponsor a child for the first time and become a Padrino, are welcomed to join. The children in Ecuador need your support, prayers, and love. More information will be shared as we get closer to the dates. We ask you to prayerfully consider becoming a Padrino.



St Mark — Global Connections

As a community of faith, St Mark has a strong history of sharing faith across borders and cultures. Our partnership with Ecuador and our support for youth in China have helped us link our lives with God's children in far away places; our preschool, our relationship with Family Focus, and our support for Natasha House and local schools have done the same to connect us with God's people in our midst. A few summers ago, our synod's outdoor ministries at Caroline Furnace brought Pastor Nahum to visit us and share God's blessing from Namibia in southern Africa. And last autumn, Pastor Joel and the Rev Seminarian Andy Taminger were able to attend the Lutheran World Federation Assembly in Krakow, Poland — sharing prayers with Christians from earth's every corner. We are honored to share the good news of Christ with this worldwide community! And in the coming months we'll keep the party going/growing! We'll continue our support for the children we love in South America and Asia! Pastor Nahum plans to visit us again from Namibia this summer, continuing to build our friendly relationship! In August, youth ministers from the Lutheran Church in Slovakia (who welcomed PJ and Andy during the LWF Assembly last September) will join us for worship while they visit the US! There doesn't seem to be a spot in this beautiful world where Christ isn't opening a place for us as God's people to connect!

PORT-Thanks!

Many thanks to everyone who helped with St Mark Yorktown's efforts supporting PORT during 2023/2024 session.

Working together, we supported 64 guests in November 2023 and 87 guests this weekend by providing hot meals and a warm, dry place to sleep.

Our Scouts, BSA Troop 0306 provided 53 coats and jackets helping to keep people warm and dry.

Cub Scouts Pack 0595 helped by assembling over 200 breakfast bags we handed out to guests who needed food to hold them over until their next meal.

To the volunteers of St Mark, volunteers from Langley Federal Credit Union, KW Allegiance - Keller Williams Realty, those who supported through donations, and our friends... thank you again and we look forward towards working together during 2024/2025 season.

Peace to all.





Special Guests Visit St Mark

St Mark Lutheran Church was blessed with two very special visitors from the Refugio de Los Suenos. Sonia Suarez, the Co-Ordinator, and Maribel Diaz, the Financial Assistant, were able to join us for two weeks at St Mark in late October-early November. Padrinos and others welcomed them with open arms upon their arrival. Later, there were opportunities to meet with them and share information with Padrinos about their sponsored children. Pastor Joel took them on a tour of St Mark's facilities and to observe the Family Focus Program. They also spent a wonderful time with St. Mark's Preschool children. They were especially thrilled to reunite with June Rossi who had previously visited the Refugio in Quito, Ecuador.

During their stay they also visited with St. Joan of Arc who sponsors the Refugio's Meal Program. They also visited Yorktown Rotary Club who has been instrumental in many construction projects at the Refugio. Their travels took them to Washington, DC and southern Pennsylvania through Amish country. They also experienced seeing the Atlantic Ocean and walking and playing in the sand. They even experienced carving pumpkins and greeting Halloweeners at Susette Goff's front door with wide open eyes.

When asked what impressed them the most, they answered the following: First and foremost, the friendliness of everyone they met, even the cashiers in stores. To quote the ladies, "The warmth they felt by the people here will forever be one of their most treasured memories." Second, but just as important, they were overwhelmed by the love that the Padrinos have for their sponsored children. They were truly touched and very emotional knowing how much the Padrinos care about their children at the Refugio. While they always knew this, experiencing their love for the children first hand was truly heart-warming for them.

There were many other cultural surprises for them. To name a few, they were very surprised that people had items outside of their homes and they were not taken. They were especially surprised that we received mail in a mailbox and it actually arrives safely. There is no use of mailboxes in Quito. They use a currier if they must send something. They were intrigued that our houses had pointed roofs.

On Behalf of Sonia and Maribel, Thank You St Mark for the Love and Hospitality

you shared with them and the memories they will forever cherish and share with both the children and the other workers at the Refugio de Los Suenos.

Thank you St Mark and Padrinos for your love and prayers for God's children. During the last 22 years over 5,000 children have passed through the doors at the Refugio and you, St Mark and the PADRINOS, have touched their lives with God's love.

St Mark Ecuador Committee



Shrove Tuesday Pancakes ~ 2024

Much fun and many pancakes were had by all in February. The favorite by far were the blueberry! Thank you cooks and helpers and to all those that came out to celebrate before the start of Lent. The choir appreciates the donations to the special music fund. We will be purchasing the few new choir robes that we need for our ever growing choir and also underwriting guest musicians for upcoming services. The love and support of music at St Mark (even through pancakes) keeps us planning and singing more and better than ever.





Flyers

**“What’s
Up, Zak?”**

St Mark youth have been
learning, singing and dancing and
will share this story with our
congregation.

**Come to worship on
March 10 at 9am
and March 17 at 11am**

The flyer has an orange background. At the top left is a cartoon illustration of Jesus with a beard, wearing a white robe and a red sash, holding a book with a cross on it. To the right is a green tree with a small figure of a person climbing it. At the bottom are several colorful musical notes (red, yellow, blue) and small star-like sparkles.

Simple Soup and Bread



&



Lenten Holden Evening Prayer

Wednesday's in Lent
February 21 & 28, March 6, 13 & 20
Beginning at **6:00pm**

PJ's Faith Fable

[Click here](#) or on the article itself to view in another window or tab.



PJ's Faith Fable: The Elk

Now an interesting fact about the elk: elk — like deer or caribou or moose — is one word that can point to one elk, two elk, or a few more elk, or even to a whole herd of elk. When we look at the world and say “I have found the elk!” it might either mean we have spotted one elk outlined on the horizon — or it could mean we have found two elk in a thicket of trees, or perhaps a dozen, or perhaps even the confluence of myriad herds.

We may also consider that many elk — like so many deer or caribou or moose — grow antlers. It is typical for the male elk to begin growing antlers in their second year of life, which they will shed each spring only to have them rise anew from older antlers’ scars. And it is around this time that the young male elk will either come together and follow a leader to form their own herd — or maybe, if the elk is a loner, to venture his own way for a while.

It is at this point we find ourselves: a biting crisp autumn evening, with leaves decaying into vibrant (if drying) colors, among the tall grass left over from a humid summer, where — eureka! — we cry, “I have found the elk!”

But what have we found? From a far distance, we see the elk: herds of hundreds migrating to winter feeding grounds here; small groups ruminating over hayfields there; and a dozen it seems where a copse looks like an orchard of trees, like a garden. “I have found the elk!” — now “the elk” is as much the regal leader of that garden band with his eleven brothers as “the elk” is the whole of them together.

The elk in this vision have traveled together for some time. Maybe a year, maybe three? They have roamed among bigger and smaller herds; they have encountered loners and they have joined, at times, large migrations — like pilgrims on a spiritual quest. Trails of their

hoofprints indicate there was, not long ago, another elk beside these eleven following their regal leader: but his track ventured off.

“I have found the elk!” — it is the venturer! He has returned tonight to the copse, to the orchard, to the garden — and the elk leers the way of the regal elk who stands like a solitary prayer on this cold night among the other elk.

It becomes difficult to tell the elk from the elk. They share the same form. They live the same likeness. As they were born the same, live the same, breathe the same — their hot breath floats like the same smoke in cold air.

Suddenly the venturer faces the regal elk and turns his head, as if to kiss him. Suddenly there is a loud bugling, like the blast of a horn against the silence of the night. Suddenly the venturer throws his heavy antlers at the regal elk like thirty coins thrown a betrayer’s way. And suddenly the peace of the moment is lost to the elk. Face to face. Antlers locked. Why?

We fear: this is how the elk will end. With antlers nailed together, the elk cannot live. With antlers nailed together, the elk will tire and expire from the struggle to avoid death. With antlers nailed together, the elk will starve for food and also thirst for a drink that can’t be reached. Which elk? One? Both?

The regal elk remembers spring, when trees bud new leaves, when bare earth births flowers after winter. “Let us lay down our antlers, break them off, put them away. Then we may live. New antlers will rise up. I will do this for us to live. Will you join me?” says the elk. Which elk? One? Both? Eureka!

*Put your sword back into its place;
for all who take the sword will perish by the sword.
— Matthew 26:52*

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Visit our website!

