



# The Messenger

715 24<sup>th</sup> Avenue South, Grand Forks, ND | [www.stmarksgf.org](http://www.stmarksgf.org) | 701-772-4807

"A Heritage of God's Grace" Since 1910

Member of GIFT of Grace Lutheran Ministry

## October 2026

## God's Work, Our Hands

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### ***OCTOBER OUTREACH PROJECT – UNITED WAY'S BACKPACK PROGRAM***

For many kids, the only consistent source of food they have is the meals they receive Monday through Friday at school.

**United Way's Backpack Program** fights to end childhood hunger in our community by providing bags of food in students' backpacks to get them through the weekend.

A donation of just \$7 provides one bag of food. One bag provides a child with six meals (two breakfasts, two lunches, and two dinners), two snacks and two drinks.

**This Backpack Program serves 17 area schools, 1400 children per week, with 256,512 meals served in the 2025/2026 school year.**

Throughout the month of October, we are collecting items for this backpack program. Items should all be Individually wrapped and nut free. Cash or check donations can also be left in the church office (Please make checks payable to the United Way.).

Suggested items are:

Cereal (single serving)

Fruit/Cereal Bars

Ramen Noodles

Applesauce

Fruit Cups

Individual Juice Packets

Oatmeal Packets

Mac & Cheese (Easy Mac or Velveeta Cups)

Ravioli (pull open top)

Cheese Crackers

Goldfish Crackers

Pop Tarts

Soup (pull open top)

Crackers

Juice Boxes

There will be a collection box by the church office.  
Thank you for your generosity.

# *A message from Pastor Karen...*

## **Reforming and Remembering**

Every Reformation Sunday we remember the teachings of Martin Luther, who endeavored to help the church remember why it exists. The purpose of the Christian church is to share the good news of Jesus. The Christian church had lost its way by the year 1517. Strict rules about conduct and offerings of money became the measure of a person's chance of going to heaven, instead of the perfect love of God shown in the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. Martin Luther was transformed by reading the book of Romans in which St. Paul declares that we are not saved by our good works, but we are justified by faith alone.

Dr. Michael Chan was the presenter at our Synod's Fall Theological Conference at Fair Hills Resort. He reflected on the theme, "Deuteronomy: Remembering Our Way to Hope." He reminded us that as we move forward, we must look back. A people that do not know their history are a vulnerable people. He was careful to point out that history is not the same as nostalgia. We must remember our past truthfully and as accurately as possible. This keeps us centered in our identity as God's people, knowing that God is faithful when we stray. We are most vulnerable when we do not remember who we are and whose we are.

This is the essence of the teachings of Martin Luther. Luther called the church to remember the faith given to us in the New Testament. We must keep our focus on Jesus and his sacrifice for us. We are saved by grace through faith. Our good works are a response to the gospel and not a way to earn favor with God. As we move into the future, we have hope. We are not going to be judged on our action, but we will be received as precious children coming home to their loving father. Our history as the people of God assures us of this.

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Karen Young Trenne



### **MARK THESE UPCOMING EVENTS ON YOUR CALENDAR:**

Men's Breakfast – Thursday, October 1<sup>st</sup>, at 9:00 am at Butterwicks  
Abiding Memorials – Tuesday, October 13<sup>th</sup>, at 5:30pm in the Library  
St. Mark's Council - Tuesday, October 13<sup>th</sup>, at 6:30pm  
Parents of Loss – Tuesday, October 13<sup>th</sup>, at 7:00pm in the chapel  
JOY – Wednesday, October 14<sup>th</sup>, at noon

From the Office of the Presiding Bishop  
The Rev. Yehiel Curry  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



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## All Together in One Place

August 19, 2026

### A Call to be Trusted Messengers in this Election Season

Dear church,

In an interview after I was elected, I reflected on my experience as a mission developer, saying, “It is not about what you think you’re bringing into the community. It’s who you are in the community. The minute we showed that we cared is really when the community adopted us. People don’t care about what you know till they know that you care, and that was the biggest learning for me.”

Faithful. Informed. Engaged. This refrain captures a vision for Lutheran Christians living out their baptismal calling in the election season and beyond. Faith grounds us in God’s promises, and Christ sends us forth to love our neighbors and serve the world. Being informed equips us to address complex issues with wisdom, discernment and integrity. Being engaged reminds us that our participation in civic life is a key way we love and serve our neighbors. Our public witness is rooted in faith, guided by honesty and expressed through active citizenship.

ELCA ministries and leaders already play vital roles during election seasons. You register voters, provide rides to the polls, open your buildings as polling places and advocate for voting rights. Thank you! This year, I invite you to embrace an additional role to help strengthen our democracy: serving as trusted messengers in your communities.

Our church can be “all together in one place” as a powerful witness for truth, love of neighbor and honesty. False information remains a persistent challenge during elections. It can spread rapidly, undermining confidence in the electoral process and discouraging participation. Grounded in the commandment not to bear false witness, our churches and faith leaders are uniquely positioned to help address this challenge by seeking out and sharing accurate information and correcting misinformation when it arises. In a time when trust is often in short supply, serving as trusted sources of wisdom and guidance is a meaningful form of Christian witness. By helping our neighbors access accurate information and engage confidently in the democratic process, we live out our faith through responsible civic engagement and service to the common good.

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*“Healthy civic engagement depends on clear distinctions between fact and all forms of falsehood, ranging from partial misstatements to intentional disinformation to outright lies. ... Our church, then, encourages us all to ask, in every personal interaction and on social media, whether our words or those we repeat represent the best possible understanding of our neighbor.”*

(continued on next page)

## All Together in One Place – continued

— ELCA social statement Faith and Civic Life: Seeking the Well-being of All (p. 62)

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The ELCA offers a variety of resources to help congregations and individuals be trusted messengers.

The new “ELCA Election Engagement Toolkit” provides guidance on topics that include serving as trusted messengers, engaging in election protection and modeling love of neighbor in polarized communities. (A tool kit launch webinar on Thursday, Sept. 3, at 12:30 p.m. Central time will provide an introduction to action steps and themes grounded in our Lutheran tradition.)

Through the “ELCA Civic Engagement Guide” you can access materials on voter education, voter registration, candidate forums, legal guidelines for congregations, voting rights and ways to encourage participation in local communities.

I invite you to take faithful steps this election year:

- Register to vote if you have not already done so and check your registration to make sure it is up-to-date. Use the “Prepared to Vote Checklist” to think through local voting requirements.
- Learn about the issues, ballot measures and candidates that will shape your community. Participate in respectful conversations.
- Check sources of information before sharing it in conversations or online.
- Pray for those who serve in public office, for election workers and for all who will exercise the privilege of voting. Create spaces for faithful, open conversation with voters, candidates or neighbors in your community.
- Encourage your family members, friends and neighbors to take part in the democratic process.

Be faithful, informed and engaged as disciples of Jesus seeking the well-being of our neighbors and the common good of the communities God has entrusted to our care. Every act of informed participation, every conversation marked by grace and every vote cast with prayerful discernment is an opportunity to bear witness to God’s love in the world.

In Christ,





## **Christux Rex Luncheon – October 16<sup>th</sup>**

Members of the GIFT Parish are preparing and serving the Friday meal for Christux Rex on Friday, October 16<sup>th</sup>. Kim Rustad is organizing the meal and is looking for volunteers. If you would like to help with the event, please contact Kim at [kimrustad@yahoo.com](mailto:kimrustad@yahoo.com).

Walle members will prepare taco in a bag and are requesting donations of cookies or bars (they need about 180 total). If anyone would like to donate, please leave them at St. Mark's by Wednesday, October 14<sup>th</sup>, and Michele will see that they are delivered to Christux Rex. You can contact Michele at 701-330-0297.



## **Highlights from the September St. Mark's Council Meeting**

### **ST MARK'S FINANCIAL REPORT - 01/01/26 through 08/31/26**

|                                    |                      |
|------------------------------------|----------------------|
| BUDGETED GIVING:                   | \$ 43,148.00         |
| (2025 YTD Giving \$ 56,928.00)     |                      |
| 2026 YTD Fund Income               | \$ 85,780.00         |
| 2026 YTD General Fund Expenses     | \$ 87,262.00         |
| <b>GENERAL FUND <u>Deficit</u></b> | <b>- \$ 1,482.00</b> |



## **Women of the ELCA Board Meeting September 14, 2026**

Rose Keeley, Sandy McCleary, Kathy Mutcher, Linda Simmons, Sandy McCleary, and Olive Weber

Our annual Christmas Brunch is scheduled for December 5 at 10. Plans are being made for the lunch.

Our next meeting will be on November 2, 2026, at 2:00 p.m.

We closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Linda Simmons, Secretary





*The JOY Group will meet for food and fellowship on Wednesday, October 14<sup>th</sup>, at Noon. There is a sign-up sheet in the narthex.*

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## **Our New St. Mark's "Little Library"**

We are so excited to show you our new "Little Library"!! Thank you to Greg LaMont, Marilee LaMont and Ivy Becker for all their work for this beautiful library.

Our former one was vandalized and destroyed in July. Iver will soon have this back out on the berm along Cherry Street, for people to use. It will be stocked with books for all ages.

Thank you so much!! We hope you all enjoy this addition to our church grounds.

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## **Faithful Servant Worship...**

Walle Lutheran is having a "lay-led" service to celebrate their members – especially those 90+. This Faithful Servant worship will be held on Sunday, October 18<sup>th</sup>, at 11:00am.

There will be a meatball dinner with all the fixings afterwards. All are welcome!



The Parents of Loss group will meet on Tuesday, October 13<sup>th</sup>, at 7:00 p.m. in the chapel at St. Mark's. This group is for all who are grieving the loss of a child or grandchild, regardless of age. They meet here the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of each month.

## Abiding Memorials Ministry

Please remember that if you have any requests for project funds, they should be submitted to Abiding by the last week of each quarter. This will give them sufficient time for all members to review the paperwork. Requests should be sent to Iver Buchmann. Thank you!

## October Birthdays and Anniversaries...

### Birthdays:

|    |                |
|----|----------------|
| 2  | Dennis Larson  |
| 15 | Roger Johnston |
| 18 | Ann Henderson  |
| 20 | Beverly Bear   |
| 25 | Donna Hubbard  |

### Anniversaries:

|    |                           |
|----|---------------------------|
| 1  | Marilee & Gary LaMont     |
| 7  | Carol & Elton Hendrickson |
| 14 | Mackenzie & Ross Dunnigan |
| 21 | Janet & Jack Chatt        |
| 23 | Garlynn & Marty Helmoski  |
| 26 | Ashley & Zachary Mahoney  |

(Please contact the church office if you have any corrections.)



**President**  
**Vice President**  
**Secretary**  
**Treasurer**  
Donna Hubbard

Mark Peterson  
Iver Buchmann  
  
Rose Keeley  
Marsha Oss      Art Ruud

**Interim Pastor:** Pastor Karen Young Trenne  
**Ministers:** Every member of the congregation  
**Missionaries:** Willie & Annie Langdji  
**Office:** 701-772-4807      **Office Email:** stmarkselca@msn.com  
**(Office Hours will vary – please call ahead)**  
**Websites:** St. Mark's [www.stmarksgf.org](http://www.stmarksgf.org)  
GIFT [www.giftofgracegf.org](http://www.giftofgracegf.org)



Please look for our logo and "Like" us on Facebook at St. Mark's Lutheran Church



# October 2026

| Sunday                                                                    | Monday            | Tuesday                                                   | Wednesday                          | Thursday                     | Friday                               | Saturday                                                                            |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                           |                   |                                                           |                                    |                              |                                      |                                                                                     |
|                                                                           |                   |                                                           |                                    |                              |                                      |                                                                                     |
|                                                                           |                   |                                                           |                                    | 1<br>9:00<br>Men's Breakfast | 2                                    | 3                                                                                   |
| 4<br>10:30 Worship                                                        | 5<br>7:00 Scouts  | 6                                                         | 7<br>10-Noon Quilting              | 8                            | 9                                    | 10                                                                                  |
| 11<br>10:30 Worship                                                       | 12<br>7:00 Scouts | 13<br>5:30 Abiding<br>6:30 Council<br>7:00 Parent of Loss | 14<br>10-Noon Quilting<br>Noon JOY | 15                           | 16<br>Serve Lunch at<br>Christus Rex | 17                                                                                  |
| 18<br>10:30 Worship<br>11:00 Walle Faithful<br>Servant Worship &<br>lunch | 19<br>7:00 Scouts | 20                                                        | 21<br>10-Noon Quilting             | 22                           | 23                                   | 24                                                                                  |
| 25<br>10:30 Worship                                                       | 26<br>7:00 Scouts | 27                                                        | 28<br>10-Noon Quilting             | 29                           | 30                                   |  |