September 2026

THE SPIRE

Volume 75 · Issue 9

Ministry Fair Sunday, September 13th Stop by our ministry fair tables in the church lobby between the 8:30 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. worship services! Learn about St. Mark's ministry areas, write cards to shut-ins, sign-up to volunteer, and more!

Sunday School Sunday School kicks off for all ages at 9:30 a.m.! PreK-5th Grade students will enjoy activities and snacks downstairs in the fellowship hall, and 6th-12th grade students will meet upstairs in the gym!

On Sunday, **October 25th** we will host a festival to celebrate the Fall season. Come join us at 12 p.m. in the parking lot for Trunk-or-Treat, a costume parade, delicious food and activities! We invite you to volunteer with set up, clean up, participation and donating bags of candy to help us create a memorable and joyful experience for our church family and surrounding community. Please call the church office with questions (419) 691-3597.

Communion Connection

It has been the practice here at St. Mark to provide First Communion instruction to our fifth grade students, and welcome them to the table on All Saints Sunday, Nov. 1st. We are continuing to do that, but in response to many requests from parents with younger children, we are offering our "Communion Connection" instruction to anyone who wishes to learn more about the sacramental gift of Holy Communion.

WHAT: "Communion Connection" event! We will look at the Scriptural basis of the sacrament, examine Luther's Small Catechism's definition, and do several interactive, intergenerational activities.

WHO: Current fifth graders, ANY adult who wishes to revisit and expand their knowledge of Holy Communion, and younger students whose parents feel that they are ready to receive the sacrament.
(All students fifth grade and under should be accompanied by at least one parent or guardian.)

WHEN: Tuesday, Oct. 13th from 5:00 - 8:00 p.m. at St. Mark. Dinner will be provided.
The First Communion Welcome rite will be on November 1st at the 10:30 a.m. service.

HOW: You must RSVP for this event by registering at **www.StMarkToledo.com/CommunionConnection** or calling the church office at 419-691-3597.

Sunday School/ PreK-Fifth Grade

We hope everyone had an enjoyable, relaxing summer. It's almost time to kick off a new Sunday school year. We are excited and hope the kids are too.

Please mark your calendar and join us on our Rally Day which will be on Sunday, September 13th from 9:30 a.m. - 10:20 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall. Come to register your children for the new year, make a craft, play a game, and eat a light snack. Please note that a new registration form needs to be signed each year.

Our theme for this year is "Our Lord Lifts Us Up" with Psalm 3:3 as our verse: "But you, Lord, are a shield around me, my glory, the One who lifts my head high."

We will be trying out a new curriculum called "Sparkhouse Digital" to keep the kids engaged, learning, and building their faith.

Our mission offering will connect to ELCA's, "At the Table." We will tie this to the St. Mark food pantry by collecting a different food item each month. A flyer will be handed out to the kids with items to donate. Any monetary donations will used to purchase resources such as cows, pigs, chicks, honeybees, or goats for ELCA's, "God's Global Barnyard" to help those in need.

Our team members are Tess Bourgeois, Megan Buehler, Wendy Johnson, Jess Kamelesky, Dana Sabback, and Leslie Welling. I would personally like to thank them for their continued support of our youth. As in year's past, I am asking others to prayerfully consider joining our team. If you have questions or would like to join us, please see Kim Kruse or Emily Hemminger.

Kim Kruse - Superintendent

Property Board

Just like that... it is September! I would like to give a shout-out to the summer Yard Crew! Thank you for keeping our grounds beautiful, freshly mowed, weeded and free of litter. A special thanks to their leader, Brad Isbell for reaching out weekly to the group and committing to the job every Friday morning! If you are interested in volunteering with them, please reach out to Brad. And a special thanks to the Fletchers for maintaining the beautiful flowers by the lobby entrance as well. Snow will soon be upon us. We will be looking for volunteers that would be available to snow-plow the sidewalks during the week and on Sunday mornings when necessary. Please reach out to either Brad or myself, Beth Rokicki if you are interested. We would greatly appreciate the help.

Over the next few weeks you will be seeing some additional work being done around the St. Mark sign. The brick border surrounding the sign has come apart in places and needs to be fixed and reinforced. Thanks again, Brad, for taking the lead on this and making it happen.

There was a small repair made in the gym area this past week. There was water damage from the upper level of the gym that trickled down the wall to the first floor. The damaged area has been scraped and cleaned and then repainted.

Fingers crossed that the office make-over will be completed by the end of September, if not before. If you haven't seen it, please stop by and take a tour. This project started in January with re-painting the offices and then was followed by decisions on flooring, demo of the bathroom and new cabinets and desks which have been made possible by generous donations specifically towards these projects. I am happy with the final results and glad that this project is almost complete.

As always, reach out with questions/comments/suggestions.

Beth Rokicki - Property Board Chair

COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES FROM AUGUST 18, 2026

After the meeting was called to order, Judy Zimmerman (Secretary) presented the June 2026 meeting minutes which were approved. The council did not meet in July.

Kelda Vernatter (Treasurer) reported that church spending in June was under budget by 14.2% ($4,955.31), but expenses exceeded income for the month by $6,839.07. Yearly spending to date was over budget 0.7%. Church spending in July was under budget by 4.0% ($1,561.62), but expenses exceeded income for the month by $444.44. Yearly spending to date was under budget by 1.3%. The treasurer's reports were approved.

Old Business: The current AV computer in the sanctuary has had problems for some time. The council voted to approve the purchase, with funds from a dedicated account in the Capital Campaign Fund, of an upgraded AV computer for live-streaming with a cost up to $2,000.

New Business: Andrew (Vice President) reported that the nominating committee has personally asked people to run for the open church council offices (President, VP, and Out-Reach Chair). Emily and council members suggested ways to help secure volunteers, including: inviting them to a council meeting, talking about the duties of the council during church services, and hosting a Ministry Fair on September 13 between the two services.

Emily Hemminger (Youth/Family Life Director) thanked Karen Johansen for her help with the eight students who attended the hurricane disaster Mission Trip to NC from June 27-July 3. She shared that she is a part of a virtual cohort that discusses how to recruit and retain volunteers. Emily told council members that Walgreens might set up a free clinic to administer flu shots this fall, hopefully to coordinate with a Neighborhood Dinner. Fall Fest is scheduled for October 25 – more info and requests to follow

Tom Ritter (Finance Chair) reported the Endowment Committee meeting in September the group will finalize the "request for funds" form, and will then present it to the church council. He reminded the council that the church's new insurance policy costs considerably more than what had been budgeted for insurance. The Finance Committee, Tom and Kelda will be working to find a policy that is not as expensive. Tom shared that the church had paid off the capital campaign loan because the interest rate was so high.

Jason Fletcher (At Large Member) reported and led a discussion among council members about the care and maintenance of the church's organ.

Beth Rokicki (Property Board Chair) reported that she purchased a new window air conditioner for the ladies' lounge and Mike Rokicki installed it. She was able to sell the church's old kitchenette for $375, and the money was placed in the general fund. The new office flooring is installed; and the office bathroom remodel will be complete with new flooring and cabinets. Beth informed the council that a template has been created to make new counter tops for Ryan's office and the kitchenette. Beth reported that on August 31, new outlets are being installed in the office areas. Beth shared that two new groups will use the church facility this fall: REFIT and Rev & Flo. Bells & choir practices, and dartball will also be starting again.

Kathy Agoston (In-Reach Chair) shared that she appreciates the people who have volunteered for altar and communion set-up.

Karen Johansen (Out-Reach Chair) reported that in July, 115-120 food bags (including fresh fruit), 11 extra kids' bags, and 100 toiletry bags were distributed at the Neighborhood Dinner. Over 130 families attended. Because quite a few new people attended, they will plan for 110-120 bags for the next Neighborhood Dinner. At the last Kids' Nite, they distributed 17 of 25 bags.

GARY HESS age 78, passed away on August 4th. Interment at Ottawa Hills Memorial Park.

Memorials

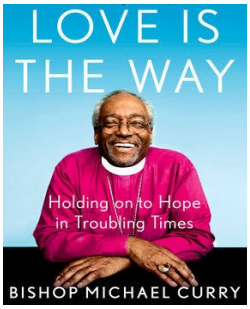
SHARON TOTH by Yolanda & Louise Carnes, Troy & Lisa Anderson, Carol Martin, Gary & Joanne Henningsen, Donald & Nancy Charlton, Larry & Sue Henderson, John & Sharon Howder.

GLEN HAMILTON by Kelda & Quentin Vernatter.

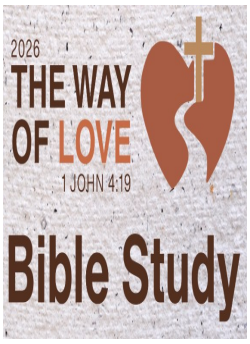
GARY HESS by Kelda & Quentin Vernatter.

Our food and personal needs pantry is looking for 1 pound boxes of spaghetti, toilet paper, and feminine products.

The Free-Store giveaway area is looking for donations of men's clothing such as blue jeans and casual pants, shirts, tennis shoes and boots. No dress clothes please. We also need bedding & pillows, household misc. items, jewelry, purses, lotions and perfumes (more than half full). Thank you!



Two week Book Study "Love is the Way" by Bishop Michael Curry Join us on Zoom Wednesdays at 7:11 p.m. September 16th & 23rd. Please let Pastor Cindy Ritter know if you would like to attend. Email: PastorCindyRitter-Toledo@Gmail.com



Five session Bible study **"The Way of Love"** written by the N.W.O. Synod Staff Wednesday's beginning September 23rd at 9:30 am at St. Mark. Please let Pastor Cindy Ritter know if you are attending so that we can have a workbook available for you. Email PastorCindyRitterToledo@Gmail.com

August Weekly Giving Totals

8/2 - 8/7
General Fund: $5,600
Dedicated Funds: $1,545
Total: $7,145

8/9 - 8/14
General Fund: $9,034
Dedicated Funds: $2,529
Total: $11,563

8/16 - 8/21
General Fund: $7,187
Dedicated Funds: $680
Total: $7,867

8/23 - 8/28
General Fund: $5,604
Dedicated Funds: $81
Total: $5,685

"General Fund" is used for everyday church expenses. "Dedicated Funds" are contributions directed to specific ministry areas and can only be used for those areas.

Weekly General Fund amount needed to meet annual budget: $8,293

The Still Ringing the Bell Capital Campaign has received commitments of $763,995, with 726,425 cash received as of Friday, August 28th.

Sunday In-Person Attendance

August 2nd Total: 104

August 9th Total: 97

August 16th Total: 99

August 23rd Total: 104

JULY INCOME & EXPENSE

General: $23,105 (June $37,006)

Dedicated: $2,237 (June $18,020)

Capital Campaign: $6,499 (June $22,320)

Expenses: $29,944 (June $37,451)

September 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
NOTE: **Back to TWO services on the 13th**		1 Theater group 6-9pm A.A. at 5:30pm in the Fellowship Hall	2 Al-Anon 7pm In the Chapel	3 Theater group 6-9pm	4	5
6 **9:30 A.M. Worship**	7 Labor Day Office Closed Theater group 6-9pm in the Gym	8 Theater group 6-9pm Dartball 6:30pm in Gym A.A. at 5:30pm in the Fellowship Hall	9 Kid's Night 3:30pm - 6pm Bell Choir 6pm Choir 7pm Al-Anon 7pm In the Chapel	10 Theater group 6-9pm in the Hall Refit Rev&Flow 6:30-7:30pm in Gym	11	12
13 Worship Services 8:30am Trad. Service 9:30am Sun. School 10:30am Praise Service	14 Theater group 6-9pm in the Gym	15 Theater group 6-9pm Council 6:30pm in the Chapel Dartball 6:30pm in Gym A.A. at 5:30pm in the Fellowship Hall	16 Bell Choir 6pm Choir 7pm Al-Anon 7pm In the Chapel	17 Theater group 6-9pm in the Hall Refit Rev&Flow 6:30-7:30pm in Gym	18	19 Refit Exercise 9-10am in Gym
20 Worship Services 8:30am Trad. Service 9:30am Sun. School 10:30am Praise Service O.C.T. Mtg. 6pm in the Chapel	21 Endowment Mtg. 6pm in Chapel	22 Dartball 6:30pm in Gym A.A. at 5:30pm in the Fellowship Hall	23 Bell Choir 6pm Choir 7pm Al-Anon party 6-9pm in Chapel	24 Refit Rev&Flow 6:30-7:30pm in Gym	25	26 Refit Exercise 9-10am in Gym
27 Worship Services 8:30am Trad. Service 9:30am Sun. School 10:30am Praise Service	28 Dartball game at 7:30pm in Gym *refreshments in hall afterwards*	29 A.A. at 5:30pm in the Fellowship Hall	30 Neighborhood Dinner 5pm Bell Choir 6pm Choir 7pm Al-Anon 7pm In the Chapel			© BlankCalendarPages.com