St. Mark's Lutheran
ASHEVILLE, NC
Love • Grow • Serve

ReMARK'S
September 2026

God's Work of New Creation

Written by Pastor Matt

God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. (Genesis 1:31)

I returned from sabbatical on August 1st, and having been away for three months, I found that some things were not as I had left them. One of the first indications was my new office décor (pictured). But there were less in-your-face changes too. New automatic opening hardware had been installed on the welcome center door to allow for better accessibility. St. Mark's had become an internship site for Vicar Katie as she prepares for a transition to word and sacrament ministry. And there were people here who had been attending worship for months that I didn't know. I hosted a "Landmarks" session for those new to the congregation my second Sunday back, and it's the biggest one we've had in since we switched to the current monthly Landmarks format. Eleven folks new to the community attended, and the majority were folks I had not met before.

Let me pause there, for a moment to tell you that this is the dream. That the whole congregation would invite and welcome new people into the life that we share together in Jesus- that's the way we want our community to be. That's who God calls us to be. And clearly, that's what you did this summer while I was away. Indeed, it was very good! Well done, people of St. Mark's! I commend you for this good and faithful work that did not leave the community how it had been, but continued to invite and grow in my absence. You did a pastor proud! And now that I have evidence that you can do this without me, consider the work of welcoming and inviting to be yours, personally (yes, I mean you), on an ongoing basis. This work takes all of us. But what a joy to welcome new sisters and brothers into our life together with Christ!

We have God who is always about the work of new creation. That means that congregations, like people, do not remain static. We are always on the watch for the new things that God is doing and how we can be part of them. Because indeed, God's work is very good.

With the goodness of God's new creation in mind, I want to give an update on some of the changes we are walking through together at St. Mark's in this season

1. Vicar Katie will complete her internship in November and have her final approval interviews for the NC Synod Candidacy Committee on November 20th. Assuming all goes as expected and she is approved, she would then be eligible to be called by a congregation. Whatever happens, we know she will continue in her current roles at St. Mark's through at least the end of this year.
2. Anticipating Vicar Katie's transition and in consultation with our council, I've asked Eve Kindley to help me convene a team to review the feedback from the summer listening sessions and discern two things: 1)What would God's preferred future look like for St. Mark's, and 2)what staffing would we need to make that future a reality? We hope for the discernment team to make recommendations to council about those directions no later than the November council meeting.
3. We're juggling a couple of staffing transitions currently. Because the federal government did not process a work authorization for Maryna, our Ukrainian weekend cleaner for about the last year, her employment with us ended earlier this month. Fortunately, we are in the early stages of welcoming a new weekend cleaner, Kavi Zuniga. As you will read elsewhere in this newsletter, we also are looking at some changes to office hours for our Parish Administrator, Danielle. Her schedule will be Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday from 8:30-2:30. We hope to soon be able to bring on some additional, long-term support in the office on Mondays. Conversation on that is ongoing, and we will communicate as soon as we have details to share.

I'll have more to say on all of the above transitions as we walk through them together. But for today, I'm grateful that we have a God who brings new goodness into the world, including life out of death. Just imagine- what new goodness may God have in the works for our life together? I can't wait to find out.

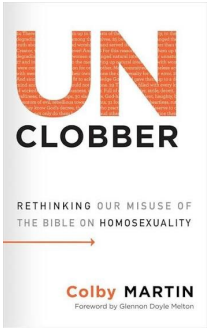
It's good to be back with you!

Pastor Matt

Faith Formation - Sunday's @ 9:45am

Adult Faith formation book study, September 6-October 4th:

Unclobber: Rethinking Our Misuse of the Bible on Homosexuality, by Colby Martin



A handful of scriptural passages have loomed large in Christian conversations about same gender relationships. Six passages (sometimes called the "Clobber verses") are consistently cited as the reason some oppose full LGBTQ+ inclusion in the life of Christian congregations. *Unclobber* reexamines what the Bible says (and does not say) about homosexuality from the perspective of a former evangelical megachurch pastor.

Join Pastor Matt in the fellowship hall for five weeks of conversation with scripture, Martin, and the Holy Spirit as we seek to interpret the Bible together faithfully. Pick up a book in the Commons ($15 donation offsets costs), but come for the conversation even if you haven't read it!

9/6	Chapter 2	9/27	Chapter 8, Romans 1
9/13	Chapter 4, Genesis 19	9/20	Chapter 6, Leviticus 18, 20
10/4	Chapter 10, 1 Corinthians 6; I Timothy		

LandMARKs

Sunday, September 16th

New to St. Mark's? Want to get to know the people here? Interested in getting involved with what God is doing in this place? LandMARKs is a monthly meeting with Pastor Matt and/or Vicar Katie that helps visitors and new members learn about the ministries of St. Mark's, get to know the staff and members, and ask questions about our community. Meet us at the bottom of the main staircase at 9:45am to join!

New Member Sunday

Sunday, September 27th during both services

We will welcome new members on Sunday, September 27 at both services! If you would like to join, please contact the church office. Vicar Katie will then reach out to you and let you know what New Member Sunday is all about! Please feel free to reach out to Vicar Katie or Pastor Matt if you have any questions. Whether or not you plan to join as an official member, we are thankful that you are here with us, and look forward to getting to know you more.

An Update from Our Parish Administrator

***Permanent office hours: Tuesday-Thursday 8:30am-2:30pm**

There is a Mother Teresa quote hanging in my house that states; "*If you want to bring happiness to the world, go home and love your family.*" When the chaos of the world gets overwhelming, this wisdom allows me to sit back and remember that simplicity can bring peace. As a congregation, St. Mark's has faithfully allowed me to continue to put my family first and practice this philosophy through many chapters of my life over the last five years.

As you know, I have been working an abbreviated schedule since returning from maternity leave in February. After much discernment, I requested that I keep this schedule for the long term in order to fulfill both my mom heart and my career heart. Wyatt is now eight months old and Walter just entered fourth grade. Being mentally and physically present for them, watching them reach milestones, and helping them learn to glorify the Lord is something that brings me an immense amount of joy.

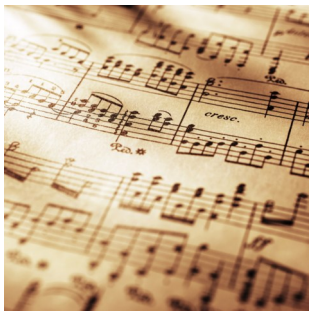
With grace and understanding, the council voted to keep my part time schedule permanently at their August meeting. Ministry comes in many different packages, and I am beyond grateful that you all have provided this gift of time to my family. I will continue to faithfully serve the St. Mark's congregation and continue to be your main point of contact in the church office. As a reminder, I will be in the office Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday from 8:30am-2:30pm. The church office will remain open Monday-Thursday, 8:30-2:30 and closed on Friday.

-With Gratitude, Danielle

Mark Your Calendar

Choir and Handbell Rehearsals Resume

Beginning September 10th



Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy: choir and handbell rehearsals resume on September 10! Now is a great time to join either group. No previous musical training is required for the choir; if you can sing "Happy Birthday," you have all the talent necessary (after all, Christmas is coming). Handbell ringers do need to be able to read music. Cantor David will be happy to answer any questions you may have!

Orange Shirt Day

Participate on Sunday, September 27

Orange Shirt Day, also known as the National Day of Remembrance for US Indian Boarding Schools, is approaching on September 30. The symbol of an orange shirt was inspired by the accounts of Phyllis Jack Webstad, whose personal clothing—including a new orange shirt—was taken from her during her first day of residential schooling, and never returned.

As a congregation we are encouraging members to wear orange shirts to service on Sunday, September 27. If you don't have an orange shirt, no worries! There will be FREE t-shirts available on Sunday, September 20, with any donations made going towards Living Waters ministry in Cherokee. Questions - contact Debbie Layne.

Mark Your Calendar

World Communion Sunday

Sunday, October 4th @ St. Mary's

Worshipping together on World Communion Sunday is a unique opportunity to enjoy fellowship with Christians from different denominations, and to demonstrate unity in a time when division is so common. This year St. Mary's Episcopal will be hosting! At 11:00am on October 4 join us at St. Mary's with our friends from St. Paul's United Methodist Church. While there will be a brief 8:30 service on that day, please plan to attend the 11:00 service so that you can join together with our Methodist and Episcopalian siblings in Christ!

2027 Budget Request

Submitted by October 5th

Can you believe it is time to start preparing for 2027 already? If you are a liaison for a ministry team, please start reviewing your teams current budget and expenses for the 2026 year. If there is a need for a budget change moving into next year, please reach out to Danielle in the church office by October 5 to make this request. Questions? Contact Danielle (admin@stmarkslutheran.net)

Habitat for Humanity Faith Build

Asheville Area Habitat for Humanity®

St. Mark's has been invited to participate in Habitat for Humanities Faith Build. There are three opportunities to get involved with St. Mark's this year in Habitat's neighborhood, New Heights. The volunteer days are full days 8:15am-3pm.

10/13 - 6 Volunteers Needed

- Wall Construction scheduled at the Habitat Warehouse (33 Meadow Rd.)

10/22 - 2 Volunteers Needed

- Wall Construction scheduled at the Habitat Warehouse (33 Meadow Rd.)

11/10 - 2 Volunteers Needed

- Wall Installation scheduled in New Heights (327 Duin Terrace)

If you are interested in volunteering or would like more information, please contact Henry Ulrichs @ henryulrichs66@gmail.com or 910.620.4854.

CROP Walk October

CROP WALK

Communities **R**ejoice **O**ver **P**izza!!
hmmm...no, that's not it.

Cucumbers **R**elish **O**nions **P**ickles
wait...what??

Cute **R**ed **O**val **P**lates
no...definitely not that.

Cats **R**ule **O**ver **P**eople!!!
well, while that might be true, it's not what we're talking about.

We're talking about the CROP Hunger Walk - originally
the **C**hristian **R**ural **O**verseas **P**rogram.

Beginning in 1947, this was a post-WWII initiative by Midwest farmers who shared grain with hungry families in Europe and Asia. Community walk-a-thons started around 1969-1970 to symbolize the distance people in developing nations often walked daily for food and clean water. Today, CROP is retained as the historic name for a nationwide community movement. The CROP Hunger Walk is an interfaith, community-wide event where people walk to raise money and awareness to end hunger and poverty both locally and globally. This year's CROP Hunger Walk will benefit Loving Food Resources and the ABCCM, so please gather your family, friends, and neighbors to join your St. Mark's Team in walking, volunteering, or donating to make a difference in your community and around the world. Contact Dan Dudde or Debbie Layne, or simply go to https://events.crophungerwalk.org/chw/team/st-marks-lutheran-church.

CROP Hunger Walk
October 4, 2026
Registration: 1:00pm
Walk begins: 2:00pm
St. Mark's Lutheran Church

New Stage of Life

Last year we shared part of the stage that had long been stored behind the curtain in the fellowship hall with ABCCM, splitting the stage in two. We were able to keep 160 sq ft of stage and send the same with ABCCM. Recently we crossed paths with the ABCCM staffer who helped pick up our stage last year, and he shared with us that it's been getting lots of use, including at the recent groundbreaking for the Veteran's Restoration Quarters rebuild (picture). Thanks be to God for this new *stage* of life for a resource that served our congregation well for many years!

ABCCM Donations

We are always collecting needed items for ABCCM. If you would like to donate to those in need, place the listed items below in the bins by the indoor play area and kitchen. Thank you in advance!

Needed Clothing Items:

Men's Denim (size small), Men's Belts, Men's Boxer Shorts, Non-Perishable Food, Towels

Lutheran World Relief Baby Care Kits

LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF

August-September

The CAT team, with help from a Thrivent Action Grant, is planning to collect baby care kits for Lutheran World Relief in August and September. We need to have them assembled in time to be shipped to LWR with the quilts. Most importantly, the CAT team is asking that you either donate a COMPLETE KIT or donate money that we can use to shop with. This will avoid ending up with too many of a given item and too few of another. LWR is very firm that all kits contain exactly the same items, so please do not vary from the specific list that we provide. There will be a list of what a kit must contain on the volunteer bulletin board and there will be a plastic crate below it for your donations. This list also has specific instructions. The Christian Action Team will be providing the diapers and diaper pins for each kit. Please follow them carefully so that LWR is not penalized by customs officials. Since the baby care kits can be expensive, you may want to work with others in the congregation to assemble a complete kit. Thank you for your help.

Questions - Contact Donna Turnbaugh (thetbaughs@gmail.com)

July Financial Report

Below you will find July 2026 financial report for the Operating Fund.

Thank you for your continued contributions.

General Fund					
	July 2026			**Year To Date** (as of 7.31)	
	Actual	**Budget**		**Actual**	**Budget**
Giving	35,456	48,700		369,558	584,398
Expenditures	47,302	48,700		332,619	584,398
Surplus (Loss)	-11,846			36,940	

Caring for God's Creation: June Solar Report *(as of 8.26.26)*

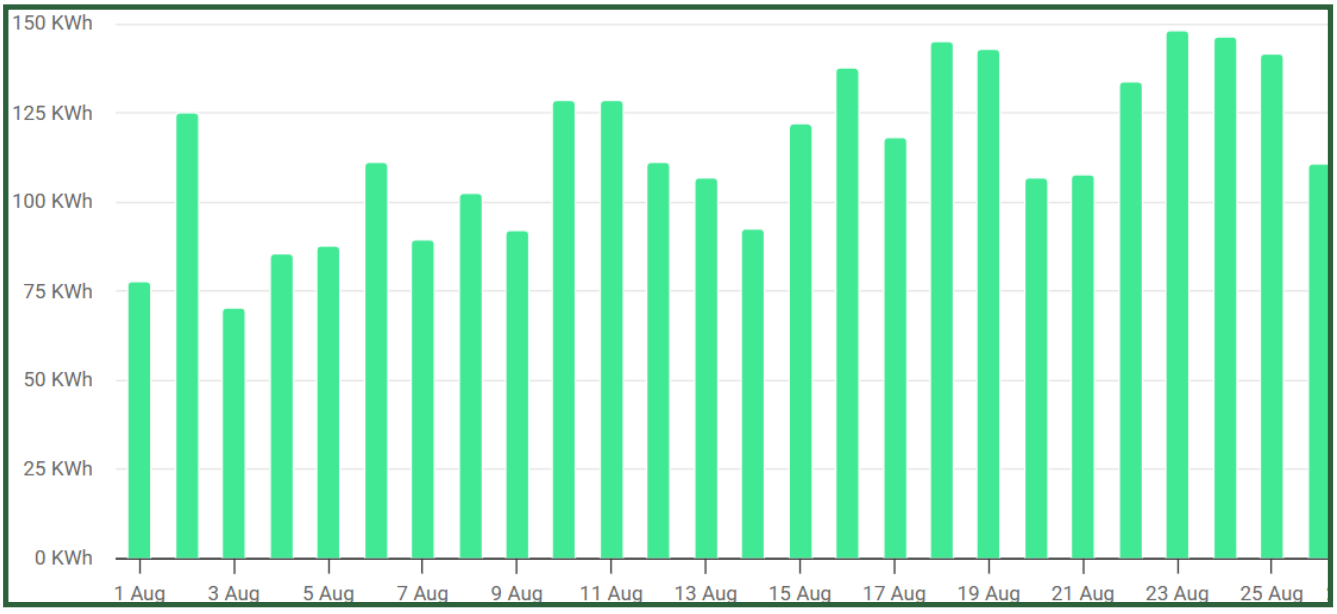
August 23rd was the highest producing day at 148.22KWh

2,741

Equivalent Tree Planting

412K

Miles Driven on Sunshine



Sunday Calendar

September 6	**15th Sunday after Pentecost**
8:30am	Worship
9:45am	Faith Formation
9:45am	LandMARKs
11:00am	Worship
September 13	**16th Sunday after Pentecost**
8:30am	Worship
9:45am	Faith Formation
11:00am	Worship
September 20	**17th Sunday after Pentecost**
8:30am	Worship
9:45am	Faith Formation
11:00am	Worship
September 27	**18th Sunday after Pentecost**
	New Member Sunday
8:30am	Worship
9:45am	Faith Formation
11:00am	Worship

Updated Contact Information

If you or anyone in your household has new contact information, please let Danielle in the church office know. If you aren't sure - better safe than sorry! Send Danielle your current address, email, and phone number and she will cross reference the information she has on file.
Danielle Barker - admin@stmarkslutheran.net

September Birthdays

Sept. 1	Heather Dixon
	Doug Johnson
Sept. 2	Nathan Doane
	RJ Hronek
Sept. 5	Betty Broitzman
	Paul Metcalf
	Henry Ulrichs
Sept. 6	Julia Nance
Sept. 7	Judy McKay
Sept. 9	Christopher Mott
Sept. 10	Shelby Lamm
	Joseph Pawelek
	Sharon Herrmann
Sept. 11	Eleanor Schreck
	Sarah Volk
Sept. 12	Asher Linton
	Jackson Penland
	Bill Chalmers
	Greg Watkins
Sept. 13	Clara Owen
Sept. 14	Evan Flanders
Sept. 17	Bob Schiller
Sept. 18	Nancy Dodenhoff
Sept. 19	Jack McHenry
Sept. 23	Matthew Warren
	Cat Slater
Sept. 25	Patti Oppenheim
Sept. 26	Tommy Ransdell
Sept. 27	Vic Allwein
	George Hahn
Sept. 29	Andrew Davis
	David Neighbors
	Meta Husni
Sept. 30	Nancy Larson
	Tom Mock
	Bill Waters

St. Mark's Lutheran

ASHEVILLE, NC

Love • Grow • Serve

10 North Liberty Street · Asheville, North Carolina 28801
(828) 253-0043 · www.stmarkslutheran.net

Our Vision

Making disciples by loving Christ, growing in faith, serving all people

Our Mission

Transforming lives through God's grace as an inclusive, intergenerational congregation through Worship, Outreach, Learning and Fellowship

Office Hours

Monday through Thursday: 8:30am to 2:30pm

Ministers

The People of God at St. Mark's

Staff

Pastor: The Reverend Matt Smith
pastormatt@stmarkslutheran.net

Director of Discipleship and Faith Formation: Vicar Katie Rivers
vicarkatie@stmarkslutheran.net

Cantor: David Anderson
cantordavid@stmarklutheran.net

Parish Administrator: Danielle Barker
admin@stmarkslutheran.net

Facilities Manager: Steve Henry
facilities@stmarkslutheran.net

Pastor of Caring Ministries: The Reverend Linda McHenry
pastorlinda@stmarkslutheran.net