

The Country Church Herald

...Proclaiming the Word of God

ST. JAMES UCC
13312 Pioneer Road
Newton, WI 53063
920.693.8100



ST. MARK'S UCC
W1307 Orchard Road
Cleveland, WI 53015
920.693.8361

PASTOR: Rev. Dr. Patrick Schultz

December 2025

December 7th -

St. Mark's: 9:00am Worship
St. James: 10:30am Worship Service
Sunday School 9-10 at St. James

December 14th -

St. James: 9:00am Worship
Sunday School 9-10 at St. James
St. Mark's: 10:30am Worship

December 18th -

Blue Christmas Service,
7pm at St. James

December 21st -

St. Mark's: 9:00am Worship
St. James: 10:30am Worship Service Includes
Children's Christmas Program
Sunday School 9-10 at St. James

December 24th -

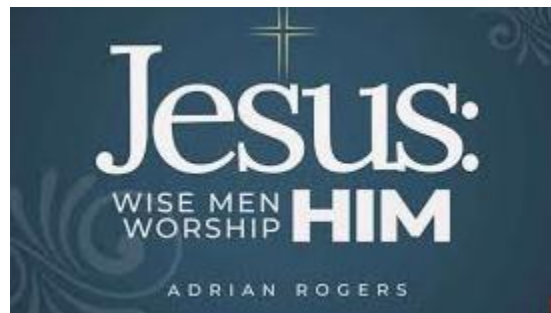
Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship
with Communion, 4 and 7pm at St. Mark's

December 25th -

Christmas Day Worship, 10am,
with Communion at St. James

December 28th -

St. James: 9:00am Worship
NO Sunday School Today
St. Mark's: 10:30am Worship



Visit our Church Website: <https://www.stmarksstjamesucc.org>
Worship Services are recorded weekly and uploaded to our church
YouTube channel: St. Mark's & St. James UCC

Visit & follow:

Facebook: St. Marks & St. James UCC

Instagram: stmarksandstjamesucc

From Pastor Patrick....

For many, Christmas is not “The Most Wonderful Time of Year” as the song goes. It can be a time of sadness or grief, a time of loss and uncertainty. We find ourselves surrounded by Christmas carols, holiday parties, glad tidings and good cheer when actually the season accentuates our feelings of sadness.

Because of this some may try to mask their feelings or feel shame about having them. However, when a loved one is no longer with you to celebrate the holiday, there is often guilt, sadness, and loneliness. Whether you have experienced tragedy around the Christmas season or lost a loved one, a Blue Christmas service can offer some healing and hope.

A Blue Christmas service is a quiet, contemplative service that usually happens shortly before Christmas. It's all about making space during a season that is noisy with celebration, to acknowledge the “both/and” of our emotions. It's an avenue of making space for compassion, warmth and care for those who are struggling.

Join us in a Blue Christmas on December 18th at 7:00pm at St. James.



ST. MARK'S CONSISTORY MEETING

Regular Consistory Meeting – November 6, 2025

Ben Grunwald called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Members present were Tyler Bramstedt, Pastor Patrick Schultz, Judy Steinbeck, Ben Grunwald, Brenda Miota, Linda Schroeder, Lori Roelse, and Jody Binversie.

Pastor led us in prayer.

Judy gave the Financial Report. The budget balanced as usual. The Sunday, November 2, 2025 offering was outstanding. Missing two services in October was hard. She mentioned being grateful to the 25% of the congregation who give generously, but wondered how to reach the 75% who are not regular contributors. There was some discussion. Judy finished by offering to call a new insurance company who reached out to her recently. Tyler made a motion to accept the report. Lori seconded. Motion carried.

The Secretary's report was reviewed online earlier. There were no corrections. Linda made a motion to accept the report. Tyler seconded. Motion carried.

Pastor gave his report. He mentioned Karen Mansker's desire to start posting on Instagram, but is in need of some guidance from someone more experienced. Pastor reported that our online viewership is up quite a bit and we have three new subscribers. Pastor also shared that Karen has updated our welcome brochure. There are copies available at the back of church. He suggested members carry copies with them to pass out when opportunity arises.

Projects:

- Bell tower - on hold until the spring
- Parsonage - a rotten post needs to be replaced before the porch railing can be installed
- Garage - now open to use; bricks remain

Old business:

- *Just Say Yes*, Chapter 6 - Pastor and Ben led us in discussion. It is important to keep our goals and activities in line with our mission and vision.
- DSPS - tabled
- Mission display - Jody will reach out to The Sign Shop in Sheboygan to inquire about a portable banner display prototype.
- Mission Fest - Scott and Kathleen LeBonte are unable to make it. Kyla Brumley, Transitional Housing Coordinator at Home, Inc., will graciously take their place to speak about the unhoused in Sheboygan whom she helps transition into homes. Kyla is excited to speak to us of how God has called her. Tyler reported that Cindy is ready to go. Ben and crew will set up tables on Saturday, November 8, 2025. Judy will purchase more dessert/salad plates.
- Social Media - Lori will take photos during the upcoming service for the website and Facebook.
- Website address on the sign - Jody will ask The Sign Shop if they have a solution for us

New business:

- St. James Chili Dinner in early March - proposed joint Consistory led, proceeds to go to our church's wider mission. An inquiry will be put forward in hopes of finding a new point person to purchase supplies, organize buckets, recruit workers and lead the way.

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ST. MARK'S CONSISTORY MEETING, continued...

New business (continued):

- Judy mentioned that a request was made to move \$1,000 from the Youth Fund into a CD for 9 months. Tyler made a motion. Linda seconded. Motion carried. St. James previously approved the motion as well.
- New Consistory Members - names were presented and there was discussion on the matter.

A Christmas Bingo update was given by Lori.

- Karen will reach out to local churches
- Sign-up sheets for both churches
- I, Brenda, will hang flyers at local businesses
- Lori will order subs from Walmart; Tyler will pick them up
- There will be a cookie exchange; bake sale items will also be available
- Consistory will make desserts for dinner
- Beverages of lemonade and water
- Wrapped \$5 gifts for entry
- Help with clean up afterwards
- Lori found Christmas Bingo cards online

Congregation: Please share out the Bingo advertisement on Facebook! The More, the Merrier!

Lori will also work to plan Spring and Fall craft nights.

The next meeting is set for Thursday, December 11, 2025 at 6:00 p.m.

Tyler made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Linda seconded. Meeting adjourned at 7:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda L Miota

ST. MARK'S FINANCIAL NEWS

Thank you so much for your overwhelming response to our plea for the general fund. We are no longer in a negative situation. Your generosity is greatly appreciated.

The last bit of news for 2025 is our OCWM commitment. We made a profit of \$1,004.08 from Mission Fest. We still need \$2,224.17 to meet our pledge of \$6,000 for this year.

It amazes me how this church comes through when we are in a pinch. You have no idea how much I and the consistory appreciate your efforts and generosity.

Books for 2025 will close on December 29. Please make sure that your contributions are received at church prior to that date.

Since some of you have asked, my contact information is listed below.

Judy Steinbeck, St Mark's Financial Secretary

Church email: StMarksfinsec@gmail.com

Personal email: judysteinbeck2025@gmail.com

Cell phone: 920-917-2398

ST. JAMES CONSISTORY MEETING

November 4, 2025

- The meeting was called to order by Vice President Jamie Henschel. Members present were Sheila Hemb – Treasurer, Wendy Meyer – Secretary, Tanya Boman, David Lutze, and Matt Lutze.
- Absent: Scott Henschel & Pastor.
- Prayer led by Jamie.
- Motion to approve the Secretary's Report was made by Matt and seconded by David. Motion carried.
- Motion to approve the Treasurer's Report was made by Wendy and seconded by Tanya. Motion carried.
- Building and Grounds:
 - Gutter guards – Oostburg is planning to complete this year.
 - Light in parking lot is waiting for the special bulb to arrive.
 - Tree/shrub trimming – Scott to check with T & L.
- Committee Reports:
 - Vision of Hope: Next meeting November 17
 - Stewardship Committee: nothing
 - Christian Board of Education: Christmas Program to be held December 21.
 - Social Committee: Bunco November 20
- Old Business:
 - Mission & Vision statement displays – nothing new. Waiting for material to arrive.
 - New consistory members – Scott, Wendy, Sheila replacements
 - Kristin Zolltheis – yes
 - Cindy Klapperich – maybe
 - Scott checking with others.
 - Memorial Sunday – November 23 – Heidi will provide candle for Steve. Tanya to check with Sohns to see if we have enough of the other candles.
- New Business:
 - Check with volunteers to see if they will continue in 2026. Scott to discuss with each.
 - Sohn's – janitor, organist, choir
 - David Lorfeld – opening door
 - Linda Lorfeld – communion
 - Barb Reimer – mail
 - Bill Heckmann – snow
 - Wendy to bring a box in December for Peter's Pantry, Manitowoc.
 - Wendy to contact Deb LaDuke if she will be the chairperson for adopt-a-family. There was great participation last year and Deb did a really good job putting it all together.
 - Dec 2 at 5:30 pm the Consistory will be putting up the Christmas trees in Church. Wendy to look at the large wreath to see if it needs to be replaced.
 - We accidentally missed Pastor appreciation in October. We will review in December.

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ST. JAMES CONSISTORY MEETING, continued

- New Business continued:
 - The Sohn's provided a list of items that need to be fixed or replaced such as ceiling tiles in the balcony, ceiling tiles and light bulb in the cry room, new lamp shade in the narthex, bathroom seat in the women's stall, ceiling tile in the hallway by the furnace room. The group will review each area after the meeting.
 - We discussed the chili dinner and if we needed to find a new chairperson. Kari expressed that she may be stepping down. We also need to determine where the profits will go since there is no longer a formal Youth Group since Brenda Schultz stepped down. Wendy to send an email to St. Marks for them to discuss during their meeting.
 - The Youth Group CD is coming up for renewal. A motion was made by Matt and seconded by Tanya to renew the CD for 9 months.
- Congregation concerns: none
- Next meeting date: December 2, 2025 at 6:30 pm.
- Motion to adjourn made by Matt and seconded by Sheila. Motion carried.
Meeting adjourned at 7:14 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Wendy Meyer, Secretary

DECEMBER SPECIAL SUNDAYS

December 7 will be Building Fund Sunday at both churches. St James just had the new gutters, downspouts, and gutter cap installed this past week. Thank you to the Vision of Hope for the generous donation to help make this possible. Future projects include cleaning the carpets, possible updates to the landscape, and general building maintenance.

A special offering will be taken for the Christmas Fund on December 14. The Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross is a special mission offering that congregations have been supporting for over 100 years. The offering is administered through the United Church Board for Ministerial Assistance, the charitable arm of the Pension Boards. Funds provide direct financial support to those who serve the church and are facing financial difficulties.

Also, I would like to say that the deadline for submitting timely contributions for 2025 is Monday December 29th for St James. If the contributions are sent by mail, I would like to have them sent to me directly to make sure I receive them on time.

My address is: Sheila Hemb
 12616 County Line Rd
 Cleveland, WI 53015

Sheila Hemb, St. James Treasurer

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT – HEIDI AND CLARENCE BELITZ



It is often said that God works in strange ways. This might be the case when he matched the Belitz's. Was it he or fate that brought together this young man who helped the dad of family friends with Scouting, and a young lady who helped the same family with babysitting, meet on a blind date? God works in great ways because they are a wonderful match!

Heidi grew up a member of St. James. Clarence joined after the birth of their daughter, Katie. He made the major decision to leave another church and religion so that they could all attend St. James together as a family. Completing their family several years later was the birth of their son, Michael.

Being retired, Heidi as a nurse and Clarence as a machinist, doesn't mean they have slowed down much. Personal interests include crafting, reading, and candy making for Heidi, and for Clarence it's woodworking and reading. They also enjoy traveling and camping with family and friends. Let's not forget to mention that they have contributed significantly to the furtherment and success of Friends of WI Camp Tapawingo in Mishicot. They both currently serve on committees at St. James and have been very active in supporting the church over the years.

Some of their favorite memories at St. James involve the youth. Watching and guiding them as they make their way from Sunday School through young adult activities has been both entertaining and rewarding.

What they love most about our church is the warm and open feeling they get when attending church services and activities.

Future hope – being able to overcome future challenges and to grow for many years to come. With a strong dedicated congregation, St. James will continue to be blessed!

One of St. Mark's historians led the confirmation class through St. Mark's church cemetery. He shared some of the history of St. Mark's when it used to be right next to the cemetery.

The confirmation students asked great questions. They explored the names on the headstones and monuments and they looked for the oldest date on the markers. 1860's is the oldest they found, but many were worn smooth and unreadable.



The Giving Tree is up at St. Mark's and all of the labeled ornaments are ready to be picked up at St. James. All wrapped and labeled gifts are due on Sunday, December 14th

St. Mark's members may also sign up Online at:
<https://bit.ly/stmfamily2025>

Christmas Cookie Exchange

What is better than Christmas cookies? Having several different varieties!



If you would like to participate in a cookie exchange, sign up on the sheet in the St. Mark's church entry or let Lori know. Package your cookies in groups of 6 in bags, boxes, or plates. Signups are due by Saturday, December 6. I will let you know by Sunday, December 7 how many half-dozens to bring. Have your cookies at St. Mark's by 10:15 am on Sunday, December 14. After the church service, you will have a beautiful assortment of cookies to take home. A maximum of 15 people may participate. St. James friends are invited to participate as well.

If you would like to bring extras to offer at our Christmas Bingo event, that would be welcomed as well.

Please let Lori Roelse know if you have any questions, 920-946-3540. Merry Christmas! And Happy Baking!

Christmas Bingo

Fun for All Ages!

*St. Mark's UCC
171307 Orchard Rd., Cleveland
Sunday, December 14
11:30-2:00 (The Packers play at 3:25.)*

*Lunch will be provided.
A basket will be out for cash donations.*

*Admission: Each person should bring a wrapped gift,
cost not to exceed \$5.*

*Please sign up at St. Mark's or St. James, or
call/text Lori at 920-946-3540*

to give us an idea of how much food is needed.

Drop-ins are still welcome.

Baked goods will be available for sale.

*Invite your friends, family, and neighbors.
The more the merrier!*

QUILTERS CLUB

Please join us on Tuesdays,
December 2nd
January 6th & 20th
9:00 - noon
at St. Mark's UCC.

You don't need any special skills,
just a love for serving and
sharing warmth with others.

**The best Christmas gift of all
is the presence of a happy family
all wrapped up with one another.**

~Shared by St. James Stewardship Team~



Sheboygan County Interfaith Organization

Bulletin Bites

DECEMBER, 2025

1. THE WINTER MARKET IS OPEN!

New Signage: New signage has been created for the Winter Market based on feedback gathered from both vendors and customers.

Exciting New Vendors: The Winter Market welcomes new prepared food vendors and features first-time participation from several Hmong vendors.

Outlook: The organization is looking forward to a great and successful winter market season! We anticipate a special visit from the North Pole at our December markets - 12/6 and 12/20!

2. The Holidays are in full swing here at SCIO! And as always your help and support is appreciated. This month's needs include dryer sheets, toilet paper and floor cleaner. With Gratitude!

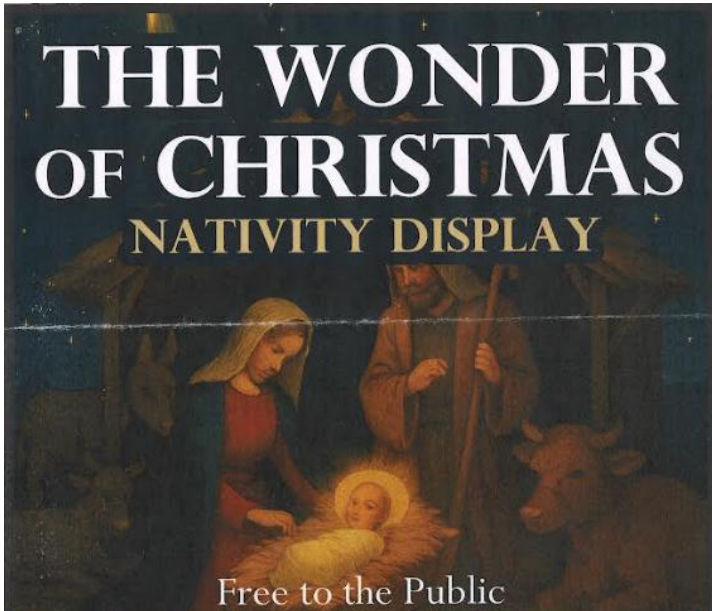
3. Family Pathways now has five families that have completed the application process as well as in person intake meetings and are patiently waiting to get on the schedule. We are in the process of setting up interviews to secure staff as soon as possible in order to reach out and start the visitations for the families.

4. End of Year Giving: As we reach the end of the year, we invite you to support SCIO's three impactful programs—Family Pathways, Bridgeway, and our Farmers Market—which together provide safety, stability, and nourishment for our community. Your gift today becomes hope for a parent rebuilding, a family finding safety, and a neighbor accessing healthy food. Thank you for helping us carry this mission forward with compassion and courage. Checks can be mailed to PO Box 73, Sheboygan WI 53082 or online donations at <https://www.sheboygancountyinterfaith.org/ways-to-give/>



If you or a family member are in need of pastoral care or are hospitalized, please contact Pastor Patrick by calling the church office, 920-693-8361, or Pastor Patrick's cell phone, 608-352-9544. You may also email Pastor: schultzpw@gmail.com

...SUPPORTING OUR NEIGHBORS...



**THE WONDER
OF CHRISTMAS**
NATIVITY DISPLAY

Free to the Public

Saint James Episcopal Church
434 North 8th Street Manitowoc
Dec 5th - 11am to 4pm (Groups only)
Dec 6th - 11am - 4pm
Dec 7th 1pm-4pm

Live Music, Scavenger Hunt, Refreshments

Contact St James Episcopal Church 920.684.8256 or info@mysjec.com



Our 23rd Year!

Living Nativity
Come! Celebrate the birth of Jesus!

See and hear a live 15 minute outside presentation
of the Christmas story with animals.

Friday, December 5th - 6-9 p.m.
Saturday, December 6th - 6-9 p.m.
Sunday, December 7th - 4-7 p.m.

Signed Presentations for the Hearing Impaired
Saturday, December 6th at 6, 7, & 8 p.m.

St. Paul's Lutheran Church
441 Millersville Ave
Howards Grove, WI
stpaulshowardsgrove.org

Join us in our gym for cookies, warm drinks and
musical entertainment. See a display of beautiful
nativities in the commons.

FREE Admission, Parking and Refreshments



ST. LUKE
UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH

*Crafts
and
Christmas Cookies*

Due to ongoing renovations at
St. Luke UMC, we are moving to
Uptown Social to be part of their
2025 Holiday Craft Fair.

UPTOWN SOCIAL
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2025
8:00 AM TO 2:00 PM
1817 N. 8TH STREET
SHEBOYGAN, WISCONSIN

Uptown Social has a \$2.00
suggested admission



ST. JAMES USHERS

DECEMBER & CHRISTMAS

* Dave & Jackie Mueller
Tom & Nancy Nye
Cody Mueller
Tammy Serketich
Alivia Maxey
Kendra Meyer
Karri & Jeremy Ladwig
Cheyenne Behnke
Lee & Terri Schmitz

JANUARY

* Jamie & Heather Henschel
Rieck & Sandy Beiersdorf
Brian and Sheila Hemb
Tom Kleinhans
Amy Christianson
Alyssa Grotegut
Ashley Grotegut
Christopher Grotegut
Charlie & Ruth Ann Kolb
Ashley Lutzke
Ethan Lutzke
Linda Lutzke



ST. JAMES VISION OF HOPE

"Application for Funding" forms are available in the narthex, from VISION OF HOPE Committee members, or under "More" on our church website.

We welcome specific requests as well as your suggestions for using our semiannual gifts from the Wagner Foundation.

STUDENTS!

Use this form for tuition help (currently \$1,000) each year.



ST. MARK'S USHERS & GREETERS

DECEMBER

Greeters/Ushers Needed

JANUARY

Bruce & Karen Mansker

READERS

Dec. 7th - Sandy Perronne

Dec. 14th - Scott Siekman

Dec. 21st - Lori Roelse

Dec. 28th - Jacob Grunwald

****Let Pastor or Karen know if you're interested in reading.**

CHURCH ATTENDANCE

St. James

St. Mark's

48	November 2 nd	49
*	9 th	82
40	16 th	49
72	23 rd	46

***St. Mark's Mission Fest, Joint Worship**



St. James December Celebrations!

BIRTHDAYS

- 4 Ellen Mae Surfus
- 16 Cole Lodes
Keith Mauk
- 24 Jenny Riesterer
- 25 Raymond Henschel
Noel Wippermann
- 27 Ethen Lutzke
Payton Faith Beck
- 28 Tim Russart
- 31 McKenna Jo Fitzgerald
Galen LaDuke

ANNIVERSARIES

- 2 William & Dorothy Mueller
- 31 Jeremy & Karie Ladwig



Please report any corrections or additions on the birthday and anniversary lists to Karen in the church office:
stmstjoffice@gmail.com
OR call 920-693-8361
so that the information will be correct on future publications.



Please let Karen, the church secretary, know if you have a change in your mailing address, email or phone number.

You may either note the change on the Welcome Card and write a note that it's new info., email the church office at stmstjoffice@gmail.com or call the church office 920.693.8361.

St. Mark's December Celebrations!

BIRTHDAYS

- 4 Tyler Bramstedt
Jim Taylor
- 7 Benjamin Grunwald
- 10 Brianne Vandoske
- 11 Jacob Grunwald
- 13 Andrew Roelse
- 16 Janell Davis
- 22 Michael Scharl
- 24 Lee Sixel

ANNIVERSARIES

- 28 Mike & Amy Summers

