

The Country Church Herald

...Proclaiming the Word of God

ST. JAMES UCC
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Newton, WI 53063
920.693.8100



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

PASTOR: Rev. Dr. Patrick Schultz

February 2026

February 1st -

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

February 8th -

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

February 15th-

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

February 18th -

Ash Wednesday Worship Service,
with Communion, 7pm at St. Mark's

February 22nd -

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

February 25th -

Lenten Worship Service,
7pm at St. James

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 our Facebook page: St. Marks & St. James UCC
(Invite your family & friends to our Facebook page)



Dear friends in Christ:

I'm pausing in the middle of sermon writing to send this note of encouragement to you.

Union Congregational UCC in Green Bay is the oldest worshiping congregation in the Wisconsin Conference UCC. Today they mark a great milestone – 190 years!

One of the interesting facts about the congregation is that they are officially designated as a stop on the Underground Railroad by the Department of the Interior. The Rev. Bridget Flad Daniels says: "The best corroborated story tells of the pastor and his wife harboring a former slave and his children in the church belfry while they were awaiting safe passage to Canada. Several others in the congregation also provided such sanctuary."

This story is a testimony to our long tradition of "loving neighbors near and far" and advocating for justice, equity and inclusion for all God's people. In these frightening days, it is helpful to remember we stand on the shoulders of those saints who boldly fought against the powers of discrimination and subjugation. Our strength comes from them and from the God in whom we live and move and have our being.

Our Gospel convictions matter. Lately, I have been preaching about the love of Jesus as a compass for the decisions we make and the directions we take. Yes, it is challenging to preach prophetically against the powers and principalities of our time. But we have 190 years of history in which our spiritual ancestors lifted the poor and liberated the marginalized by preaching and marching and practicing Matthew 25 Christianity – welcoming the stranger, feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, encouraging the downtrodden.

Friends, I encourage you to lean on the Gospel. Anchor your words in the commandment of neighborly love. Inspire your people to renewed goodness, to random acts of kindness, to loving curiosity toward those who don't look or sound like us.

Finally, I'm fortified and comforted by this Sunday's lectionary reading from Isaiah 43:

Thus says the Lord: Do not fear, for I have redeemed you.

I have called you by name and you are mine.

*When you pass through the waters I will be with you,
and the rivers shall not overwhelm you.*

*When you walk through the fire you will not be burned nor consumed by flames,
For I am the Lord your God and you are precious in my sight, and I love you.*

Faithfully yours,

The Rev. Franz Rigert, Conference Minister

A Letter From Pastor Patrick....

Dear friends and church family, I can't help but to be overwhelmed by the love you have shown Brenda and I these last few weeks. I've received many cards, gifts, delicious snacks, homemade meals and phone calls checking to see how I am doing.

I am doing well. I have "survived" the two surgeries with the first (Jan 6th) being the most difficult. That surgeries left me feeling quite sick and head-achy. The second was completed just last Thursday (Jan 22nd); it went much better in so far as how I feel post-surgery.

I have a couple of weeks of recovery and assorted doctors' visits to check my heart and program the DBS they inserted into my head and chest. If you see me about, my head looks like a mess! There are scars and stitches showing. I'm not sure if they will ever go away completely. But, it's still the same me on the inside 😊

I want to thank Rev. Keith for doing an awesome job in my absence. It's not easy to step in and assume the ministry and mission of a church, without a lead-in, much less two churches. He has done a wonderful job, and I've heard nothing but good. I also want to thank Karen Mansker for managing the office: getting the annual reports completed and out; getting weekly bulletins prepared and printed; completing the newsletter; and everything else that has been thrown her way. Thank you to all who helped proofread, correct, and finalize the annual reports with Karen!

Thank you especially to the two consistories who, as usual, do much of the behind the scenes work that is integral to the inner workings of the church.

You all are tremendously valuable to the church – not just for what you do but for who you are. I thank and praise God for all of you.

Peace and blessings,

Pastor Patrick

Thoughts From Pastor Patrick...

On Sunday, January 4th, Reverend Keith preached from John 1:1-18 in which verse 10 has remained in my head, or maybe more accurately in my heart. It reads: *“He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him.”*

If we break this down further, we understand at least two things. Bear in mind the Gospel of John is much beloved for its paradoxical combination of both simplicity and depth, John has been called “a pool in which a child may wade and an elephant may swim.” As such there are many more than two things we could understand, but let’s start with two.

First, the Word has been in the world since before the beginning. Verse 1 tells us *“In the beginning was the word. And the word was with God.”* Since we know that God is timeless, outside of time all together, then we also know that the Word has been present since before time. This verse harkens back to the Genesis story of creation, Genesis 1:1 (in the beginning, God created the heavens and earth). John essentially wrote, *“When the beginning began, the Word was already there.”* i.e., the concept is that the Word existed before creation or even before time.ⁱ

So, The Word has been in the world since before creation, before time, or as John puts it, since the beginning of the creation of world.

The second thing we understand is that the world did not know Him is strange. God came to the same world he created, to the creatures made in his image, and yet the world did not know him. This shows how deeply fallen human nature rejects God, and that many reject God’s word. Because of this rejection, many did not receive God’s word and light. Subsequently God sent the Son into the world fulfilling the proclamation of the prophets and the writings of psalms: *“Your word is a lamp unto my feet and a light onto my path.”* (119:105)

Continued on the next page....

Continued Article From Pastor Patrick....

Tuesday evening, I lay in recovery following a 6-hour surgery, moaning and groaning because the anesthesia had caused tremendous nausea. My head felt like it was splitting apart. As the night wore on the blessed caring angels (my nurses – maybe five of them) stopped in for one thing or another about every $\frac{1}{2}$ hour to $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours. While I lamented my need for sleep, I was tremendously grateful for their tender care.

Throughout Tuesday night, there was wailing, crying, and screaming. It commenced again Wednesday night. At times this sounded like a baby and at times the nurse's voice cried out in tandem as she tried to get through to the patient. It was a woman, who had no idea who or where she was and was frightened half to death. Her cries held so much anguish it was as if her lamentations were rooted beyond the physical and planted deeply in the soul.

And planted deeply in the soul is right where God held her most closely. Can you imagine a child of God crying out in fear and worry and angst, even anger and God ignoring her? God does not ignore our cries or pretend they don't matter. Truth be told they do matter. Truth be told God does hear and respond. Maybe not in the way we wish He would and most certainly not on our timeline. Because God has a bigger plan of which we are part.

When you and the world around you is crying out in anguish know that God hears you. He hears the tiniest of cries from the seemingly insignificant individual to the great cries of a nation. For as Psalm 34:17 reminds us, *“The righteous cry out, and the Lord hears them; he delivers them from all their troubles.”*

ST. MARK'S CONSISTORY MEETINGS

Regular Consistory Meeting – December 30, 2025

Ben Grunwald called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m. Members present were Ben Grunwald, Linda Schroeder, Tyler Bramstedt, Pastor Patrick Schultz, Judy Steinbeck, and Jody Binversie. I, Brenda Miota, attended via speaker phone. Lori Roelse was absent. Wendy Schueler and Mike Bernhardt were also in attendance.

Pastor led us in prayer.

Judy presented the Financial Report. She reported on various accounts including OCWM which has been paid for the year. She informed us that \$5,000 was cashed out of the Goeke Youth Fund. Judy reviewed our fall financial struggles, but assured us that they are much improved since the letter that was sent out to the congregation. Pastor suggested a thank you letter be sent out with the annual letter conveying appreciation to the members for giving so generously. Linda made a motion to accept the report. Tyler seconded. Motion carried.

The Secretary's Report was reviewed previously online via email. There were a few edits at that time. Tyler made a motion to accept the report. Linda seconded. Motion carried.

Pastor's Report included a fun confirmation Christmas party in December, an upcoming confirmation retreat to Lakeland University on January 16 and 17, 2026, and his plans to perform the St. James baptism on January 4, 2026. He asked us to be sure to include Keith Weiland, Mike Bernhardt and Wendy Schueler in any upcoming emails. Judy asked for advice on payment for Keith as he fills in for Pastor during his surgery recovery. Tyler offered consistory assistance with any needs that may arise while he is out.

Projects – tabled until the spring.

Old business:

- DSFS (boiler and elevator) - Judy called the insurance company for the name and phone number of who to call for an appointment. Tyler will follow up.
- Mission Statement Display - Jody will call for a quote
- Social Media - Karen will continue to post on Facebook, and we are pleased with what she is posting; we will consider how much time she commits to posting and be sure she is documenting the time for pay; more photos to Karen for posting
- There appear to be a lot more "Likes" and sharing of posts on Facebook
- Annual Reports - Ben and Tyler will follow up with those who still need to submit reports
- Christmas Bingo - details of the event were shared; Ben said it was a good event; we hope to see more bingo events in the future
- St. James Chili Dinner - to be discussed at the Joint Consistory Meeting, February 9, 2026 at 6:00 p.m. at St. Marks
- Snow Removal on Sidewalks - T&L will shovel when on site for plowing at \$60/hour; we can save money if we do it ourselves; we will reevaluate the shoveling next fall/winter

New business:

- Upcoming Annual Meeting - Ben reviewed the agenda for the meeting set for Sunday, January 11, 2026; Judy highlighted a few specific account increases and decreases; we looked at the list of 2026 Special Offerings and a few calendar dates; Pastor will be sure Keith has his report to share with the congregation

Continued on the next page...

ST. MARK'S CONSISTORY MEETING....

Regular Meeting notes continued...

Ben Grunwald and Linda Schroeder will conclude their time on the consistory as of January 2026. Thank you for your service and dedication.

Installation of new consistory members is scheduled for January 25, 2026 at 10:30 a.m. Lori will lead the installation. Wendy Schueler and Mike Bernhardt are the new candidates.

The next regular meeting is set for February 5, 2026 at 6:00 p.m. New officers will be elected at that time.

A motion was made by Tyler to adjourn the meeting at 7:16 p.m. Pastor seconded. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda L Miota

Annual Meeting for 2025 St. Mark's United Church of Christ January 11, 2026

Consistory members in attendance: Ben Grunwald, Judy Steinbeck, Linda Schroeder, Tyler Bramstedt, Brenda Miota, Jody Binversie, and Lori Roelse. Rev. Dr. Patrick Schultz is currently on medical leave.

President Ben Grunwald called the Annual Meeting to order at 11:32 a.m.

Rev. Keith Weiland led us in prayer.

I, Brenda Miota, read the minutes of the January 12, 2025 Annual Meeting (pages 12 - 13). Linda Schroeder made a motion to accept the minutes as read. Glenn Grunwald seconded. Motion carried.

Judy Steinbeck reviewed the 2025 Financial Report (pages 15 - 21). She noted a few items:

- It was a trying year with the General Fund being in the negative for a few months
- A letter was sent out in October explaining the shortage; members came through with 45% of the year's income coming in November and December; even with the problems, it was a record year - thank you, congregation
- Income was reviewed
- OCWM - collection came up short, so we gave what we had
- Goeke Youth Fund - \$5,000 was taken out for any upcoming youth events; \$400 to be given to an organization of their choice from the Confirmation class
- Family Picnic - money brought in paid for expenses with some left over for next year
- Christmas Bingo was a success
- Memorial Fund - a good amount of the fund went to reside the parsonage; see page 19 of the Annual Report 2025 for a detailed listing of remaining balances
- Mission Trip - a \$1,000 donation was given to Next Step Ministries
- Investments are doing well

Todd Grunwald made a motion to accept the report. Pat Flook seconded. Motion carried.

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ST. MARK'S CONSISTORY MEETING....

Annual Meeting notes continued...

Judy went on to present the 2026 Budget (pages 22 - 24). She recommended only a few minor increases and noted that the amount given by members should cover all expenses. In October, the Joint Consistory chose to freeze all salaries until their next meeting on February 9, 2026. At that time, Pastor's salary may increase slightly. Judy finished up by asking those who do not give much, give just a bit more if possible. Ron Vanderske made a motion to accept the report. Karen Mansker seconded. Motion carried.

Special Offering dates were reviewed (listed in the agenda on page 9).

Pastor's Report (pages 29 - 31) was given by Rev. Keith Weiland. He read that there were no confirmands in 2025, but there are seven confirmands currently enrolled to be confirmed in May of 2026. Keith also listed some of the activities Pastor Schultz has been involved in and the many things happening in the life of the church. He finished up by mentioning the names of the new members.

New Business:

- Delegates (2) needed to attend the Eastern Region Meeting on April 10 - 11, 2026 at the Green Lake Conference Center
- The Crop Walk set for October 11, 2026; we are still in need of a coordinator
- Projects
 - Residing the parsonage complete
 - Tuckpointing the bell tower complete
 - Thank you to Larry Perronne for heading up the projects
 - The louvers still to be done; Consistory will inquire on costs; will need approval from congregation
 - Trim on the church; Consistory will inquire on costs
- Youth Financial Report (page 34)
- 2026 Calendar (pages 40 - 41) - noteworthy events
 - Outdoor Pot Luck with St. James TBD
 - Family Picnic early September TBD
 - Mission Fest - November 8, 2026
 - Christmas Day Service - December 25, 2026 at 10:00 a.m.
- Weather cancellation information will remain the same; there is a possibility of adding statements to the website
- The next Annual Meeting will be held on January 24, 2027

Nominations to the Consistory are Mike Bernhardt and Wendy Schueler. There were no other nominations. Todd Grunwald made a motion to close the nominations. Lori Roelse seconded. Motion carried. Welcome Wendy and Mike!

Thank you to Ben Grunwald and Linda Schroeder for their three years of dedicated service and hard work.

Judy finished up by mentioning that there were no Giving Statements at this time, but they will be available at next week's service.

Glenn Grunwald made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 12:08 p.m.. Carol Weiand seconded. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda L Miota

ST. JAMES CONSISTORY MEETINGS

Regular Consistory Meeting – January 6, 2026

- The meeting was called to order by President Scott Henschel. Members present were Jamie Henschel – Vice-President, Sheila Hemb – Treasurer, Wendy Meyer – Secretary, Tanya Boman, and David Lutze.
- Absent: Matt Lutze & Pastor
- Prayer led by Pastor.
- Motion to approve the Secretary's Report made by Tanya and seconded by Sheila.
Motion carried.
- Motion to approve the Treasurer's Report made by Jamie and seconded by David.
Motion carried.
- Pastor's Report:
- Building and Grounds:
 - Tree/shrub trimming – Scott talked to Jason at T & L for further trimming and/or removal on shrubs on the eastside of church. Need to review in Spring
 - Donation envelopes – Do we need to restock? Fricke Printing was used last time.
- Committee Reports:
 - Vision of Hope: Do we have a nominee for 2026 to replace Dan K? Dan K & Brian H will renew for a second term. Will need a consistory representative for 2026 to replace Scott.
 - Stewardship Committee: Do we have a nominee for 2026 to replace Linda L? Need to verify with MaryAnn. Will need a consistory representative for 2026 to replace Sheila.
 - Christian Board of Education: Do we have a nominee for 2026 to replace Amanda? Marissa Fitzgerald has been selected and accepted. Jamie to check with the Sunday School to see if they would want to make Valentines for the shut-ins.
 - Social Committee: Dates for Sheepshead or Bunco? No Bunco dates have been selected. Sheepshead will take place on February 15th at 1:00 pm. Wendy to let Karen know. Wendy will pick a date in March to make fleece blankets for the We Believe Foundation.
- Old Business:
 - Mission & Vision statement displays – The lettering for the display is complete. David will find a time to install.
 - New consistory members – Scott, Wendy, Sheila replacements
 - Kristin Zolltheis – yes
 - Cindy – maybe
 - Need to check with others to see if they are interested and/or announce in church. We are still needing 1 other person.
 - Did someone check with the volunteers to see if they will continue in 2026?
 - Sohn's – janitor, organist, choir - yes
 - David Lorfeld – opening door – Wendy to check
 - Linda Lorfeld – communion – Wendy to check
 - Barb Reimer – mail – Wendy to check. Yes
 - Bill Heckmann – Scott to check
 - Has the list of items brought up by the Sohn's been addressed? Yes except for the investigation of the leak in the balcony. A company needs to be picked to see if they can come out and investigate. Scott will purchase floor mats this week.

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ST. JAMES CONSISTORY MEETING....

Regular Meeting notes continued...

- New Business:
 - Annual meeting January 18
 - The report responsibilities were reviewed.
 - Pastor's reports & reading during annual meeting – reports were sent to Karen.
 - Start thinking about committee reorganization after annual meeting
 - Review 2026 budget – Budget reviewed and updated.
 - Sunday morning coffee – Who organized it? Participation. David Lutze has graciously volunteered to make coffee every week. It is for all to participate. Feel free to fill up your cup up before or after church. Cups will be provided or you can bring your own.
 - Late service video taping
 - Return video chip in envelope & put in Pastor's basket so we get it back
 - Note from Secretary to return unused bulletins – put in Pastor's basket
 - Someone to pick up bulletins from St. Marks for late services/Pastor's absence. Jamie may take over from Wendy.
 - Report in the Annual Meeting that Channel 2 news will be notified for church cancellations. A decision will try to be made by 6:00 am Sunday mornings. We are also investigating a way to update it on our website.
- Congregation concerns: none
- Next meeting date: February 3, 2026 (Reminder Joint Consistory Meeting 2/9/26).
- Motion to adjourn made by Jamie and seconded by Tanya. Motion carried.
Meeting adjourned at 7:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Wendy Meyer, Secretary

Annual Meeting for 2025 St. James United Church of Christ January 18, 2026

The St. James 2026 Annual Meeting was called to order by President Scott Henschel at 11:34 am. Interim Pastor, Keith Weiland, led the congregation in a prayer.

The previous year's secretary's report was read by Secretary Wendy Meyer. A correction was made to the United Church Men and Women report. The report should have read Donald Lorfeld Scholarship instead of David Lorfeld Scholarship. A motion to accept the Secretary's report with the correction was made by Deb LaDuke and was seconded by Henry Langenhahn Sr.. Motion carried.

Sheila Hemb, Treasurer, presented the 2025 Treasurer's Report. As of 12/31/24, our beginning balance was \$12,223.18. Total income for 2025 was \$136,035.35 and total expenses were \$135,286.42, leaving a balance of \$12,972.11. A motion to accept the Treasurer's Report was made by Charlie Kolb and it was seconded by Clarence Belitz. Motion carried. The Building Fund had a balance of \$8897.01, The Memorial Fund had a balance of \$5386.62, and the Organ Fund had a balance of \$353.13.

The Pastor's report was reviewed as written.

Continued on the next page....

ST. JAMES CONSISTORY MEETING....

Annual Meeting notes continued...

Sheila presented the proposed 2026 Budget. A motion was made by Jamie Henschel to accept the 2026 Budget, and it was seconded by Jackie Mueller. Motion carried.

Mary Ann Vogel presented the Stewardship Report. She shared that the group sent out letters to those that were not making contributions to the church, welcoming them back and they only received 2 replies. A special thank you to Linda Lutzke for serving 2 terms on the committee.

Dan Kleinhans, Treasurer of the Vision of Hope, shared the Vision of Hope Treasurer's Report. We have received 2 donations from the Wagner Foundation even though the report only shows 1. The last donation was deposited in January of 2026. The 12/31/2025 Money Market Balance was \$53,975.66. The 12/31/2024 checking balance was \$2905.74 and the ending balance was \$4678.17. The Long Term Assets balance was \$282,428.21 which leaves total assets as of 12/31/2025 of \$309,404.51.

Scott Henschel shared the completed projects of 2025 and the future projects of 2026.

Dan Kleinhans and Brian Hemb have volunteered to take on a second term for the Vision of Hope. There were no nominees from the floor. A motion was made by Henry Langenhahn Sr. to accept Dan & Brian for the Vision of Hope second term, and it was seconded by Jamie Henschel. Motion carried. A special thank you to Dan and Brian for serving an additional term.

Marissa Fitzgerald is the nominee for the Christian Board of Education. There were no nominations from the floor. A motion was made by Deb LaDuke to accept Marissa Fitzgerald to the Christian Board of Education, and it was seconded by Jamie Henschel. Motion carried. A special thank you to Amanda Russart for her years of service.

Wendy Meyer is the nominee for the Stewardship Committee. There were no nominations from the floor. A motion was made by Jamie Henschel to accept Wendy Meyer to the Stewardship Committee, and it was seconded by Deb LaDuke. Motion carried. A special thank you to Linda Lutzke for her years of service.

Doris Sprenger presented the highlights of the Crop Walk. St. James had 6 walkers and raised \$4750.00. A special thank you to our church members for their continued support. Doris will continue to represent St. James and coordinate the Crop Walk and be the representative to the Rural Church Fellowship. A special thank you to Doris for her continued dedication.

Scott Henschel presented the United Church Men & Women report. He shared that \$9600 was given out in scholarships.

Scott Henschel shared that the Korean Methodist Congregation still uses our church every Sunday for their worship service. They are very grateful for the use of our church.

The 2026 annual meeting will be 1/17/27. A motion was made by Henry Langenhahn Sr. to approve the date of the meeting, and it was seconded by Jason Riesterer. Motion carried.

Kristin Zolltheis and Cindy Klapperich are the nominees for the Consistory. There were no nominations from the floor. The consistory will be short 1 member for 2026. A motion was made by Mary Ann Vogel to accept Kristin and Cindy as Consistory members and it was seconded by Deb LaDuke. Motion carried.

Continued on the next page...

ST. JAMES CONSISTORY MEETING....

Annual Meeting notes continued...

Scott Henschel presented the 2026 calendar of events and Clarence Belitz recognized Scott Henschel, Sheila Hemb, and Wendy Meyer for their years of service on the Consistory.

A motion was made by Henry Langenhahn Sr. to adjourn the meeting at 12:16 pm and it was seconded by Jamie Henschel. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Wendy Meyer

ST. JAMES STEWARDSHIP TEAM

Why Do People Go To church – poem

**Some attend church to be seen, and wear new clothes,
While others sit on their pew and silently doze.
During the service a few will check their cell phone,
With messages they just can't seem to postpone,**

**Some men darken the church door of fear,
Because if they don't their spouse won't let them near.
There are those that go to church because it is fun,
They like to see their friends, and talk to everyone.**

**Music lovers go to church because they love to sing,
And others wait for the sermon the preacher will bring.
Whatever your reason God is watching from above
He knows your true heart and is full of love.**

WELCOME...

MERCOWE

TO OUR NEW CONSISTORY MEMBERS!



ST. JAMES

Galen LaDuke, Cindy Klapperich,
Kristin Zolltheis



ST. MARK'S

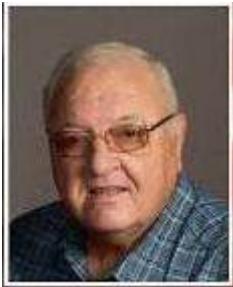
Wendy Schueler, Pastor Keith,
Mike Bernhardt

Installation of our new Consistory members during the Worship Service on Sunday, January 25th by Rev. Keith Weiland. In addition to welcoming our new members, we give thanks for the service these outgoing Consistory members provided the past three years:

St. James: Scott Henschel, Sheila Hemb, Wendy Meyer

St. Mark's: Ben Grunwald, Linda Schroeder

Our deepest sympathy is with the family and friends of Dick Binversie & Gene Kaestner. You are missed, Dear Members of St. Mark's Family.



Richard "Dick" Alfred Binversie, 80 of Howards Grove, passed away unexpectedly on January 3rd, 2026 at his home. Richard was born September 26th, 1945 to the late Arthur and Gertrude Binversie. Richard was the eldest of 9 children. He graduated from Howards Grove High School in 1964. Shortly after high school graduation Richard joined the United States Air Force. He also served as a firefighter for the Howards Grove Fire Department for 12 years and was a member of the American Legion.

Richard was united in marriage to his high school sweetheart Karen Gumm on April 22, 1967. Together they enjoyed 57 wonderful years of marriage. After his time in the Air Force Richard spent a few years installing carpet before learning to drive semi. He spent a number of years driving truck for various companies including Motor Transport, Badger Freightways, and Kohler Company. He also spent a few years delivering and selling frozen foods for Huss and Reinhart Foods before going back to driving semi for Jones Transfer in Green Bay where he retired in 2007.

Richard was a fun loving, hard working man who cherished his family. He enjoyed snowmobiling, camping, fishing and going on various trips such as Mexico, Disney World, and Hawaii with family and friends. He really enjoyed watching his children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren participate in sporting events. He was always willing to lend a hand and help others out no matter what time of day or night. Besides watching his family participate in sports Richard enjoyed watching the Brewers, Badgers, Howards Grove Tigers, Howards Grove Riverdogs and of course the Packers. Richard was a big Packer fan, rarely did he miss a game. Richard also really enjoyed driving, he would often take trips with no destination in mind just to get out of the house. He could tell someone how to get somewhere without using a map and it usually included using the back roads to get there. Richard was inducted into The Sheboygan County Veterans Memorial in 2024, something he was very proud of.

Dick's funeral was held January 9th at St. Mark's.



Gene A. Kaestner, 87 years old of Cleveland, WI, passed away on January 6, 2026. He was born on April 12th, 1938 in Plymouth, Wisconsin to Harvey and Luella (Machut) Kaestner. He grew up on a farm in rural Johnsonville and graduated from Plymouth High School in 1956. He served in the Wisconsin Army National Guard. While attending the Sheboygan County Fair, he met the love of his life, Kathleen Siegert, & they were married on April 30, 1960 at St. Mark's United Church of Christ. They celebrated their 65th Anniversary last year.

Gene remembered milking cows since he was three years old. His dream of owning his own farm became a reality in 1962, when he and Kathy started Kaymead Dairy Farm. He and Kathy spoke German frequently, so that their kids and grandkids wouldn't know what they were talking about while milking the cows. Gene was the 1973 Sheboygan County Outstanding Young Farmer and took great pride in his abilities to produce high quality milk for the former Osman Dairy. He was a proud producer for Henning Cheese Inc. He was involved in the Plymouth FFA Chapter, Sheboygan County Holstein Breeders Association, Dairy Herd Improvement Association (DHIA), 4-H Hog Project Leader, and Sheboygan County Fair Swine Barn Superintendent. In 1986, Gene and Kathy, along with their children Kristine, Patty, Gary, and Scott were awarded Farm of the Month for their beehive of activity and production on the farm. Progressive breeder award in 1977 and 1978. He was a huge supporter of the 4-H and FFA projects at the Sheboygan County Fair, even buying animals at the Meat Animal Sale, Small Animal Sale, and Dairy Sale of Champions. He served on the State Bank of Howards Grove Board of Directors for 25 years. Gene's life was defined by his faith. He taught Sunday School at Saron United Church of Christ as a teenager. He was a member and served on the Consistory of St. Mark's UCC. In 2004, Gene and Kathy retired from dairy farming and retained the land to raise crops until he turned 80. He enjoyed working for Vadoske Farms, filling in where needed with his tractor to help. He also enjoyed helping his friend, John Roehl with tasks around his farm. In the past few years, he was fond of watching Bob Vadoske and his team work the land, plant, harvest, and comment about how advanced farming has become.

Throughout the years on any given evening Gene could be found at Klemme's Wagon Wheel with an array of dear friends. He especially liked Roger's old fashions, and buying a round of jaggery on John. Polka music was his choice to listen to while at town festivals or while milking the cows. He loved discussing farming practices, driving around to see what others were up to and telling quick witty jokes to get everyone laughing, he enjoyed so many friendships. He was an avid Sheepshead and Skat player and would pick the blinds just because he was before you. One of his favorite activities to do every winter was recreate German heirloom family recipes for various sausages, especially the summer sausage; along with teaching his kids and grandkids this tradition. In later years, he and Kathleen would take an annual trip to Branson, MO to be entertained at various shows, and he seemed to be famous at the Baldknobbers, making stage appearances several times.

Gene's funeral was held on January 13th at St. Mark's.

Our heartfelt sympathy is with...

*thinking
of you*

♥ the Heckmann family on the passing of Tim's father-in-law, Scott Weyda, on December 25th.

♥ the Riesterer family on the passing of Jason's dad, Al Riesterer, on January 22nd.



**Celebrating the Baptism of August Charles Lutze
who was Baptized on January 4th at St. James**



MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: MARY ANN VOGEL

For one of our most treasured members, St. James Church holds a lifetime of memories. Mary Ann was born on the family farm two miles northwest of Osman. Her history here began at baptism as an infant and moved to Christian education and confirmation with Rev. Carl Schmal. As life moved along, Rev. Merlin Huebschman would later marry a young Wayne Vogel and Mary Ann Stoeckigt in 1963 and eventually baptize their own two children.

Mary Ann's family has been blessed to add four granddaughters and three great-grandchildren. They provide her with some of her favorite moments.

After being a thirty-two-year cornerstone employee of the Cleveland State Bank, Mary Ann retired twenty-one years ago and now enjoys spending her days reading, traveling, and summertime at the "Vogel Family Cottage" on Little Sturgeon in Door County. While considered "retired", she continues to remain active in the life of St. James as she is on the Stewardship Committee, Brat Fry Chairperson, and Service Committee Chairperson. She is also respectfully designated as our Church Historian.

Her favorite memory was being on the 150 Anniversary Committee. She enjoyed researching history, interviewing people, contacting previous pastors, and bonding time with committee members and the congregation for the "Faith Through the Generations" in 2013. It meant planning the celebration of St. James and the sesquicentennial book. It was a fantastic year of celebration for our church.

Mary Ann shares, "What I love most about St. James is our church family. I always look forward to the "Young at Heart" message during the church service and the children's response of enthusiasm and innocence. Our membership is a team working together, praying together, and showing love and kindness towards others."

"We also have fun together. The Social Committee plans Bunco nights, Sheepshead games, a summer outdoor service at Spring Hope Barn with a potluck meal and polka dancing, and our youth has a volleyball team that plays in the rural fellowship church league."

Her hope is for continued growth and to fill the pews during worship.

Mary Ann is a humble and devoted member of St. James who inspires many. We are blessed to have her amongst us.



FUN FOR ALL !



YOU are invited to...
**Join the
St. James Choir!**

(It's SO much fun!)

Tuesday, February 3, 6:30

Tuesday, February 10, 6:30

Tuesday, February 17, 6:30

Tuesday, February 24, 6:30

**“BREAKING BOARD (games)!
A NEW OPPORTUNITY OPEN TO
EVERYONE WHO LOVES TO PLAY GAMES!
It's open to the public, so share the invite!**



If you are you a person who just loves to play games...
board games, dice games, card games...
then our new group is calling your name!

BREAKING BOARD(games)!

**...will meet in the basement of St. Mark's UCC
(W1307 Orchard Road, Cleveland)**

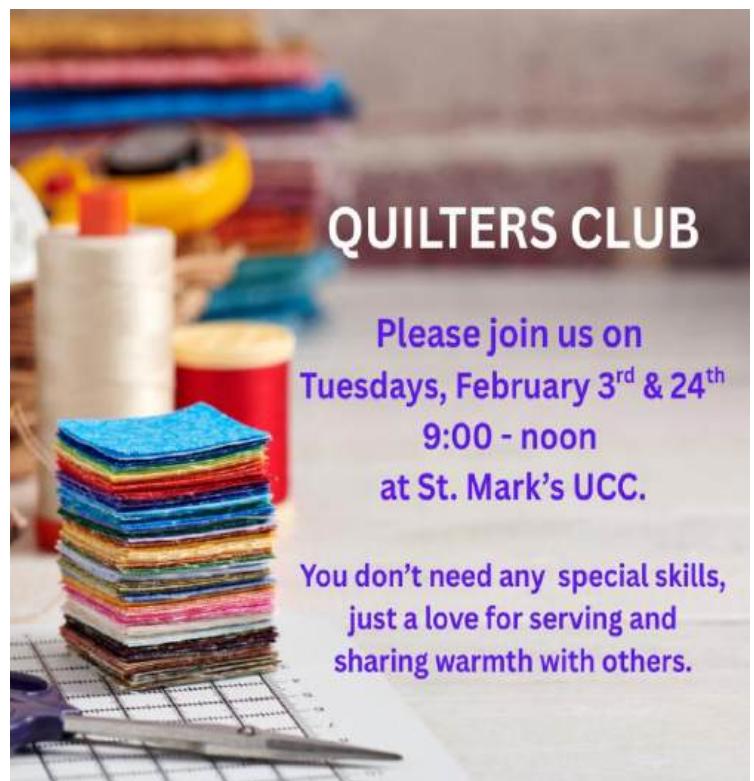
9:30-11:30am, Wednesdays, February 11th & 25th

Everyone is invited and welcome to join us--tell your neighbors & friends!

There's no charge, no reservations, just come and have fun!

*There will be games available and you are also invited to
bring your own games to share.*

**Bring a beverage and snack if you'd like.*





**UCC RURAL CHURCH FELLOWSHIP
Presents
SHEEPSHEAD TOURNAMENT**

Where: Bethlehem United Church of Christ

11608 Lax Chapel Road

Kiel, WI 53042

When: Sunday, February 15, 2026, from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm

[Snow date is Feb. 22nd, same time]

Doors open at 12:30

Entrance Fee: Canned goods and/or free will offering

Rules will be explained before the tournament begins. All levels of skill are welcome. Beginner's table(s) will be available for those who don't know how to play. Don't want to play sheepshead but want to participate in the fun? Bring your own board or card game.

Refreshments will be available.

COME ONE...COME ALL! Open to the Public!

Childcare will be supplied. Games and movies for the kiddos.

**Two
More
Enjoyable
Events
to
Enjoy
Support**

HOLY TRINITY PARISH
11928 Marken Road, Kiel ~ (Located in School Hill)

25th ANNUAL PERCH FRY

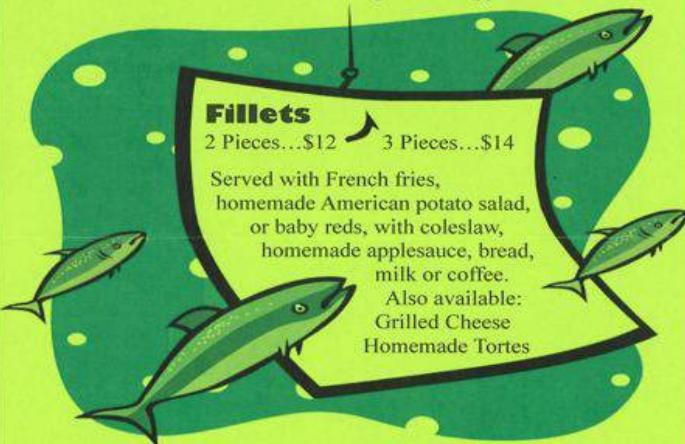
Friday, February 20, 2026

Dine-In from 3:30-7 pm

Carry-outs from 11 am-1 pm and 3:30-7 pm

Call 920-773-2380

Raffle Tickets, Visit the HT Lounge, Handicapped Accessible



Fillets
2 Pieces...\$12 3 Pieces...\$14
Served with French fries,
homemade American potato salad,
or baby reds, with coleslaw,
homemade applesauce, bread,
milk or coffee.
Also available:
Grilled Cheese
Homemade Tortes

Sponsored by Holy Trinity Parish ~ Co-Sponsored by Catholic Financial Life, Branch 109

Sheboygan County Interfaith Organization

Bulletin Bites - FEBRUARY, 2026



Dear Friends,

As we step into February, our hearts are full of gratitude for the continued support and care you show our community. Your prayers, generosity and compassion truly make a difference for the families we serve.

We are thankful to share our February Bulletin Bites with you—small reflections and updates that highlight hope, connection and the meaningful impact you help make possible each day.

Thank you walking alongside us and for being a steady source of encouragement and truth.

With sincere gratitude,

*Lisa Stephan, Executive Director
Sheboygan County Interfaith Organization*

1. ❄️ Winter Market & Expansion

- Winter Success: Our indoor market is thriving! We've officially welcomed three new vendors to the lineup.
- Market Research: We hit the road to Manitowoc to study their market operations, bringing back fresh ideas to improve our local flow and experience.
- Summer Recruitment: Outreach is paying off! Several vendors from the region have expressed interest in joining our Wednesday Summer Market.

🚜 The Locavore & Summer Planning

- Summer Kickoff: Planning is officially underway for the summer season. We are hard at work vetting farmers and finalizing layouts.
- Locavore Movement: We are seeing great momentum on our Locavore Program as we refine how to better connect you with Sheboygan County's local food shed.
- Community Hub Vision: We're moving beyond just "buying and selling." We are evolving the market into a Community Hub—a place to gather, connect, and stay a while.

🎵 Collaborations & Training

- Encore Performance: We are excited to announce another collaboration with the Sheboygan Pops for the upcoming summer season!
- Professional Growth: Your market leadership is heading to the Farmer Market Manager Workshop on March 13th to bring back industry-leading strategies for our vendors and guests.

2. We hope you are all staying warm and healthy this season. And with cold and flu season in full swing this month, we could really use the following: **Bottled Water, Lysol Disinfectant Spray, All Purpose Cleaner.** We are always grateful for your help!

3. **Family Pathways** has seen several families move to unsupervised visitation over the past month. We are looking forward to moving 3-4 families off the waiting list and on to our visitation schedule by early February! We are grateful for the referrals and ability to serve the community as the only private supervised visitation program in the county.

4. During this month of St. Valentine's Day, we give **heartfelt thanks** to our faith community for being a **living reflection of love in action**. Your compassion, generosity, and care remind us daily that we are not alone and that hope is strengthened when love is shared. Because of you, kindness continues to ripple through our community in meaningful ways.

ST. JAMES USHERS

FEBRUARY

- * Richard & Sarah Lutze
- Joe & Cindy Klapperich
- Jamey Binversie
- Sadie Koenig
- Cole Binversie
- David & Megan Lutze
- Matthew & Amber Lutze

MARCH & LENT

- *Amanda Russart
- Tim Russart
- Jason & Jenny Riesterer
- Austin Riesterer
- Briana Riesterer
- Emma Russart
- Williem Langenhahn
- Chelsea Langenhahn
- Madisan Langehahn
- Henry & Bonnie Langenhahn, Sr.
- Henry & Kari Langenhahn, Jr.



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

FEBRUARY

- Jon & Julie Herrmann
- Mike & Roxi Bernhardt

MARCH

- Dave & Ann Adams
- Glenn Grunwald

MID-WEEK/LENTEN

Needed

READERS

- Feb. 1st - Sandy Perronne
- Feb. 8th - Scott Siekman
- Feb. 15th - Lori Roelse
- Feb. 22nd - Jacob Grunwald

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



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

CHURCH ATTENDANCE

St. James	St. Mark's
96	December 21
**	December 24 (4pm)
**	December 24 (7pm)
63	December 25
35	December 28
56	January 4
44	January 11
45	January 18
44	January 25

St. James February Celebrations!

BIRTHDAYS

5 – Mary Ann Vogel
6 – Jeff Meyer
9 – Kari Langenhahn
10 – Elliot Gumm
 Briana Riesterer
12 – Amanda Russart
15 – Clara Meyer
17 – Everit Gumm
19 – Wyatt Koenig
22 – Tom Nye
24 – Sheila Hemb
25 – Myron Hickman
 Jason Riesterer
26 – Rieck Beiersdorf
27 – Karie Ladwig
28 – Poppy Binversie
 Theodore Sibley
29 – Eunice Stolzmann

ANNIVERSARIES

26 – Bill & Laurie Heckmann



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, email the church office:
stmstjoffice@gmail.com or call the church office 920.693.8361.

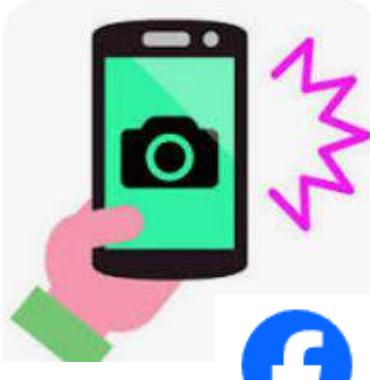
St. Mark's February Celebrations!

BIRTHDAYS

4 – Mark Jurk
5 – Judy Steinbeck
7 – Ada Roelse
8 – Trevor Schueler
9 – Hillary Hermann
 Ron Vadoske
10 – Jon Herrmann
16 – Cole Herrmann
21 – Linda Schroeder
 Reid Vadoske
22 – Scott Dexter
 Peter Grunwald
25 - Bill Roelse
26 - Amy Summers
29 - Walter Taylor

ANNIVERSARIES

There are none this month



We need YOU to help our Facebook page grow!

Here's how you can help:

1. Take photos of church events and send to Karen at stmstjoffice@gmail.com Include a brief paragraph that tells what the event was. Posts with photos get LOTS more
2. Follow our page: St Marks & St James UCC
3. Like the posts
4. Share the posts to your social media
5. Invite others to visit our page (there's a 'button' you can use to do it!)