

The SERVANT

February 2024



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Worship

Saturday, 5:00 p.m.

Sunday, 8:30 a.m.

Sunday, 10:45 a.m.

Sunday School, 9:30 a.m.

Pastors

Lori L. Hope

Sawyer Vanden Heuvel



St Mark's Lutheran Church
2001 S Elmwood Avenue
Sioux Falls, SD 57105
605-332-4092
www.smluth.org

Different Gifts

Working in the church, I am amazed at all the gifts that we need to make everything happen.

We have folks who speak “budget” and manage the money.

We have folks who have tools and ingenuity, who figure out why the little refrigerator in the basement has stopped working.

We have folks who know how to throw a party!

We have folks who are faithful teachers.

We have folks who tend to our sanctuary and bake bread for the Holy Meal we share.

We have creatives who sing and play and ring their praises.

We have folks who are ever aware of the needs of the world and draw us into service in our community.

We have folks who know about sound equipment and work to be sure the Word can be heard by everyone present.

We have folks who manage lots of tasks like making bulletins and newsletters and ordering candles and such.

We have folks who pay close attention to others, asking about illnesses and vacations and absences.

It's astonishing how many gifts we need in this life of ours.

The world is actually an amazingly beautiful place, populated with beautiful people, each a gift to someone else.

Vicar Melinda shared this poem by Rev. Jennifer Shimota at the January 20 and 21 worship services.

“Heroes”

from Pastor Lori

“God heals the broken-hearted, and binds up their wounds.”

Psalm 147:3

A. A. Milne from Winnie the Pooh

"Today was a Difficult Day," said Pooh.

There was a pause.

"Do you want to talk about it?" asked Piglet.

"No," said Pooh after a bit. "No, I don't think I do."

"That's okay," said Piglet, and he came and sat beside his friend.

"What are you doing?" asked Pooh.

"Nothing, really," said Piglet. "Only, I know what Difficult Days are like. I quite often don't feel like talking about it on my Difficult Days either.

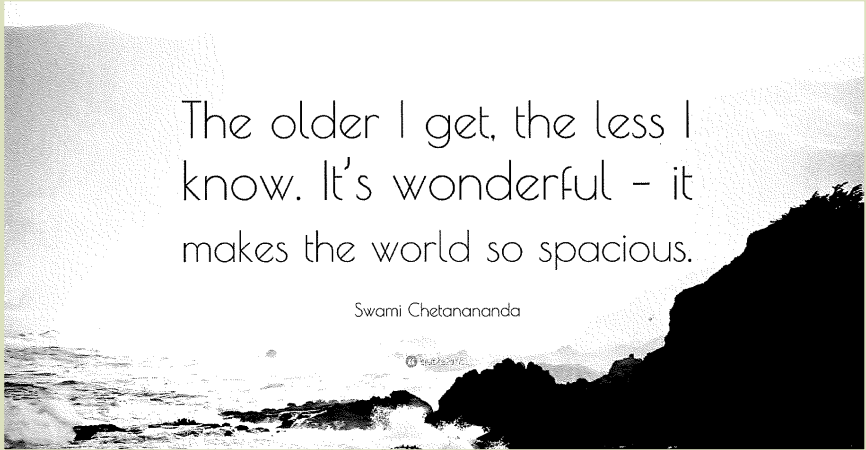
"But goodness," continued Piglet, "Difficult Days are so much easier when you know you've got someone there for you. And I'll always be here for you, Pooh."

And as Pooh sat there, working through in his head his Difficult Day, while the solid, reliable Piglet sat next to him quietly, swinging his little legs...he thought that his best friend had never been more right."

The older I get, the less I know and I am all right living without certitude. What I do know from all the “Difficult Days” and times spent with my back to the wall is the strength found in community and trusting. Trust in God and trust that interdependence is not failure. We have the gift of one another and we are able to know God more fully and bring more hope, love and beauty into the world together. There is so much I don’t know but I do believe with all my heart that we were created in and for community. Jodi Picoult writes, “Heroes didn't leap tall buildings or stop bullets with an outstretched hand; they didn't wear boots and capes. They bled, and they bruised, and their superpowers were as simple as listening, or loving. Heroes were ordinary people who knew that even if their own lives were impossibly knotted, they could untangle someone else's. And maybe that one act could lead someone to rescue you right back.”

I am honored and humbled to know all of you heroes!

Peace,
Pastor Lori Hope



The older I get, the less I know. It's wonderful - it makes the world so spacious.

Swami Chetanananda

“Promise”

Pastor Sawyer

As Rivers Flow from a Distant Spring

(in *All Creation Sings* #1046)

*As rivers flow from a distant spring
to quench our thirst and feed the earth,
so let our lives flow from you, our Source,
to counter death and nurture birth.*

*As woods make shelter with in its shade
for beasts to feed and birds to nest,
so let our lives be a sheltered space,
a refuge for the worn to rest.*

*As trees rise up from the forest floor
by roots that feed each limb above,
so let our lives rise in praise to you
from hearts we root in your deep love.*

*So let us praise you, Creator God,
for worlds that witness to your care,
that show your presence in every place,
your glory shining everywhere.*

Text: David Bjorlin, b. 1984

Dear friends in Christ,

As the ground in South Dakota remains covered with snow, the text from the hymn above reminds us of the distant memory of Spring. The author, David Bjorlin, wrote this text along the North Shore of Lake Superior. I cannot help but to imagine looking out at this vast, frigid body of water and seeing nothing but the stark openness amongst the landscape.

Soon, we will once again be marking ourselves with ashes that remind me of the grey, bleak, and bitter cold of a frozen Lake Superior. What hope, what promise, can we have when we are physically reminding ourselves with this sign of our own finitude and mortality? For me, I think about this promise that comes from living a life that is rooted deep in the promises of God’s love for us and for the rest of creation.

Even through our woundedness, even when the world is in turmoil, even when death’s grip seems so strong, we can rest in knowing that Spring does return. Resurrection comes alive once again. The birds will sing their hopeful harmonies. The trees will be filled with leaves and our lives, rooted in Christ, will “counter death and nurture birth.”

May God bless you always,
Pastor Sawyer

“Love”

Vicar Melinda

“We love because he first loved us.”

1 John 4:19

This year Ash Wednesday falls on the day of love — Valentine’s Day. The day that many buy sweet treats, flowers, and gifts for their loved ones. It is also a day that reminds others that they are alone or that their loved one is no longer with them. A day that is promoted as a day of love can be celebrated in various ways. I am excited that we will be celebrating the day of love as one community, on Ash Wednesday.

Ash Wednesday is a reminder of our mortality and our desire to be in a relationship with God. It marks the beginning of the season where Christians put time aside for prayer, fasting, and repentance. The placement of ashes on our foreheads is a visual representation that we acknowledge where we come from — “ashes to ashes, dust to dust.” It is also a visual way to show our faith as Christians. There are few, if any, other days in the year when a person may see you and know immediately that you are a Christian. More importantly, it is a day that we as a community gather to confess our sin, mark ourselves, and walk united into a season that will lead us to the cross. A season that leads us to the one who gave their life for us. A season that reminds us that we have a God who loves us unconditionally. A season that leads us to the who is LOVE, whose name is Jesus.



Love
because He first loved us
1 JOHN 4:19

As we prepare for the season of LOVE, let us hold those in our prayers, in our hearts, and in our minds that are in a season of suffering, pain, need, and loneliness. Let us also put actions behind our thoughts and prayers, with practical gifts, with our voices, and by our presence.

May we know and always remember that “we love because he first loved us.”

I look forward to journeying with you this Lenten season.

Peace and Love,

Vicar Melinda

Lenten Season at St. Mark's

We are entering the season of Lent beginning on February 14 with Ash Wednesday. Lent brings to mind many experiences, traditions, and rituals. Our theme this year is "The Seed of Joy." Before you panic and wonder if we understand the season of Lent, let's name what joy is not: joy is not the same as happiness; joy is not elation or jubilation; joy is not manufactured optimism, and joy is not denial of our present reality. We sometimes act as if life is always a dichotomy: sad or happy, light or dark, bitter or sweet, brave or cowardice, and question or answer. But we don't have to live very long before we realize that our lives are so often both/and or a whole lot of gray. We have been in a hospice room where we laughed so hard that we cried. We have days that we can only describe as bitter sweet. We have been so brave in the face of a difficult situation but inside we were so afraid.

An important part of the season of Lent is the community that gathers to sing, pray, confess, and commune. In N.T. Wright's Luke edition of *Lent for Everyone*, he uses the metaphor of a house that's grown dusty and disorganized through lack of attention. So we take some time to think, remember, and reflect. In this season of Lent we set apart 40 days to name all the sadness, pain, loss, fear and grief. We also know that as we share this journey together we can remind one another of the life and ministry of Jesus that was not afraid to walk right into the pain and hurt; not to dismiss it but not let it define us. We have all been shaped by all the heartache and pain we have experienced in our lives AND we have had people who have held our hand or embraced us. We have all been shaped by all the heartache and pain we have experienced in our lives AND we have been overwhelmed by the grace and mercy that was shared with us. We have all been shaped by all the heartache and pain we have experienced in our lives AND we have learned to be authentic in our lives as we share with others honestly when we are angry, exhausted and hopeless.

C. S. Lewis wrote, "Joy is the serious business of heaven." In this season of honesty, house cleaning, and authenticity, we are often surprised by joy: joy as resistance, joy as vulnerability, joy as sincerity, joy as tenderness, and joy as unconditional love. Walter Brueggemann calls this joy unspeakable. He writes, "The Jewish reality of exile, the Christian confession of crucifixion and cross, the honest recognition that there is an untamed darkness in our life that must be embraced — all of that is fundamental to the gift of new life." A joyful Lent is not an oxymoron. From the authors of *The Seed of Joy*: "What is joy, anyway? We probably know it when we find it, but maybe we've missed some of its subtleties. Sometimes it's an emotion, sometimes a conviction, sometimes a practice; sometimes it seems far off, simply a promise. Joy can shout or it can hum quietly. It reveals itself in layers, adapting to different life circumstances. It even mixes with other experiences, like hope, sorrow, confusion, peace, or pain. The complexity of joy reflects the complexity and beauty of God."

Pastor Lori

Ash Wednesday Services

February 14 at 12:00 noon and 7:00 p.m.

Lenten Wednesday Services

February 21, 7:00 p.m.

February 28, 7:00 p.m.

March 6, 7:00 p.m.

March 13, 7:00 p.m.

March 20, 7:00 p.m.

Lenten Wednesday Suppers

February 21-March 20, 6:00 p.m. - 6:45 p.m.

Lenten Offerings

The first \$1,000 of the Lent and Easter offerings will be given to the LSS Refugee Resettlement program. Additional funds will go to [Charis Ministry Partners](#), the churches that implement Food to You and other ministries.

Lenten Devotional Booklet

A daily devotional guide, "Tending Joy," is available in print or [online](#). Contact the office or sign up in the narthex if you would like a print copy.

THE JOURNEY

A PANEL DISCUSSION FORUM



The RIC Task Force is offering a panel discussion forum on Sunday, February 11 at 9:30am OR Thursday, February 15 at 7:00pm.

MEET THE PANELISTS

The panelists below will share their personal experiences as they engage in a dialogue about faith, sexuality, gender identity, and racial equity.

Tiff Dorfman

they/them

Tiff is a Chaplain at Sanford Health and a licensed Pastor in the United Methodist Church.

Tiff identifies as non-binary/gender non-conforming.

Darrell Herman

he/him/his

Darrell is a member of St. Mark's Lutheran Church. He is the Council President and served as the Council Vice President in 2023. He works in sales. He is Native American.

Melinda Garza Moran

ella/she/her

Melinda serves as the Vicar for St. Mark's Lutheran Church. She is Mexican American and proud mother of a son and daughter who are part of the LGBTQIA2S+ community.

“Cookies and Conversation”

Who: Everyone is invited!

When: Sunday, February 11, 10:00-10:30 a.m.

Where: St. Mark’s Fellowship Hall

Why: Come and have a sweet treat while engaging in conversation with our Sunday School students. Make a new friend, laugh, share stories, answer questions, and build a lifelong relationship!



Intergenerational Game Time

We welcome all ages to join us for Intergenerational Game Time on Sunday, February 19, from 9:30-10:30 a.m. In lieu of our traditional Sunday School time, we invite you to build relationships with the children of St. Mark's by playing board games together. Games will be provided or you may bring your own. Get ready for some laughs and make a new friend!

Welcome New Members

Brad, Charisse and Alexa Brockmueller are excited to join St. Mark’s Lutheran Church!

Brad is a teacher in the Sioux Falls School District, currently teaching cybersecurity and computer hardware classes at the Career and Technical Education Academy. Charisse works as a neonatal nurse practitioner in the Sanford NICU. Their daughter, Alexa, is a 2023 graduate of Roosevelt High School and is currently in her first year of college at Wartburg College in Waverly, IA.



Fat Tuesday Party

Tuesday, February 13, from 5:30-7:30pm

Pancakes, sausage,

ice cream with a host of toppings

Please bring an ice cream topping to share!

LIVE JAZZ MUSIC

MAKING OUR OWN MASKS TO WEAR
FELLOWSHIP AND FUN!

*A free will offering will be given
to ELCA World Hunger.*

**If you can help set up, serve or clean up
please sign up in the narthex or call the
office to let us know how you can help.**

History Highlights

St. Mark’s will observe its 70th anniversary in 2024. As we prepare for the anniversary, we are sharing some of the church’s history highlights along with notes on what was happening nationally and around the world. **In 1979:**

- **Dean Osterman was elected as first president of the council and congregation on January 29.** (Previously, the pastor served as council president.)
- President Jimmy Carter proposed that Martin Luther King Jr.’s birthday be a national holiday.
- Over 100,000 people participated in the first Gay and Lesbian Civil Rights March in Washington, D.C. on October 14.

St. Mark's Delivers!

The St. Mark's Meals on Wheels team delivers lunch seven days of each month on Route #17. (Some St. Mark's folks help with other routes and with meal packing, too.)

At this time, Route #17 is short a regular Wednesday driver. Occasional substitutes are also needed.

St. Mark's takes lunch to 15-20 people. The route takes about an hour to an hour-and-a-half. If you have not driven for Meals on Wheels but would like to try it, let the St. Mark's team know. You would be able to ride along with an experienced Meals on Wheels driver.

St. Mark's needs drivers on the following dates:

- Friday, February 16
- Wednesday, February 21
- Friday, March 15
- Wednesday, March 20

Please consider. Volunteer by contacting the church office or Cathy Brechtelsbauer. Thanks!

2023 ELCA World Hunger Giving Report

St. Mark's giving to ELCA World Hunger in 2023 was as follows:

\$ 500.00	Church Budget
1,000.38	Noisy Offering
3,364.00	Member designated offerings
\$ 4,864.38	Total to ELCA World Hunger
\$ 580.00	Member designated to Lutheran Disaster Response
\$ 5,444.38	TOTAL

St. Mark's goal for 2023 was \$16 a year per baptized member. The average for 2023 was \$11.63. At the January 28 Annual Meeting, St. Mark's renewed the goal for 2024 at \$16.

The 2023 report refers to gifts made through St. Mark's. Some St. Mark's members send donations directly to ELCA World Hunger and those gifts are not reflected in St. Mark's report. Direct donations are appreciated and encouraged as are the donations that are received through St. Mark's.

ELCA World Hunger has an exceptional record of efficiency in helping get food to hungry people both in the US and mostly far away. Thanks to all who gave in 2023 and all who will give in 2024.

... for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me.

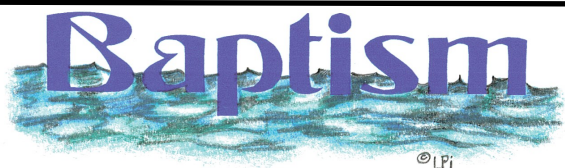
Matthew 25:35 (NRSVUE)

Our Christmas offering

Each year, St. Mark's council designates where the Christmas Offering will be directed. This year, the Christmas offering was shared with the Sioux Falls Public School Lunch Angel Fund and Shepherd's Table.

The Angel Fund alleviates the burden of school lunch debt for K-12 students in the Sioux Falls School District. Child Nutrition Coordinator Gay Anderson thanked St. Mark's on behalf of the school district:

"Blessings. Your wonderful donation covers a total of 478 hot meals. Thank you for your generosity."



February Baptism Anniversaries

Kent Alberty	Scott Kortemeyer
Joey Bohlen	Sutton Randall
Amy Douglas	Christy Schweitzer
Donna Hirsch	Gabriel Splichal Larson
Ruth Huber	Dustin White
Connie Kinstad	

THANK YOU

to those who are sponsoring our missionary in Nicaragua and our Transportation Ministry during the month of February

Transportation Ministry Sponsor
Marlon Mollet is the January sponsor.

Mission Ministry Sponsors

February 4:	Marlon Mollet
February 11:	Marlon Mollet
February 18:	Karen Zingmark
February 25:	Dale and Dianne Schnabel in memory of Inez Schnabel

Council Minutes

St. Mark's Lutheran Church Council Meeting Minutes

01/16/2024

Mark Smith, Angie Smith, Kent Alberty, Pastor Sawyer, Barb Stanley, Vicar Melinda, Sally Turner, Dianne Schnabel, Lorie Laurila, Deb Carrier, Pastor Lori, Luanne Alberty, Darrell Herman, Karin Lindell, Becky Luke

Devotions –Darrell shared devotions with us.

Minutes – MSC.

Treasurer's Report – We spent less than our budget for 2023 and have a positive general fund balance of approximately \$30,000. We will move the general fund balance to the savings account for 2023. MSC. For clarification, we did spend less than our budget, but we also took in less than we expected, so we were definitely good stewards of the contributions we did receive.

President's Report – Thank you for everything you've done this year to help her.

Pastor Lori's Report – Thank you for all of the hard work this year. She gets to do fun things because of us. She shared a story of someone she is mentoring, and that person found where she belonged in the program she was completing. Pastor said so many get the "You belong here" feeling here at St. Mark's. It's wonderful!

Pastor Sawyer's Report – The church office is working on a communications survey. He is going to set dates in the not-so-distant future to meet with families with children to get to know them better to see what more we can do for them. He also let us know that he's been accepted into a leadership program through Luther Seminary.

Vicar's Melinda's Report – She has decided on a final project. It is a Name Honoring Service that will be on March 30 at 7:00 p.m.

Committee Reports

Youth – They went to a Skyforce game. They are also planning Fat Tuesday and hope to go to a Stampede game. Several are going to FaithFest at Augie with Vicar Melinda.

Mission – Pastor Lori brought up that we maybe should create our own backpack program because we get several people in the office that are hungry now and the gift cards may not help them.

Worship and Music – We had lots of people help to take down decorations on a very cold and blustery Saturday. Thank you to Becky Luke for all of the communion bread she has provided over the past several months. Response on the Time and Talent sheets was good so Barb will be able to call others to help with the bread.

Property – All of the furnaces and the boiler are working. Jack Mortenson has been a godsend this past year in helping the committee with pretty much anything they need.

Old Business

The Lent and Easter Offering will go to Refugee Resettlement for the first \$1000, then to Charis Ministries Partners. Charis is Greek for Grace. These are the churches that provide Food to You and other ministries.

New Business. None at this time.

We closed with our prayer concerns and the Lord's Prayer.

MSC to adjourn.

Submitted by Becky Luke, Secretary

Annual Meeting Minutes

St. Mark's Lutheran Church Annual Meeting January 28, 2024

President Luanne Alberty called the meeting to order.

Pastor Sawyer led opening devotions.

MSC to adopt the agenda with the addition of the audit committee report.

Luanne appointed Thad Titze the meeting's parliamentarian.

Minutes – MSC to accept the January 29, 2023, annual meeting minutes.

Nominations – President-elect Darrell Herman presented the 2024 nomination ballot. Hearing no discussion, Luanne declared the ballot approved.

Treasurer's Report – Luanne presented the Treasurer's report. MSC

Audit Committee Report – Luanne read the audit committee's report. MSC

Budget – Luanne presented the 2024 budget. MSC

Committee Reports – Pastor Lori and Pastor Sawyer presented their reports. Pastor Lori also presented Vicar Melinda's Report as Vicar Melinda has Covid and could not attend the meeting. Luanne presented the standing committee reports and organizations report. MSC

Resolutions – Luanne read the 2024 proposed resolutions. MSC to adopt the resolutions.

Old Business – In August 2022, the ELCA Churchwide Assembly passed updates for incorporation into congregational constitutions. St. Mark's Council approved these updates last year, but we did not vote on them at the annual meeting. These changes largely address matters of clarity and inclusive or expanded language. MSC

New Business – Cathy Brechtelsbauer reported that the member contributions to ELCA World Hunger and Lutheran Disaster Relief channeled through the congregation in 2023 averaged 11.63. This fell short of our goal of \$16/person. She did acknowledge that part of the issue is our number of baptized members increased this year. She then made a motion to set the goal at \$16 per baptized member for 2024. MSC

Kerri Smith brought forth a plea for our St. Lucia Festival. This is the first year that she's felt overwhelmed with the event, mainly because of the lack of leaders. We need leaders for publicity, costumes, the kitchen, volunteers, etc. Please prayerfully consider helping with organizing the event.


Luanne thanked everyone for all of the support this year.

MSC to adjourn.

Becky Luke
Secretary

St. Mark's Mission Statement
to nurture faith and life for loving service in Christ's name.

February 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
				Book Study, 10:00 a.m.	Pastor Sawyer's Sabbath Book Study, 7:00 p.m. via Zoom	Watercolor, 10.00 a.m. Worship, 5:00 p.m.
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Worship, 8:30 & 10:45 a.m. Sunday School, 9:30 a.m.	Pastor Lori/Vicar Melinda's Sabbath	Quilters, 9:00 a.m. Office Staff, 9:30 a.m. Internship Committee, 6:00 p.m.	Book Study, 9:00 a.m. Lectionary Discussion, 11:00 a.m. Watercolor, 1:00 p.m. Choir, 7:00 p.m. 9th-10th Grade Confirmation, 7:00 p.m.	Book Study, 10:00 a.m. Ruth Circle, 1:00 p.m. Fill Your Cup, 7:00 p.m.	Pastor Sawyer's Sabbath Book Study, 7:00 p.m. via Zoom	Watercolor, 10.00 a.m. Worship, 5:00 p.m.
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Worship, 8:30 & 10:45 a.m. Sunday School, 9:30 a.m. RIC Panel Discussion, 9:30 a.m. Cookies and Conversation, 10:00 a.m.	Pastor Lori/Vicar Melinda's Sabbath	Quilters, 9:00 a.m. Office Staff, 9:30 a.m. Fat Tuesday Party, 5:30 p.m.	Ash Wednesday Fill Your Cup, 9:00 a.m. Lectionary Discussion, 11:00 a.m. Worship, 12:00 noon Watercolor, 1:00 p.m. Choir, 6:10 p.m. Worship 7:00 p.m.	Book Study, 10:00 a.m. RIC Panel Discussion, 7:00 p.m.	Pastor Sawyer's Sabbath	Watercolor, 10.00 a.m. Worship, 5:00 p.m.
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
Worship, 8:30 & 10:45 a.m. Intergenerational Game Day, 9:30 a.m.	Pastor Lori's Sabbath	Quilters, 9:00 a.m. Office Staff, 9:30 a.m. Council, 7:00 p.m.	Lectionary Discussion, 11:00 a.m. Watercolor, 1:00 p.m. Supper, 6:00-6:45 p.m. Choir, 6:10 p.m. Worship, 7:00 p.m.	Book Study, 10:00 a.m.	Pastor Sawyer's Sabbath	Watercolor, 10.00 a.m. Worship, 5:00 p.m.
	Vicar Melinda Out of Office					
25	26	27	28	29		
Worship, 8:30 & 10:45 a.m. Sunday School, 9:30 a.m.	Pastor Lori/Vicar Melinda's Sabbath	Quilters, 9:00 a.m. Office Staff, 9:30 a.m.	Discussion, 11:00 a.m. Watercolor, 1:00 p.m. Supper, 6:00-6:45 p.m. Choir, 6:10 p.m. Worship, 7:00 p.m.	Book Study, 10:00 a.m.		

St. Mark's Lutheran Church
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Sioux Falls, SD 57105

The Servant February 2024

Office Hours & Contact Information:

- Lori Hope, Pastor
Tuesday-Friday
pastor@smluth.org
- Sawyer Vanden Heuvel, Pastor
Monday-Thursday
sawyer@smluth.org
- Melinda Garza Moran, Vicar
Tuesday- Friday
intern@smluth.org
- Linda Hallstrom, Office Manager
Monday - Wednesday 8:30 a.m.- 2:30 p.m.
Thursday 8:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
stmarks@smluth.org
- Karin Lindell, Ministry Coordinator
Tuesday 9:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
Wednesday 1:00 p.m.- 4:00 p.m.
Thursday 9:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
karin@smluth.org
- Deb Carrier, Finance Manager
Wednesday
deb@smluth.org
*If you need anything related to finance,
please email Deb anytime.*

To reach a member
of the pastoral team
during non-office hours
605-215-2925

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St. Mark's office is also open on Fridays
from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.