

STANDING TOGETHER

Building Christ-Centered

HOMES

Our Savior is Coming!

By Pastor Chris Rubino

Indeed our Savior is coming, indeed Pastor but when?

No one can answer that question, even Jesus the Son of God said he did not know, only God the Father knew. We find that response from Jesus frustrating because we want to know so as to be prepared for His coming.

Many false prophets have said they figured out the exact time. They have deceived others into believing that the end was to come on a specific date and time.

Jesus speaks to this in Mathew 24:4-5 *And Jesus answered them, "See that no one leads you astray. For many will come in my name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and they will lead many astray.*

Jesus does say to be prepared and we must be vigilant. Jesus tells us there will be significant changes in the world and the world will become very anti-God and wickedness will prevail. I think we can all agree that we have seen these changes in our world. What we thought was sin is no longer an offense against God. The world is asking us to turn away from the ways of God; that they no longer apply. Remember Satan is clever, He deceived Adam and Eve "surely God did not say you could not eat the apple from this tree?". He convinced them that they could be just like God and that God did not want them to become just as powerful as Him.



We have seen this in people who have vacated the position that we are created in God's image and have instead created God in their image. This enables us to live our lives the way we want to rather than the way God wants us to live.

We have seen a liberal movement in churches that have turned away from God's law. I am not talking about the order of worship from a liturgical perspective or what type of music is used during the service. I understand people have differences on how a worship is conducted because this can be considered adiaphora because it cannot be directly defined by scripture. (I personally love the way our worship is done but not everyone will agree.) However, redefining what is sin is not optional because it is clearly defined in the Old and New Testaments. Perhaps this movement away from the word of God is a sign that the end is near, but again no one knows for sure.

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Sunday Worship Services

8:30- Traditional Service

9:45- Bible Study

11:00- Contemporary Service

Holy Communion is celebrated on the 1st & 3rd Sundays of each month.

All services available to view at
saintmarkgr.org
[fb.com/saintmarkkentwood](https://www.facebook.com/saintmarkkentwood)
 YouTube: SMLC Sound & Video

...Continued from front

Based on scripture no one knows when the end will come, so we must always be prepared. This is stated in Mathew 4:36 and 42-44:

"But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only."

"Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect."

Indeed our Savior, Jesus Christ will return and at a time we do not expect. The Apostle Paul said we must stay focused on the prize of eternal life, and not stray off course in following the ways of God.

We must reject the world or the deceptive ways of Satan and place your trust in God Almighty.

Revelation 22:20 speaks to Jesus' promise of His 2nd coming:

"He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!"

Being prepared for Jesus's 2nd coming makes it easy for us to say: Come Lord Jesus!!!!

- Pastor Chris Rubino



Thanksgiving Eve Service

will be

**Wednesday, November 24th at
6:30p.m.**



Adult Bible Study Opportunities

Sunday Morning - 9:45 a.m.

What is Lutheran? Pastor Verity, Leader
Meets in the Sanctuary.

Study on Proverbs, Jim Stadler, Leader
Meets in Room 223.

Disciples of Jesus, Renee Ambriz, Leader
Meets in Room 225.

Monday Morning - 10:00 a.m.

Women's Bible Study, Room 205 Jessi
Marsiglia, Leader.

Wednesday Morning - 6:45 a.m.

Men's Zoom Bible Study, Heaven & Earth
Contact Jon Krueger for Zoom link or for more
information.

Thursday Morning - 10:00 a.m.

Men's Bible Study, based on the book, *The Gospel According to Paul*, Room 211. You can join in-person or by Zoom. Pastor Chris Rubino, Leader

Call Committee Update

We have been informed that the district has created a new list of pastors to be considered for our next call. We should be receiving the list in the next couple weeks.

On Thankfulness

Ah November!

What a welcome sound November is. The start of our holiday season, our Christian holiday season. Just after Reformation Day which reset the Christian world into a straight path to our redemption. Now we are on our way to one of many people's favorite holiday, Thanksgiving.

Thankfulness. Something we should all feel every day of our lives. This holiday was set aside by one of our greatest Presidents, Abraham Lincoln. Its formal day, the fourth Thursday in November, was set by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt. During these eras and Presidents, we as a country were tried to the core by the Civil War and World War II. Our country has always had faith in Christ but in these war times we were losing hope and when hope was waning, the great leadership of these times gave us something to put our hope in. That hope was reset by insightful leaders. Hope was directed to being thankful.

Being thankful requires us to look around at our own environment, with love, at what makes our lives worth living. Looking with love starts with contentment. Paul in Philippians 2 tells us to be content in every situation.

Do we feel contentment in our daily lives? Let's see, do we have a roof over our heads? Do we have a bed? Do we have food? A refrigerator? Clean water to drink? Do we have transportation? Clean clothes? Are we loved by someone? We can all think of these more basic items (blessings), so then shouldn't we feel content? All in all we have it pretty good! All in all we are blessed! Consequently, does this not give us a feeling of thankfulness?

Thanksgiving at the greatest level is that we are saved from sin. Because God the Father our Creator loves us so much, he saved us from our sins thru His son Jesus. Most of us have had the sin of discontentment and thus a feeling of being unthankful. Paul tells us in 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18;

"Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."

As Rev. Dr. Michael Zeigler, Speaker of **The Lutheran Hour** wrote in a recent devotion; *"giving thanks is like the act of exhaling in breathing. We inhale God's gifts—gifts for body, gifts for the soul, gifts in our relationships with God and others, gifts for time and for eternity. But, inhaling is only the start. Next, we exhale. We breathe out. We turn toward Jesus in praise and thanks. This inhale and exhale of faith sustains us in our service to our neighbors."*

Let's take this month and change our attitudes to be thankful through recognizing our blessings that are all around us. Cast your cares to Jesus, for we know He cares for us all day long. Let us have a thankful heart and have a joy filled life.

Love in Christ,

Jim Tafel

Enter his gates with thanksgiving
and his courts with praise;
give thanks to Him and praise His
name.
For the Lord is good and his love
endures forever;
his faithfulness continues through all
generations
Psalms 100:4-5



A Word from the Board of Directors

It is now November, and Thanksgiving is nearly upon us. What a fantastic time to think about how greatly we have been and will be blessed by God. We are thankful that God has provided us a way to eternal life, and assurance that he is always with us here and now.

As a Board we want to thank everyone at St. Mark for the blessings they have been this year. Your commitment to Christ and absolutely huge hearts gave us great successes during a very tumultuous time. You have:

- Continued to worship every week
- **Hosted fun events such as the “trunk or treat”**
- Invited friends/neighbors/family to join us on Sundays
- Purchased new Bibles for the sanctuary
- Replaced several roofs
- Fully funded new flooring in Chapel Hall
- Kept the pre-school running
- Showed up to maintain the grounds
- Reached out to people in need
- Showed love to countless people in and out of our congregation
- Volunteered to serve on task forces, committees and boards
- **Kept ministries running and not waited “until the new pastor gets here”**
- **Worked together instead of fighting over things that just don’t matter**

We are thankful to each and every one of you for all you have done, and for the many amazing things we know you will do as we grow forward.

Have a blessed Thanksgiving.

St. Mark Board of Directors.

Saint Mark is excited to once again host a [Financial Peace University](#).

If you are interested, please email John Salzwedel at john@thecoach.vip for more information.



Stewardship

Sometimes people don't like it when pastors talk about stewardship. For some, it hits too close to home. It is easier to talk about bad people in Washington, in history, or wherever than it is to think about what our daily life in Christ is supposed to look like and how we are supposed to love our neighbor.

The fact that we don't like it certainly means we ought to face it. So, here are a few simple and practical realities.

God calls us to first-fruits, sacrificial giving. That means that we should give off the top. We should set a percentage of our income as a deliberate gift for the work of the Church and then give that first. We write the check to the Lord's work in the Church before we pay the mortgage or pay for our medicine or pay for anything else. We don't pay for all the stuff we need – and stuff we think we need – and then give from what is left over. That is the firstfruits idea. It is hard because we think we need all sorts of other things first. But that is the point of "sacrificial."

Next, how could the starting point for Christian generosity and sacrifice really be anything less than a tithe – 10%? The ceremonial law of the Old Testament was never arbitrary. In the Old Testament, the Levites received this tithe so that they could be full-time ministers. Does the New Testament have a ministry that is larger or smaller? It is far larger: "Make disciples of *all nations*" (Matt. 28:19). And we are still to have a full-time ministry: "The Lord has commanded that those who preach the Gospel should make their living from the Gospel" (1 Cor 9:14). So if 10% is what it took in the Old Testament, and we have a bigger mission need in the New Testament, how can we expect the Lord's work to be done on less than a tithe?

By first-fruits, sacrificial, and generous giving – that's how. We shouldn't fool ourselves into thinking that we've out given God's goodness or that we've given plenty. We might be tempted to think that way, but consider that no one in the Church has given plenty because no one has given all. No one has died for his sins. Only the sinless Son of God did that.

St. Paul brought the Good News of Jesus into the discussion of our giving to support the Lord's work in the Church when he wrote: "I say this not as a command, but to prove by the earnestness of others that your love also is genuine. For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich" (2 Cor. 8:8-9).

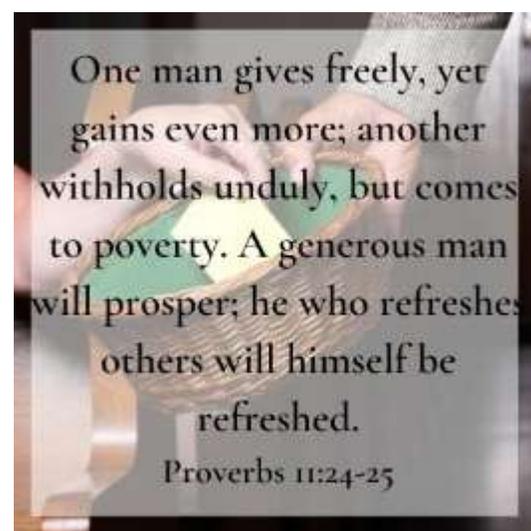
As you can see, what the Bible commands about our stewardship can sting. It's Law, and the Law shows our sins. It calls us to repentance. The Law is meant to expose and accuse for the sake of showing us Christ and His fulfillment of the Law. So if first-fruits, sacrificial giving has you squirming, that's the point.

In Mark's account of the feeding of the 4,000, Jesus took the disciples' seven loaves and blessed them. It was nothing among so many, but, of course, it was plenty. Jesus makes something from nothing. Mark doesn't say that all the disciples gave Jesus all the bread they had. It is quite possible that some of them held something back. But even if they did, that didn't stop Jesus from blessing them. Jesus makes something out of nothing. He, who fed His people in the desert with Manna every morning, doesn't need their bread.

But they need to give it. And what they give – however little it might be and however grudgingly they do so – He blesses. He not only blesses those whom He feeds with it, but He blesses them – the givers. He blesses the givers not just in that they wind up with a basketful for each loaf, but they are blessed by learning to trust and rejoice in Him.

The Lord gives, and the Lord takes away. The Lord gives abundantly, or He asks us to fast. We do not know what will happen. Blessed be the Name of the Lord. He does all things well, and He works all things together for good. The disciples don't give their bread to Jesus because it is a good investment. They give it because He is good, because they love Him, and because they trust Him. Let us go and do likewise.

-LCMS Stewardship Ministry





TRUNK OR TREAT 2021

Thank You to all those who volunteered and donated to
St. Mark's fall outreach!

We could not have done it without your support!

A Brief Bio of Pastor Verity

As I go about meeting folks here at St. Mark I have detected a bit of wonderment about my life and my experience in the ministry of Christ's Church. To start it is helpful to know that I picked up a bit of 'wanderlust' from my mother who traveled all over the U.S. during World War II. Following her footsteps, in a fashion, the Almighty has seen fit to have me live in 5 different states in 9 different communities and make friends in Europe and the Caribbean. He is amazing! Janet has shared life with me in 4 of those states. How patient she is!

I hail from, "The Great Northwest"; specifically, Tacoma, Washington. The Proctors, my mother's family, moved there way back at the beginning of the 20th century. My mother, a Navy veteran of World War II, met my then future father a couple years after the war. He, in his words, was "an escapee" from New York by way of the army. He was mustered out at Fort Lewis. The rest is history!

Four children were born to my parents. I was second. Together we have 16 grandchildren (ten of whom are related to Janet and myself). I am the only one who does not live in Washington.

I enrolled and then graduated from Concordia College in Portland, Oregon receiving an Associates degree concentrating in Reformation history and ancient languages. I then moved (flew) to Michigan where I enrolled in Concordia College in Ann Arbor receiving a degree in History concentrating in specialty studies about Ancient and Prehistory, Anthropological history, History of the slaving institution in the U.S. and the Reformation. Throughout those years we pre-ministerial students continued to study ancient languages. I chose classical Latin and classical Greek.

In the summer months between college years I was fortunate to have been accepted into a ministry called, "A Christian Ministry in the National Parks." I worked in park concessions renting rooms and providing security. On my days off me and a few friends took to the Alpine trails for mountain hiking and some climbing. On Sundays, myself and a partner, put together services of worship to which we invited park guests. It was a fabulous experience meeting people from all over the world! During one of my "off" years, I talked my way into studying at a seminary in Tacoma. That was a fascinating experience for me since I hadn't yet graduated from college. But everyone was kind to me. And yes, I made sure whatever credits I earned were transferable to one of our Seminaries.

Returning to Concordia Ann Arbor for my final year of college I right away met this attractive, highly focused, Detroit originated, business woman who was working for a company which ran the cafeteria. Succumbing to my inexhaustible charm and vague promises of extra large homes and big boats she started to take me (guardedly) seriously. We became engaged and were married June 9 shortly after my college graduation. She is patiently waiting for the palatial homes but seems satisfied with the 15 foot boat I am now renovating as partial fulfillment of my early promises! That was June of 1979.

Janet and I then moved to Fort Wayne Seminary. I concentrated there in History and Theology. I was granted dual degrees in those two areas. Along the way, while we were in Oregon where I served my vicarage, we were blessed with a Duck! That would be our son, Sean. The animal mascot for the University of Oregon is, a duck. So, Sean is a Duck.

After graduating from Seminary we were placed in central Kansas where I served two calls for 14 plus years. During our early years, in Tampa, Kansas, we were blessed with first Shannon and then Sheena. They are, Jayhawks, the mascot for the University of Kansas. Finishing my ministry there, I received a call to be Senior Pastor of Our Savior in Gladwin Michigan where we spent many favorable years parenting our children and guiding the congregation in ministry. Janet changed careers while we lived in Kansas to teaching. She taught in Kansas, Beaverton, Michigan, and retired from Grand Rapids Public.

I received a call to be the Senior Pastor at Immanuel Lutheran in Grand Rapids. So we moved to G.R. After a few power-packed years I retired from the full time ministry. I then took specialized training and began serving congregations for shorter periods in various parts of the Michigan District and the English District.

I build highly specialized small tables, write essays and have a couple books in print with two more nearing completion. When not doing any of the above I do my best hoping to confuse our brilliant grandchildren. I figure that is only fair since their parents, at least our three children, claimed during their teen tenures that they were beyond brilliant and fully capable humans!

A few months ago I was asked what I miss when I am not serving a congregation. It didn't take me long to say that I miss all the people I have been blessed to meet along my way. I have been given a charmed life having the best wife, the most successful children and making friends in many, many places!

That is a short Bio about Pastor Tim. I hope it goes some ways making myself and my family familiar. It's all about making friends!

Vacancy Pastor
Pastor Tim Verity

Specific Ministry Pastor
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Preschool Director &
Children's Ministry
Chris Stodola
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Music Director
Obe VanderTol

OUR VISION
Succeeding in our
mission, we believe...

That all of God's children, young and old, would be baptized into faith through **God's Grace alone, taught** the Word of God, and brought together in the Peace of Christ; and that we, as members of Saint Mark Lutheran Church, would live this Peace in our words and actions, giving our time, talents, and treasures, and taking an active role in our ministries, missions, education, and outreach, for service to His kingdom locally and throughout the world.



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OUR MISSION: One Body. Seeking Christ. Teaching His Word. Sharing His Love.

Personal Care Products Drive

What is it?

In partnership with Love INC, Saint Mark is hosting a drive to collect personal care & hygiene products for In The Image. Items in high demand include:

- deodorant (men's or women's),
- baby wipes,
- shampoo & conditioner,
- toothbrushes & toothpaste.



How do I help?

Bring any new, unopened, personal care or hygiene products to the collection spot in the narthex on Sundays throughout November. If you prefer to write a check, you can make it out directly to In The Image.

Why is Saint Mark's involved?

This is a great way to show love to our neighbors. In The Image is a Love INC community partner - they moved into Kentwood (4255 Kalamazoo) this past summer and they are a free store where people with needs can "shop" at no cost for clothes, basic household items and hygiene products.

Gift Baskets

Women's ministry will be making gift baskets again this year for our shut ins and we need your help.

Items needed...

- Word search books
- Note pads/pens
- Book of stamps
- Playing cards
- Hand or body lotion
- Purse size Kleenex
- Soap or body wash
- Lip balm
- Hand sanitizer
- Toothpaste/toothbrushes
- Hand wipes
- Hard candy
- Christmas mugs
- Slipper socks



Please put your donations in the box in the narthex.