

SAINT MARK'S EPISTLE

St. Mark's Evangelical Lutheran Church

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October 2026



INSIDE

Pastor's Ponderings

Financial Statement

Sunday School News

Trunk or Treat

Quilters

October Calendar

Birthdays/Anniversaries

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Pastor's Ponderings

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Every year as Reformation Sunday approaches, we return to the heart of our tradition: the call to be continually reshaped by God's living Word. This year's Gospel reading from Matthew 22 brings us directly to that center. When Jesus is asked which commandment is the greatest, he answers with words that echo across centuries of faith:

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind... And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Mt 22:37-39

Jesus doesn't offer a complicated theological treatise. He doesn't build a fence of rules around the commandments. He simply places love—love of God and love of neighbor—at the very core of faithful living. "On these two commandments," he says, "hang all the Law and the Prophets." Everything else is suspended from this foundation.

This teaching would not have sounded strange to his listeners. In fact, it echoes a famous conversation between two revered rabbis, Hillel and Shammai. A seeker once asked Shammai to teach him the whole Torah while standing on one foot. Shammai dismissed him. But Hillel responded with a sentence that has become one of Judaism's most beloved teachings: *"What is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbor. The rest is commentary—go and learn it."*

Versions of this teaching appear in nearly every major religion and moral tradition. It is stitched into the fabric of human conscience. It is the compass we instinctively reach for when we want to act with integrity, compassion, and courage. And Jesus places it not as a suggestion, but as the very shape of the life God desires for us.

Reformation Sunday reminds us that the church is always being reformed—not by novelty, but by returning again and again to what matters most. In a world that often rewards outrage, division, and suspicion, Jesus calls us back to love that is wholehearted, embodied, and neighbor-shaped. Love that is willing to be the first to step toward reconciliation, generosity, and justice.

When we aren't sure which direction to go, when the noise of the world grows loud, when decisions feel heavy, this is where we begin: **Does this action reflect love of God? Does it reflect love of neighbor? Does it honor the dignity I hope others would honor in me?**

If the answer is yes, we are already standing on holy ground.

As we celebrate the Reformation this year, may we remember that the most radical reform Jesus ever offered was not a new doctrine, but a renewed heart. A heart aligned with love. A heart that sees God's image in every neighbor. A heart that trusts that when we start with love, we are already walking in the way of Christ.

Your sister in Christ, *Pr. Karen*

October Acolytes/Readers**High School Tech****October 4th Cameron Buderus****Linkin Baker****October 11th Devaney Hansen****Kaddo Schrunk****October 18th Westin Wallin****Sadie Ferris****October 25th Emmett Harral
(St. Peter's)****XXXXXXXXXX****SUNDAY SCHOOL RALLY DAY
SEPTEMBER 13TH**

The following third grade Sunday school students were presented with their bibles on September 20th:

Waylon Rabe; Rink Hansen; Stella Hansen; Skylar Buderus

Not pictured: Everly Gaer; Harrison Rutar

WORDS OF THANKS AND OTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS

Pastor Karen will be attending the synod Fall Leadership Gathering in Kearney on October 19th—21st. If you need pastoral assistance during this time, please contact Jane Tonjes @ 402-922-3946 or any council member. She will be recognized at the event for the 20th anniversary of her ordination.

Congratulations Pastor Karen!!



90th Birthday Celebration

*Please join us for an open house honoring
Carolyn VonSeggern's 90th birthday!*

Saturday, November 7th 2:00—4:00 P.M.

St. Mark's Social Hall

*Enjoy refreshment and fellowship as we celebrate this special milestone
with Carolyn. Everyone is welcome!*

*Please Notify the Church Office
When...*

**You or a member of your family is
hospitalized.**

You would like a pastoral visit.

You have a change of address

Your phone number has changed.

Your email address has changed.

*Your help with this is very much
appreciated!*

Blessing of the Quilts

October 11th

**Thank you to our quilting
ladies for the countless hours
they have spent making quilts.**

**The quilts will be sent to
Lutheran World Relief as well
as other quilts and blankets to
the Caring Cupboard.**

Treasurer's Report for the Month of Sept. 2026

GENERAL FUND

Beginning Balance	\$	72,436.58
Income	\$	9,788.96
Expenses	\$	-30,362.42
Balance on hand 08/31/2026	\$	51,863.12



September saw the welcoming of a new little sister in the faith. Bergan Lee Moore was welcomed to our congregation, through the sacrament of holy baptism on September 6h. Bergan's parents are Chelsea and Spencer Moore.



**God's Love Shines
Even in the Dark!**

St. Mark's and St. Peter's will be continuing the tradition of holding a Trunk or Treat. It will be in the St. Mark's parking lot on Sunday, October 25th at 4pm. All are invited to participate!



October 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 10:30 Prairie Breeze Worship 5-7 pm Food Pantry	2	3
4 9 am Sunday School 10:30am Worship @ St. Mark's World Communion Sunday	5 Pastor's Day Off	6 10am Clergy Text Study	7 2:30 Confirmation	8	9	10
11 9 am Sunday School 10:30am Worship @ St. Mark's w/Choir Blessing of 'Quilts	12 Pastor's Day Off	13 10am Clergy Text Study	14 Quilting 7:00 PM Zoom Confirmation	15 10:30 Prairie Breeze Worship	16	17 10am Food Pantry
18 9 am Sunday School 10:30am Worship @ St. Mark's Poley Baptism	19 DEADLINE FOR NEWSLETTER Pastor @ Synod Meeting	20	21 No Confirmation →	22	23	24
25 REFORMATION 9 am Sunday School @ St. Mark's 10:30am Worship @ St. Peter's 2:30 Confirmation Halloween Party 4:00 Trunk or Treat at St. Mark's	26 Pastor's Day Off	27 10am Clergy Text Study	28 Quilting 7:00 PM Zoom Confirmation	29	30	31 HAPPY HALLOWEEN

**ST. MARK'S EVANGELICAL
LUTHERAN CHURCH**
302 S. Norris Avenue
P.O. Box 580
Pender, NE 68047



Forwarding Service Requested

To this believer in God's love:

OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

Oct. 1 ~ Scott Pfeiffer
Oct. 2 ~ Judy Gathje
Kaddo Schrunk
Oct. 3 ~ Joe Schmidt
Kelly Schrunk
Steve Smith
Nancy Suhr
Stella Hansen

Oct. 5 ~ Joyce Novak
Oct. 6 ~

Boyd & Norma Hightree

Oct. 8 ~ Roger Leonard
Margaret Reppert
Lauren & Sandy Ostrand

Oct. 9 ~
Brent & Melanie Leonard

Oct. 10 ~
Janae Kubik
Betty Roberts

Oct. 12 ~
Ken & Kathi Siebrandt

Oct. 14 ~ Robin Christiansen

Oct. 15 ~ Joel Lamplot

Oct. 16 ~ Lee Tonjes
Oct. 18 ~ Addilynn Johnson

Oct. 19 ~ Nancy Beckman

Oct. 20 ~ Kathy Moore
Peggy Krusemark
Kirk Nelson

***Russ & Kerrie Renter
Matt & Penny Bruns***

Oct. 21 ~ Kolton Lehmkuhl

Oct. 22 ~ Cole Sorensen

Oct. 23 ~
Dustin & Kelly Schrunk

Oct. 24 ~ Jody Fillipi
Tim VonSeggern

Oct. 25 ~ Ivy Sorensen

Oct. 26 ~ Katie Darling
Avery Mathis
Louis & Becky Mostek

Oct. 27 ~ David Anderson

Oct. 28 ~ Deree Gralheer
Chris Schrieber

Oct. 30 ~Layton Smith
Oct. 31 ~Eric Doht

