

SAINT MARK'S EPISTLE

St. Mark's Evangelical Lutheran Church

302 S. Norris Ave. POB 580

Pender, NE 68047

E-mail: saintmarkspender@abbnebraska.com

402-385-3340

Pastor Karen McNeill-Utech

Cell Phone: (402) 385-8825

Council President : Max Cochran

Church Secretary: Jane Tonjes

402-922-3946

September 2026



Pastor's Ponderings

Brothers and Sisters, fellow disciples in Christ,

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

September always feels like the moment the church stretches its arms, takes a deep breath, and steps back into the beautiful bustle of ministry. After a summer of Sabbath, rest, and preparation, we return to the joyful work of being church *together*.

This month holds so much life: a Baptism, Rally Day, Blessing of the Backpacks, the beginning of Sunday School, Confirmation classes, and all the quiet ministries that hum in the background. It's a season that reminds us of something essential — **the church is not one person's work. It is the shared calling of a whole community.**

Paul says it best in *1 Corinthians 12*, when he reminds us that the body of Christ is made of many members, each with different gifts, each needed, each valued. He writes:

"Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit... To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good."

For the common good. That's the heartbeat of September.

It takes a village to nurture faith in our children. It takes a village to surround families at baptism. It takes a village to bless students and teachers as they begin a new year. It takes a village to teach, to mentor, to encourage, to pray, to show up. And it takes a village to remind one another — week after week — that God is present, active, and calling us forward.

As we step into this busy, beautiful season, I am grateful for the gifts each of you bring: your time, your prayers, your willingness, your laughter, your patience, your presence. None of us carries the ministry alone. **We are better together.** And together, we reflect Christ's love more fully than any one of us could on our own.

May this September be a reminder that the Spirit is at work in each of us, weaving our gifts into a shared ministry that blesses the whole community.

I'm grateful to be part of this village with you.

— Pastor Karen

INSIDE

September 2026
Calendar

Pastor's Ponderings

Financial Report

Sunday School Rally Day

Confirmation

Choir

Birthdays/

Anniversaries

**St. Mark's
Services are
Livestreamed
On Facebook**

Visit our page on
facebook

September Acolytes/Readers**HS Tech****September 13th****Colby Dregalla****Lydia Felber****September 20th****Ramsey Hansen****Zander Welsh****September 27th****Ivy Moeller****(at St. Peter's)**

WORDS OF THANKS AND OTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS



Camp Carol Joy Holling held their Annual Quilt Auction on Saturday July 25h to support their outdoor ministry. Thanks again to Connie Schnier for your work on the quilt. It brought \$250 at the auction!

To: St. Mark's

Thank you guys for everything you have done for me and for the gift I received for graduation. I appreciate all things you have believed in me to do.

Thank you so much!

Carter Hansen

On August 16th, we welcomed the following children to the St. Mark's family through the Sacrament of Baptism:

Berkeley Lou Brehmer, daughter of Alex & Justice Brehmer

Eric Scott Janke, son of Trevor and Carolyn Janke

Roan River Sorenson, daughter of Jase and Abigail Sorenson.

May God bless these children as they grown in faith, and may they always know the love and support of their St. Mark's family.



Our sympathy to the family and friends of Pauline Westerhold. Her service was held on August 12th at St. Peter's Lutheran Church.

Genene (Heineman) Erikson has transferred her membership back to St. Mark's.

Together let us walk in friendship and faith.



Senior Choir News

In September the choir will be singing on Sunday, Sept. 20th. We will meet in the choir room for practice at 9:30.

We would love to have some new voices join us. If you have any questions, contact Jane Tonjes at 402-922-3946.

Treasurer's Report— General Fund July 2026

Balance Forward	\$ 77,840.28
Income	\$ 9,882.45
Expenses	\$ 15,286.15
Balance 7/31/26	\$ 72,436.58

Sunday School News

Rally Day for St. Mark's and St. Peter's students will be Sunday, September 13th @ St. Mark's. Sunday School will be @ 9:00 and the church service follows at 10:00 A.M. Students —please bring your backpacks to be blessed during the church service.

We are looking for volunteers to help out with Sunday School—no teaching experience needed, just a willing heart! Whether you can help every week or just once in awhile, we'd love to have you on our team. If you are interested, please contact Haley Haymart (308)-940-1063

Please Notify the Church Office When...

You or a member of your family is hospitalized.

You would like a home visit/communion.

You have a change of address

Your phone number has changed.

Your email address has changed.

Confirmation 2026

Synod-Wide Zoom Confirmation

This fall, our Confirmation students will join a new Nebraska Synod program designed for youth in grades 6–12. It's a free, two-year rotating curriculum that covers Lutheran basics one year and sacraments/faith practices the next. Students from across the Synod meet on Zoom the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays, September through April, for interactive learning, conversation, and community building. Optional retreats and day events offer chances for in-person connection.

The program is supported by our Synod mission share dollars, and all curriculum and resources are provided.

A letter, sharing more details has been mailed to all confirmation students. Zoom classes will be held every 2nd and 4th Wednesday evening from 7pm—8:30 pm . On the other Wednesdays, class will be held at church beginning at 2:30 PM

As many of you know, I will be retiring in two years, and part of this transition is helping move Confirmation ministry into the hands of the congregation — especially our families. A gifted teacher and parent of two former Confirmants will step into leadership when I leave, but until then, we will walk this new path together, learning and adapting as we go.

Confirmation Helpers Needed

Even once a month or once-in-a-while makes a difference.

As we begin this new Confirmation journey, Pastor Karen is looking for rotating volunteers to assist either every other Wednesday evening or every other afternoon, depending on your availability. Helpers might lead a short activity, join small-group conversations, or simply be a supportive adult presence.

You do not need teaching experience — just a willingness to show up, encourage our youth, and help build a strong foundation for the future of Confirmation at St. Mark's.

If you feel called to help, please let Pr. Karen know.
(402)385-8825





SEPTEMBER 2026



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 10am Clergy Text Study	2 2:30pm Confirmation Meeting after school	3 10:30 am Prairie Breeze 5-7pm Food Pantry	4	5
6 10am Worship @ St. Mark's Moore Baptist Facebook	7 LABOR DAY	8 10am Clergy Text Study 9:30 am—2:30 pm Blood Drive at School	9 1pm Quilting Zoom Confirmation 7:00 PM-8:30 PM	10	11	12
13 SS RALLY DAY 9 am Sunday School 10am Worship @ St. Mark's Facebook	14 Pastor's Day Off	15 10am Clergy Text Study	16 2:30 Confirmation	17 10:00 am Prairie Breeze	18	19 10-12pm Food Pantry
20 9am Sunday School 10am Worship—St. Mark's w/choir 3rd grade bible distribution Facebook	21 Pastor's Day Off DEADLINE FOR OCTOBER NEWSLETTER	22 10am Clergy Text Study	23 1pm Quilting Zoom Confirmation 7:00 PM-8:30 PM	24	25	26
27 9am Sunday School @ St. Mark's Worship @ St. Peter's Facebook	28 Pastor's Day Off	29 10am Clergy Text Study	30 2:30 Confirmation			

**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:

September BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

Sept 1 ~ Georgia Munderloh
Matthew Gatzemeyer
Skylar Buderus

Sept 6 ~Janice Smith
Sept 7~ Blake Hansen

Matt & Shelly Buchholz

Sept 9 ~ Corriッサ Jewel
Sept 10 ~ William Krusemark
Harrison Rutar
Sept 12 ~ Brittني Beckman
Sept 13 ~ Cade Ballard
Kayla Powley
Lisa Reppert
Matt Torczon

Sept 16 ~ Dawn Fillipi
Dennis & Nancy Zvacek
Sept 17 ~ Sharlene Krusemark
Ellen Lander
Sept 18—Max Lamprecht
Sept 19~**Tim & Lanette VonSeg-
gern**
Sept 20~ **Curtis & Pam Buchholz**
Sept 21 ~ Krista Heineman
Todd Kubik
Doug Nilges
Andrew Prusa
Kolby Smith
Kayla Hart
Katie Brehmer

Sept 22 ~ Olyvia Nelson
Sept 24 ~ Sandra Ostrand
Sept 25 ~ Larry Wingett
Rod & Rhonda Heise
Sept 26 ~ Jane Thomsen
Sept 27 ~ Jaxon Sunderman

Sept 29 ~ Mark Dunn
Jared Johnson
Sara Sorensen
Butch Suhr
Sept. 30— Monroe Johnson

