

Living out God's Vision

At St. Mark's Lutheran Church

**A Practical Guide and Suggestions for
Individuals to:**

Pray Daily

Learn Daily

Serve Daily,

Bring Others (into God's Ministries)

St. Mark's Lutheran Church
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Introduction and Purpose:

In the summer of 2008, St. Mark's adopted a new Vision Statement. After much study, individual and group reflection, robust dialogue, and months of prayer, we discerned that God had a vision for St. Mark's. That vision is: *"St. Mark's will be a congregation in 2012 where each of us is transformed by the power of God in Christ, to: Pray Daily, Learn Daily, Serve Daily and Bring Others (into our Christian family.)"*

Our overall, ongoing mission is to make of ourselves and others "disciples of Christ." To help us be faithful to that mission, we now have this vision on which we will work for the next few years.

But what do these functions mean? How might we accomplish praying daily or serving daily? What does it mean to "bring others" into Christ's family? Are these doable expectations?

This booklet is meant to provide ideas, suggestion and encouragements to help us all grow into this new lifestyle. Indeed, it really is a lifestyle, rather than a time specific set of tasks. Space has been left after each section to allow you to write your additional ideas and suggestions.

***"Where there is no vision, the people perish."
(Proverbs 29:18)***

“Pray Daily”

*“Pray in the Spirit at all times in every prayer and supplication.”
(Ephesians 6:18)*

The challenge to “pray daily” is a personal, individual one. The goal is to be in a personal relationship of talking and listening to God, with honest intentions, just as we are. Some suggestions. . .

Where/when to pray daily:

- In bed, first thing in the morning, or at breakfast.
- When first arriving at work for five minutes, or before going to lunch.
- When you return home, before reading the paper, **first** reflect on the day, giving thanks, seeking forgiveness, asking for guidance, praying for people and circumstances you have encountered.
- At supper time with the family - Pray.
- When exercising, on the train, during commercials, on the phone while ‘on hold.’
- At bedtime, read a bible lesson; reflect, pray. End with the Lord’s Prayer.
- Amid situational short moments, about daily experiences.
- Pray with your children, grandchildren. Do some or all of the ACTS plan.
- Use gentle, non-vocal background music to maintain a mood.
- Keep a prayer diary.

Prayer Concerns/Topics/For Whom to Pray

- Make a prayer list, to which you can refer. Use the A.C.T.S. model for prayer. Carry it with you. Pick up an “ACTS sheet” in the church narthex.
 - a) Adoration (Praising God for life, beauty, mercy, presence, etc.)

- b) Confession (your mistakes, sins, errors);
 - c) Thanksgiving (the many joys, reasons for gratitude in one's life);
 - d) Supplications (or requests, petitions).
- Use the names listed in the church bulletin or monthly Lion.
 - Ask for God's Will. Open your heart to God's plan. Seek the Lord's guidance.

Prayer Opportunities through St. Mark's Church:

- Become a "Prayer Partner." (You will pray daily for the concerns of another.)
- Become a "Prayer Sower," and pray daily for our ministries. (Contact office)
- Participate in seasonal Prayer Vigils.

Resources on Prayer:

- Special prayers in our red ELW worship hymnal, P. 72f
- Search in the "Prayer Corner" at St. Mark's.
- Use, subscribe to one of the daily devotions listed in the "Learn Daily" section of this booklet. (Portals of Prayer, Bread for the Day, Christ in our Home).
- Internet resources – again, look in the "Learn Daily" section.
- Ask a Stephen Minister to write a special prayer for unique circumstances.

“Learn Daily”

“Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” (Psalm 119:105)

Learning daily means ‘*learning about God, and God’s promises and plans for our lives.*’ The primary source is the bible. Learning also includes articles and books that help to explain God’s messages to us. Below are a few of the many ways to “learn daily.”

Environments in which to learn:

- Participate in a Sunday and/or mid week bible study.
- At home, find a time daily that works best for you. Be disciplined.
- Take a 5-10 minute study/prayer break at work.
- Listen to Christian radio stations or CDs.

Resources for Learning Daily:

- Order Bread for the Day 2009, from Augsburg Fortress Press (Lutheran publishing house). It is a 365 day devotional, with lessons and a prayer. Order at www.augsburgfortress.org or call 1-800-328-4648.
- Reread the Sunday bible passages. Read one a day, repeating for the week.
- Subscribe to daily devotions such as: Christ in our Home, The Word in Season, and Portals of Prayer. Order from Augsburg Fortress at 1-800-328-4648.
- Look for seasonal resources, such as www.devotionsforLent.blogspot.com.
- Other Internet Resources
 - (a) www.navigators.org/us - Go to “about us/tools/ A free daily devotional”
 - (b) <http://www.christ.com/devotional-ourdailybread.html>;
 - (c) www.devotions.net
 - (d) Try www.Crosswalk.com and hit “Daily Disciple Devotions.”
- MOST importantly . . . grow in the joy of reading the

bible on your own. Begin with the gospels about Jesus (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John), or the Psalms.

Tips on Bible Study:

- Pray before reading. Ask God to help you, inspire, inform you.
- Use a bible that has commentary, maps, historical insights, such as the Life Application Study Bible.
- Visit a Christian Bookstore (Such as The Mustard Seed).
- Study with others, which allows for feedback, group insights, etc.

More Suggestions:

- Carry a meaningful bible verse with you for a week, month at a time. Memorize it, put on your refrigerator, bathroom mirror, office computer.
- Pray, pray, pray...before/after readings.
- Learn about the prayer/bible reading process called "Lectio Divina."

“Serve Daily”

“Little children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action.”

The challenge to “serve daily” may sound overwhelming, daunting. We have our tension filled work worlds, busy families, and numerous tasks on the ‘to do’ lists. Serving daily??

Begin with God and Prayer: As we begin with daily prayer, focus may be on service. Ask God, “Who might I help on this day?” “Lord, place before me those in need, and help me to recognize their need and how I might be caring.” Plan carefully simple ways to serve during the week. Including:

- Listen to colleagues at work, and to neighbors and identify their hurts and stresses. Give that extra five minutes to ask, to listen, to show empathy.
- Be kind.
- Affirm others regularly.
- Make a phone call during lunch to someone you know is struggling.
- When encountering people on the soccer field, or coffee stand at work, or at the supermarket, always ask: “How are you? How’s the family?” And listen.
- Build a list of family and friends’ birthdays and anniversaries and put the dates into your calendar. Send a card on their special day.
- Take your child, grandchild to visit a shut-in with church flowers.
- At those office and family gatherings, seek out those who seem lonely.
- Be alert to tensions and conflicts at home, work, school, and share extra patience and nurture.

- Be attentive to those who are losing their jobs. Take to dinner, invite to a social event. Help network information. Listen!
- Schedule one day a month or once a quarter for a special service project– at Habitat, Meals on Wheels, etc.
- Research a local not-for-profit and identify simple ways to contribute your time or resources.
- Pray again, for God to reveal to you new opportunities to grow and share.
- Read a book or take a course on improving communications with your spouse or children – and apply the newly learned lessons.
- Be alert to simple ways to serve – bringing in a neighbor’s newspaper, helping an elderly person at the supermarket, etc.
- Make an ongoing commitment to a specific church ministry.
- Schedule time to be with your teenager or young adult son/daughter.

Be extra kind today, for everyone is facing some kind of personal battle!!

“Bring Others”

“Nathaniel said to Philip, ‘Can anything good come out of Nazareth?’ Philip said: “Come and see.” (John 1:46)

Keep the “Big Picture” in mind. Bringing others into St. Mark’s ministry may begin with a potluck, a softball game, a Sunday School class. But remember the potential “big picture” into which you are inviting them: The love of God, the forgiveness of Christ, the support given during life’s crises, the peace of mind amid death, the knowledge of God’s never ending love, God’s salvation! So, bring others and Invite them to:

- Begin by praying . . . for God to give you opportunities and the right words to invite and bring others.
- Offer to give a ride to one who is disabled or doesn’t drive anymore, or to night activities.
- Serve the poor working at Habitat for Humanity – with you!
- Participate in a small group for study, sharing, prayer.
- Become a prayer partner – yours!
- Come to church. Take them to lunch afterwards!
- Walk at the fall Lutheran Community Services Walk-Run. (Most everyone has a heart to help feed the hungry.)
- A special educational program – The annual Winter Forum or a movie night.
- A one time special event (‘easy invites’) – such as Christmas Eve services, Rally Day Sunday, the Senior Choir Cantata, the Easter Breakfast and worship.
- Encourage your children to bring a friend to Sun. School or confirmation.
- INVITE a member . . . to do something new at St. Mark’s with you! (Bible study, a retreat, to be an usher, or onto the Altar Guild, etc.!)

- Youth - Invite a friend to West Virginia, or to help with a car wash.
- Fellowship events are always enjoyable – The spring Strawberry Social, a softball game, the “Game Night,” the summer church picnic, a Phillies game.
- Bring a child along to help deliver flowers to a shut-in after worship.
- Invite a friend to go to Louisiana for our Katrina mission week.
- Invite a neighbor’s child or a grandchild to Vacation Bible School.

Invite people to help care for the hurting of the world - - at the Sojourner’s Place breakfast, by collecting food for LIFE (Lutherans Involved in Food Emergencies), by donating coats for the homeless, by driving for Meals on Wheels, by serving at the Pineapple Room at Luther Towers, etc. It’s not just about getting people involved at St. Mark’s, it is about getting people involved in God’s ministries and outreach in the community and world.

“Bringing others” can be a little intimidating. Begin with prayer. Ask God to place in your heart the names of persons you might invite. Ask for courage and guidance. God will help us share this beloved ministry.



- Prayer is speaking, listening, opening one's heart to the Lord. It is both active and passive, speaking to and allowing God to speak to us.
- **The Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi**

Lord, make us instruments of your peace. Where there is hatred, let us sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is discord, union; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy. Grant that we may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love For it is in giving that we receive; it is in pardoning that we are pardoned; and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

- “A day hemmed in prayer is less likely to unravel.”



St. Mark's Lutheran Church

Office Hours 9:00am – 4:00pm
Office Phone 302-764-7488
Web Page www.saintmarkslc.com
Email Smlc@SaintMarksLC.com

Pastor Rev. Fred Melton
Director of Music Elizabeth Lauber
Leader of Contemporary Worship Cathy Irwin
Keyboard Player for Contemporary Worship Don Roberts
Co. Dirs. Christian Education/Outreach Gail Rodger
John Rendle
Office Secretary Virginia Burbridge

Sunday Schedule

Traditional – 8:30am
Contemporary – 11:00am
Sunday Church School – 9:45 – 10:45am
Nursery – 8:30 & 11:00am services

ST. MARK'S MISSION STATEMENT

“We are... Sent by God, empowered by the Holy Spirit, to make of ourselves and others disciples of Christ who love and heal, pray and forgive, teach, baptize and proclaim the Good News.”