

# MARK TIMES

## NEWS & NOTES FOR MARCH 8, 2026

### THE WEEK AHEAD

<b>Monday, March 9:</b>	6:30PM	Yoga – Parish Hall
<b>Wednesday, March 11:</b>	9:30AM	Evangelism/Social Ministry committee - CR
	12:00PM	Ladies Lunch Bunch – Fazzi’s
	6:00PM	Soup supper – Parish Hall
	7:00PM	Lent Evening Prayer - church
<b>Thursday, March 12:</b>	4:00PM	Chancel choir
	5:45PM	Bell Choir

### Today’s Adult Forum: *Pregnancy Care Center*

We welcome Doug and Jill Luge from Belleville’s Pregnancy Care Center this morning to tell us about their organization, which we have been supporting for many years.

### Noisy/Not so Noisy Change Collection Today!

Lent is a perfect time to dig through your couch, car seats, purse and all the other places coins tend to hide! Many Franklin School students still owe past book fees totaling ~\$1600, and we can help!

**Collection will be this Sunday, March 8** during worship. The Change bucket will also be available on March 15 before and after service. Electronic donation may be made to [https://secure.myvanco.com/L-YT91/campaign/C-14EWR?access=tile\\_direct](https://secure.myvanco.com/L-YT91/campaign/C-14EWR?access=tile_direct).

**Ladies Lunch Bunch** meets **THIS Wednesday, March 11** at **12 noon** at **Fazzi’s** (1813 Vandalia Dr./Route 159, Collinsville). **Call Carol Kugler at 618-571-3079 with questions or to reserve a spot.**



### Midweek Lenten Soup Suppers

Come enjoy an evening of fellowship over a meal of soup and salad at **6:00PM** in the Parish Hall on the **Wednesdays of Lent**, before joining us in the church for **evening prayer** at **7:00PM** (see below).

### Lenten Evening Prayer: *Ad Astra per Aspera*

This Lent, journey with us on **Wednesdays** at **7:00PM** in the church for a special evening prayer series: “*Ad Astra Per Aspera: A Trek Through Lent.*” Using a space exploration theme inspired by events like Sputnik, the Space Shuttle Challenger, Apollo 13, and more, we’ll explore how faith carries us “*through hardships to the stars.*” Each service includes Scripture, prayer, and reflection in the style of Evening Prayer from *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*. Come be grounded in God’s grace as we trek together toward Easter hope.



## Financial Update from the Treasurer

The St. Mark congregation is truly blessed! Many will recall the concerns expressed at the congregational meetings in December regarding a projected financial shortfall for the year. This was based on year-to-date results reported through October of 2025 which showed a deficit condition. We have been conducting a much-needed financial audit which delayed our fiscal year reporting. However, member donations received in November and December were **\$55,563** (\$14,215 and \$48,332 respectively). The December donations were particularly significant and brought us into a net positive result for the year of \$1,218. And then, just at year's end, we received a bequest of \$31,960 from the estate of a member who had passed. This pushed our fiscal year surplus to \$33,178. Our congregation should be proud of this response and fiscal year completion.

## Epiphany Diaper Collection January 2026

THANK YOU to those who contributed diapers/pull-ups, training pants, diaper wipes, diaper cream and monetary donations. A Thrivent Action Team Grant for \$250 was also received. Target's special offers provided an additional \$120 in gift cards which were used to purchase more of the needed items.

Diapers were delivered to St. Mark/St. George Food Pantry, Violence Prevention Center (x2) and Pregnancy Care Center (x2). Additional pictures are on the Parish Hall bulletin board.



## Christ Community Trivia Night Fundraiser!



Visit the sweetness of "Jesus Land" at **Christ Community Lutheran Church** (Columbia) for their annual TRIVIA NIGHT youth fundraiser on **Saturday, March 21** from **6-8:00PM** (doors open at 5:30p)! \*This event will raise funds for this summer's youth mission trip to Duluth, MN, **which our youth from St. Mark will be participating in!**

+ Cost is **\$15 per person**, or **\$110 for a table of 8**

+ Bring your own food and snacks. Drinks will be available for purchase including mocktails, soda, and water.

+ Costume and Table Decorating Contests - dress up as your favorite Board Game and/or create cool matching table decor. Time to GET CREATIVE!!

+ Generic trivia categories - there will be something for everyone!

+ Childcare available

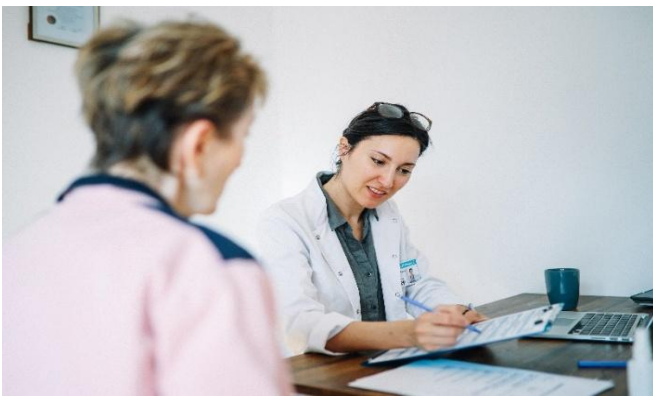
\*\*Let **Melanie** know if you are planning to join, and she will sign up all the tables at once. Checks can be written to **St. Mark Youth**.



## Bunny Bazaar Coming March 22!

On **Sunday, March 22**, in the tradition of November's "Pumpkin Palooza," we will host an Easter/Spring-themed **bake sale and craft sale** between and after all three services, with proceeds to **benefit our combined Food Pantry**. Bake an Easter/spring treat and bring before services on March 22!

**St. Mark Offerings for 3/1:** General Fund: **\$4,861.66**; Coffee Fund: \$16;  
Franklin Fees Noisy Offering: \$200.91



## **St Mark Lutheran Church**

**Parish Nurse Corner**

***Rebecca Schnitzius, RN***

**March 2026**

### **March is Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month**

March is National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month, a time dedicated to raising awareness, encouraging screenings (starting at age 45), and promoting prevention for colorectal cancer. Colorectal cancer is the second deadliest cancer in the U.S., but it is highly preventable with early detection. Routine colorectal cancer screenings make a significant difference in early detection to improve cancer outcomes.

Colorectal cancer starts in the colon or rectum. It often develops slowly over many years, usually beginning as small growths called polyps. It is highly treatable if detected early via screenings. Finding and removing polyps early can prevent cancer from forming. Colon cancer screenings can find polyps (pre-cancerous growths) and early-stage cancer when treatment is most effective. People who are 45-75 should get screened, but get screened earlier if you have any symptoms of colorectal cancer.

Risk factors for colon-rectal cancer:

- Increased age (Over 50)
- A family history of colorectal polyps or cancer, inflammatory bowel disease (Crohn's or ulcerative colitis)
- Smoking
- High alcohol consumption
- A sedentary lifestyle

Colon cancer is staged 1-4 based on the following:

- How far the tumor has grown through the intestinal wall
- If it has spread to the lymph nodes
- If it has spread to distant organs

Common symptoms of colorectal cancer to watch for:

- Blood in the stool – Bright red blood or tarry stools
- Changes in stool/bowel habits – Frequent diarrhea, constipation, or narrower, ribbon-like stools
- Stomach pain - Persistent discomfort, cramping, bloating, or fullness in the abdomen
- Unexplained weight loss – Losing weight without really trying
- Feeling tired or weak – Constant tiredness or low red blood cell count



Other things to think about:

- Early stages – Colorectal cancer often causes no symptoms in its early stages
- Other causes – The previously listed symptoms can be caused by conditions other than cancer, such as infections, hemorrhoids, or inflammatory bowel disease

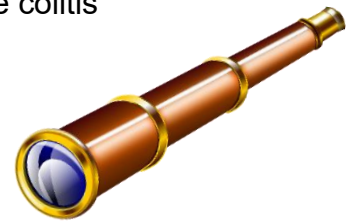
Colorectal cancer is highly treatable when found early. Since many people have no symptoms at all, screenings can find polyps before they turn into cancer.

Who should get screened?

- Adults starting at age 45-50
- Anyone with a family history of colorectal cancer
- People with certain conditions like Crohn's Disease and Ulcerative colitis
- Anyone with symptoms of colorectal cancer

Screening options:

- Colonoscopy – Every 10 years or as ordered by doctor
- Stool-based tests:
  - Done at home
  - Looks for hidden blood or DNA changes
- CT Colonography (every 5 years) – A non-invasive imaging test which requires bowel prep but no sedation



How can you reduce your risk of getting colon cancer?

- Eat more fruits and vegetables
- Stay active
- Limit red and processed meats
- Avoid smoking
- Keep alcohol intake low
- Maintain a healthy weight



Remember, colorectal cancer is very preventable. Get your screenings for colorectal cancer on a regular basis. Everyone should get screened, especially if you are 45-70 years old. Ways to prevent colon cancer are eating a healthy diet, getting regular exercise, quitting smoking, and maintaining a healthy weight. These reduce the risk of polyp formation and cancer development.