

MARK TIMES

NEWS and NOTES for January 18, 2026

THE WEEK AHEAD

Monday, January 19:

Office closed – Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

2:30PM Fiber Arts at Westfield Manor

6:00PM Pastoral Care committee – *conference room*

7:00PM Church Council – *conference room*

Thursday, January 22:

4:15PM Chancel choir

6:00PM Bell Choir

6:00PM Yoga – Parish Hall

Installation of Church Council

New and ongoing members of the Church Council will be installed during worship during this morning's worship.

Adult Forum: *Why are Pagan River Gods in Scenes of Jesus' Baptism??*

Among the expected figures in images of Jesus' baptism are the Lord himself, John the Baptist, a dove, and sometimes angels and/or lookers-on. But beginning in the late fifth or early sixth century C.E. and continuing to modern times, another figure turns up in scenes of baptism: a classical male river deity, either sitting on the side watching the action, or partially submerged in the river itself. What is the purpose of this uninvited guest, and why did artists feel the need to include him? We'll discuss this and more in this morning's adult forum with Pastor Brian.



Diaper Drive for Epiphany!



As the Wise Men brought gifts to the baby Jesus, we will celebrate **Epiphany** with a **Diaper Drive** for little ones in need in our community.

Our Epiphany Diaper Drive runs through TODAY, January 18. Items collected will be donated to The Pregnancy Care Center of Belleville, Fontabella Maternity Home in O'Fallon and other local organizations.

Diapers sizes 3 through 7, and pullups sizes 2T through 6T, and disposable pants sizes 2T through 6T and 3T are most needed. Open packages will be accepted. **Unopened packages of diaper wipes and diaper rash cream are also welcome.**

Realizing diapers are expensive, members are encouraged to join together on purchases or give monetary donations to Sherri Foppe or Ann Martens. Donations may also be made electronically at <https://secure.myvanco.com/L-YT91/campaign/C-14EWR?access=tile> **direct** through January 18.

Important Safety Class Upcoming!

On **Saturday, February 7** from **9am-1pm** in the **parish hall**, Chestnut Health Systems will present information on **Mental Health, Substance Abuse/Narcan** and **Suicide awareness/prevention**. Our target audience is the **safety committee members, food pantry workers** and **ushers**. Anyone else interested in this important information is also very welcome to attend. Please sign up in the Canterbury Room on the available sheets on St. George's table to assist in our planning. For questions, please text **Mark Bearth @ (618) 767-6543**

Lenten Quiet Day - Save the Date

This year's **Lenten Quiet Day** at Toddhall Retreat Center will be on **Saturday, February 28** from **10am-2pm**, led by Father Mark. The event is **FREE**, although freewill donations will be accepted at the event. **Lunch is included with registration**. The **deadline** for registrations is **Friday, January 30**, and can be made by following this link: <https://forms.gle/eq5DsL32MAC8U6F7A>

Great (Super) Bowls of Fire!



St. George's famous **white chili** (both mild and hot) will be sold **Sunday, February 8** after each church service and from **noon to 3:00PM** in the Parish Hall. Cost is **\$11/quart** when ordered in advance and prepaid, and **\$12 on the day of sale**. Orders with payment can be made to Henry in the office or by mail to St. George's. Proceeds benefit our food pantry.



As sign-up sheet to help prepare chili on Wednesday, January 28 and to make and dispense it on the day of sale is in the parish hall.

*Those who may be out of town Super Bowl Sunday but would like to order chili can request another Sunday for pickup.

Let it Shine!

THANKS to those involved in getting the Parish Hall floor buffed and waxed – the difference is amazing, and it's so nice to see it SHINE!



50th Anniversary Committee

As most folks know, St. Mark Lutheran Church celebrates its 50th anniversary in 2026. We are looking for members who might be interested in serving on a **planning committee** to devise ideas for events to help celebrate this milestone. Please contact Pastor Brian if you're interested!

From the Parish Nurse... Upper Respiratory Infections

If you have symptoms of the flu, common cold, or COVID, **please stay home** if possible, and **wear a mask** to prevent spreading to others who may be vulnerable to infection. Everyone should be washing their hands diligently and/or using hand sanitizer as needed. **Common symptoms include fever, runny nose, cough, or sore throat**. These upper respiratory infections (*especially the FLU*) are **very** active right now, so please take care of yourself, and in doing so, take care of others!!

St. Mark Offerings for 1/11: General Fund: **\$7,301**; Epiphany Diaper Drive: \$195.99;
Toni Brendel Memorials: \$100;