**\*\*NEW SERVICE TIMES & LOCATIONS\*\***

**St. Mark’s and St. Peter’s Lutheran Church UPDATE**

St. Mark’s and St. Peter’s began working together last June, right before the fire at St. Mark’s, to share Pastor Karen. A few weeks later, the congregations were forced (by fire) to unite for church services. A majority of the congregation members enjoyed the larger attendance. The councils have been discussing this for months and on Wednesday, April 12, they met to discuss how we could continue to unite in celebration while best utilizing both churches. After much discussion and consideration, the two councils unanimously agreed to a “Summer/Sunday School Year” rotation and will work together on holiday services throughout each year.

**What does this mean?** Each church will hold a service every week of the year, but depending on the time of year, each church will only hold a Sunday or Saturday service.

**When will each church hold their respective Sunday or Saturday service?** After Easter\*\* until the end of summer, **Sunday** services will be held at **St. Peter’s** and **Saturday** services will be held at **St. Mark’s.** During the school year (Labor Day – Easter) to match Sunday School services, **St. Mark’s** will hold the **Sunday** services and **Saturday** evening services will be held at **St. Peter’s**.

**What time will each church service be held?** To create consistency the councils decided that every Sunday service will be at 10:00 am and Saturday services will be at 5:30 pm. Sunday School will be at St. Mark’s at 9:00 am.

**When will this start?** June 4, 2023

**Who do I contact if I have questions?** You may contact any council member of either congregation or Pastor Karen with any questions.

**\*\*UPCOMING SCHEDULE\*\***

**Summer 2023: June 4 – August 27, 2023**

 Sundays at St. Peter’s (10:00 am) and Saturdays at St. Mark’s (5:30 pm) ***Except July***

**Sunday School Year 2023 – 2024: September 3, 2023 - March 31, 2024**

Sundays at St. Mark’s (10:00 am) and Saturdays at St. Peter’s (5:30 pm)

**Summer 2024:**  **April 7 – August 25, 2024**

 Sundays at St. Peter’s (10:00 am) and Saturdays at St. Mark’s (5:30 pm)

**Sunday School Year 2024 – 2025: September 1, 2024 – April 20, 2025**

 Sundays at St. Mark’s (10:00 am) and Saturdays at St. Peter’s (5:30 pm)

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I am writing this as an introduction to the new joint church schedule on the back of this letter.

Ever since the fire at St. Mark’s last year, the experience of sharing ministry and worship opportunities has been central to the question of where God is leading us. Since St. Mark’s members returned home, the questions for both congregations have been, “How do we make it happen, now?” How do we maintain our historic identities and worship spaces and worship together?”

Many of you remember the survey given during the annual meetings. There were many different options and several members in each congregation offered additional possibilities. The conclusion was that most saw the benefit, but no one had the same vision. I was not disappointed by this, to the contrary, I felt that people were being open and honest, and that the conclusion was that we needed to take some time and make sure we were hearing the body of Christ speak in its fulness.

 How do we respect the individual identities of St. Peter’s and St. Mark’s.? How do we address parents attending another church while their children have Sunday School together? How can we have services every Sunday together or what if we don’t want to attend another church building because ours has such a special or safe place in our hearts? How do our Saturday night folks get to worship if Sunday morning is difficult, especially at 9am? How can we share one pastor and not feel like we are overworking her - thank you, some of you have said that. It gets confusing on times and places when we do things together, how can we have it all and not throw our hands in the air? These are some of many questions that needed to be thoughtfully considered, but the most central is, “Where is Jesus leading us?”

At our most recent joint council meeting, we had something rare, a unanimous agreement to this plan. One time 10am every Sunday. Church in each sanctuary every Sunday, (*except July with a prescheduled vacation and two weddings.*) at one church and Saturday at 5:30pm at the other. Long, defined, stretches at both churches. Maximum use of space, warmer months fill up the smaller sanctuary and cooler months the larger. Both congregations have the opportunity to worship with the children when they are in Sunday School. There are so many other “boxes” ticked, weather, stewardship of facilities and resources. Not to mention, we get to worship our Lord together AND maintain our historical identities. God is good! Your sister in Christ, Pr. Karen