

The Messenger

2013, ISSUE 5

SEP-OCT 2013

St. Mark's Vestry Votes to Retain Father Zwifka on Full-Time Basis

Since he began his ministry at St. Mark's three years ago, Father David Zwifka, our rector, has served on a part-time basis: first as a permanent supply priest and then as our rector on a half-time basis. In August, 2011, Father Zwifka took on responsibilities as Director of Finance and Diocesan Administration for the Diocese of Central Pennsylvania, also on a part-time basis. You may have heard Father Zwifka remark how he had two full time jobs for half time pay. This wasn't far from the mark. However, it came to the attention of Blair Hannon, Senior Warden, and other members of the Vestry that Father Zwifka would be leaving his post at the bishop's office as of July 31, 2013. This meant he would need to explore other possibilities to supplement his income as our half-time rector. Wanting to remain solely in church ministry, this meant that Father Zwifka would likely be seeking a full-time position in or out of the Diocese of Central Pennsylvania. After informal consultations with members of the Vestry, the Wardens and parish officers explored the possibility of retaining Father Zwifka on a full-time basis. At a special meeting on July 7, the Vestry unanimously voted to offer Father Zwifka such a position. He readily accepted.



This bold move will require the parish to take money out of its investment funds/savings to the extent and until such time as regular revenue can meet the added expense. Father Zwifka was quick to point out that the current arrangement cannot be indefinite, else the parish will go through its hard earned savings unreasonably. Consequently, St. Mark's has adjusted his letter of agreement moving his status to full-time for one year, renewable for another year. The Vestry and Father Zwifka feel this is adequate time to solidify some of the gains we have made under his leadership. At that time, we will determine the needs of the parish and its capacity to sustain a regular clergy person and at what level. Meanwhile, we look forward to an exciting period of transformation for our parish!

Rector's Corner

It goes without saying that I am honored that parish leadership requested that I consider a fulltime cure at St. Mark's. When I was asked, I prayed for God's guidance to be sure that my inclination to shout, "YES!" was clearly in his will for the parish and for me. Every leading of the heart while in prayer indicated that this indeed was what was to be the next step in our mutual relationship. As the article above indicates, I remain concerned that this undertaking does not impair the financial future of the parish. I pledge to do everything I can to see that this does not happen.

The first challenge that confronted us was to prepare for and execute the celebration of 30 years of Jubilee Ministry with the Presiding

Bishop. That was a smashing success due in no small part to the efforts of so many volunteers in the parish. Now that this huge endeavor is behind us, I will be working with Vestry to create a pastoral plan for the parish. I will be sharing that information with you as elements of the plan come together. Meanwhile, I ask for your prayers and support as we together seek to create the community of faith and love to which God has called us.

With you in the heart of Christ, I remain

David +

COMING EVENTS

Breaking Bread Together
Dinner
Sep 26, 5:30-6:30
Parish Hall

Sauerkraut Prep
Sept 28, 9 AM 'till
Parish Hall Kitchen

Vegetable Soup Sale
Oct 4
Parish Hall

Blessing of Animals
Oct 6 12 Noon
Memorial Garden
(if inclement weather —
in Church)

Vestry Meeting
Oct 15, 5:30 PM
Parish Library

Folks of a Seasoned Age
"Retirement Planning &
Investing in Today's
Economy" With Wade Curry
Oct 16, 6 PM
Parish Hall

Safe Church Training
Oct 19, 9AM-4PM
Parish Hall
(see p. 4 inside for info)

Breaking Bread Together
Dinner
Oct 24, 5:30-6:30 PM
Parish Hall

Vestry Meeting
Nov 19, 5:30 PM
Parish Library

ECW Salad Bar
Dec 6, 11 AM-1 PM
Parish Hall

Sinners Repaint!

St. Mark's got a new coat.
Will you help us out?

Please consider donating a
"gallon of paint."

A \$35 donation will help to de-
fray the cost of brightening our
interior

Make a tax deductible donation to St. Mark's
Episcopal Church and mark "Sinners Repaint!"
on your check. Just drop in the offering plate or
send to St. Mark's at the address listed in the
newsletter.

Parish Church School: Back in Action on September 15th



**To Know,
To Show,
To Grow
in Christ**

"Why take the summer off?" Father
Zwifka fired back, "God doesn't take
vacations!"

"But *we're* not God and *we* need a break!"
Deacon Loretta counseled in a firm but
gentle tone.

"Oh, alright. I guess we all need a break
now and then."

So went the conversation that led to the decision to sus-
pend Parish Church School from the first week of July
until just after the Presiding Bishop's Visit to St. Mark's.

And so ended the first term of the whole parish Church
School undertaken on the first Sunday of Lent, 2013.
Few would wonder at the attendance of children at Sun-
day School—it's what we do— but one of the marvelous
outcomes of this first effort were the number of regular,
dedicated adults who joined in study and discussion each
week 45 minutes before the schedule service time. Not
once was attendance under ten and at times was as high

St. Mark's Calls "Sinners to Repaint-ance!"

We're getting closer BUT we still need to acquire more
"paint." We are inching toward our goal of 100 gallons
(\$3500) but need some help getting those last buckets lined up. If
you haven't contributed toward the repainting of the Church, please
consider buying a "gallon" (a \$35 contribution). Don't worry we
will even take pints and quarts!! Every little bit helps.



Folks of Seasoned Age Continues Exercise Class

Folks of a Seasoned Age continues its weekly
exercise program on Tuesdays at 3:30 PM in the Parish Hall.

Also in the planning stages are:

- An evening with Wade Curry (discussion about retirement plan-
ning and investing in today's economy) - Tentatively set for Oct
16 at 6 PM.
- A Holiday Gift Workshop with Nancy Laub (Dec 14)
- Lunch & A Movie (tentative date Jan 13, 2014)

The Steering Committee continues to explore more programming
opportunities. Watch the parish website and the bulletin for more
details!

Cemetery Committee Considers Columbarium

After recent discussions in Vestry, a committee has been
formed to create a plan for the construction of a columbar-
ium at St. Mark's Church and St. Mark's Community Cemetery.
Under consideration is a three-phase plan that would see a colum-
barium in the Memorial Garden, the Church Narthex and the
cemetery proper. Because plans were drawn for the Memorial
Garden some time ago, that will form the basis for Phase 1. Be-
cause cremation is increasingly becoming the preferred mode of
"final disposition" among many in our community, this effort
should find great support. More information will be available as
plans develop.

as eighteen! This speaks of the thirst that many parishioners
have for the Word of God and how it can make a difference in
their lives. This is the approach of the *Feasting on the Word*
curriculum now fully implemented in the parish. Each week,
one of the Scripture readings from the Sunday liturgy is the fo-
cus of our activity from the youngest to the eldest participant. In
one sense, we are all together preparing to hear the Word of God
not only for ourselves but also for our families and friends. Each
lesson plan asks four questions: 1. WHAT is important to know;
2. WHERE is God in these words; 3. SO WHAT does this mean
for our lives; 4. NOW WHAT is God calling us to do. Meaning-
ful activities help participants to explore the meaning of the
passage and moves us to a heartfelt response. Prayer bookends
each session and by the end we are ready to approach worship
with new insights and ideas. Won't you join us now that we
have reconvened? Would you consider being a group leader?
Speak to Father Zwifka about the possibilities.

Parish Bids Farewell to Father Ronald J. Lynch, native son, priest, and friend

The Rev'd Ronald J. Lynch, affectionately known simply as Father Ron, died peacefully the morning of June 21, 2013 at Valley View Home in Belleville. In spite of Father Ron's failing health, he remained very much himself to the very end. Visits by family, friends, parishioners, and clergy alike cheered him. Certainly the love and affection poured out in St. Mark's Church during its farewell made clear the impact this man of God had on all he touched through his long and productive career.



Bishop Baxter and Fr. Ron confer during a recent visitation to St. Mark's

Throughout his ministry, Father Ron had a great love for young people as he worked among the youth at so many diocesan programs. Not long ago, the youth of the diocese dedicated two large glass mosaics in his honor that now hang in the Cathedral ambulatory. Photos taken of him at the ceremony of dedication show his obvious pride in the connection that was still able to make with young and old alike.

Many stories were told during the viewing and visitation that occurred in the Church on the eve of his funeral. Current and former parishioners gathered to welcome his body in song and prayer while vigil was kept through the night. On Tuesday morning, members of the Lewistown community and other friends filtered in after the doors were opened at 8 AM. By 10:45 the church was nearly full for the service, presided over by Bishop Baxter, Father Zwifka, and Mother Barbara Hutchinson, current rector of St. Andrew's Shippensburg where Father Lynch served. Also present was Deacon Jack Hoffer of Trinity Church, Tyrone, another of Father Lynch's churches and Mother Dee Calhoun, who preached the sermon in a way that both honored Father Lynch's life accomplishments and gave us a glimpse into how each of us practices for sainthood. Many clergy from the Altoona Convocation as well as representatives from north to south in the diocese were present. Indeed, it was a fitting tribute and farewell to a true priest and man of God.

Family and Friends return to St. Mark's to celebrate the life of Dr. Robert Banks

Family members journeyed from far and wide to greet friends and neighbors at St. Mark's on July 18th as they offered their condolences on the death of Dr. Robert P. "Bob" Banks, OD. Dr. Banks was 86 at the time of his death on June 27th.

Bob and Ginny recently moved to warmer climates in North Carolina to be closer to family. Having hung up his skis (he was an avid skier) at age 83, Bob and Ginny felt it was time to begin a new chapter of their life. Bob has turned yet another page as he has gone home to the Lord. They retained their home in Central Pennsylvania and planned to visit periodically.

The family has asked that memorial donations in Dr. Banks' memory be made to St. Mark's Episcopal Church.

Gifts in Memory of Donna Harden to Support Breaking Bread Together Dinners

St. Mark's parishioner Donna Harden, died suddenly on August 19, 2013. Always quick with a smile and great hello, Donna Harden's sense of hospitality marked her out as a pillar of St. Mark's Church. Donna saw the Breaking Bread Together Dinners (BBT) as an extension of her work in food service. Father Zwifka has often mentioned that one of the obvious gifts of St. Mark's is "intentional hospitality." "Donna exemplified that in her life and brought flesh and blood to an otherwise abstract concept," Father Zwifka told a crowded church in his sermon at her funeral on August 22nd. "Family was at the core of her existence. No one would be left out," he continued. "Children, grandchildren and even great grandchildren gave her purpose and meaning. But it didn't stop there."

Donna's family has requested that memorial donations be made to "Breaking Bread Together Dinners" at St. Mark's Church. "It is extremely fitting that we were able to provide a special picnic for our usual BBT diners on the occasion of the Presiding Bishop's visit," Father Zwifka said, "Part of the memorial contributions already collected provided for part of that very special day in the life of our parish. The picnic shared with the Presiding Bishop and the people we serve was a fitting tribute to Donna's memory."

Breaking Bread Together Dinner Resumes

Our monthly Breaking Bread Together Dinner resumes its regular schedule with a dinner to be served on Thursday, September 26, 2013 from 5:30 PM to 6:30 PM. As always, volunteers are welcome for both preparation and service.



No Let Up in Mother

Hubbard's Work

The Cupboard is open Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 9 AM- 12 Noon and Friday afternoon from 3:00 – 6:00 PM. We are always looking for new volunteers to help staff the cupboard at these times. We are also looking for someone who is interested in providing some administrative help. For more information, please call the parish office and ask for Elta Lauver.



Apple Fest - Saturday, October 12, 9 till 2

The parish will hold its second annual *Apple Fest* on Saturday October 12. The parish kitchen will be buzzing with activity on Friday, October 11th starting at 8 AM as the aroma of just baked apple dumplings wafts through the parish hall enticing all who enter. If you don't want to miss this exceptional treat, it's best to place an order that can be picked up at the parish. You can sign up on the bulletin board in the parish hall or call 717 248-8327. Dumplings will be available on Saturday from 9:00 AM until 2:00 PM or the supply is exhausted (whichever comes first).

During the sale, there will be a Chinese Auction (Saturday 9 AM - 2PM).

Winners will be drawn at 2 PM at the close of the sale.

The parish needs donations of flour, butter, shortening, cinnamon, sugar and apples. Please contact Sharon Copenhaver (717 543-5715) if you would like to donate ingredients.

The Chinese Auction will feature new or "slightly used" item as well as home made jellies, jams, pickles, handy crafts and jewelry. There will also be a white elephant table! For more information or to make a donation, please contact Cynthia McKinley (717 248-9903).



Safe Church Training to be held at St. Mark's on October 19th

Safeguarding God's People is a program of the Church Pension Group, offered throughout the Episcopal Church and its dioceses. Its purpose is to educate clergy and lay persons who are engaged in church-sponsored activities, whether in a paid or volunteer capacity. All training must be renewed every three years.

The Diocese of Central Pennsylvania offers several Safeguarding training programs, and each has its own completion requirements. Two components of this program will be offered at St. Mark's on **SATURDAY, OCTOBER 19 from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM**. The training is required of all clergy and diocesan employees. It is also intended for wardens, vestry members, lay Eucharistic visitors, pastoral visitors, youth leaders, Confirmation sponsors, acolyte leaders, choir directors, church school teachers, volunteers working in a congregation on a regular basis and all employees of congregations.

Parishioners may take their initial training at any sponsored training site. So if you cannot make the

training on Oct 19, please let us know. Information about other trainings is available on the diocesan website (www.diocesecpa.org).

Renewal will be available on-line in the future to facilitate updates and fulfill the requirements of the Church's mandate.

The first portion of the day is dedicated to *Safeguarding God's Children*. It is a required training for all those working with children and youth in any capacity. The remainder of the training will focus on two other topics: *Safeguarding God's People: Preventing Sexual Exploitation in Communities of Faith*, which addresses the development or attempted development of a sexual relationship between a person in any ministerial position and an individual with whom he or she has a pastoral relationship; this is commonly called adult sexual exploitation. *Safeguarding God's People: Preventing Sexual Harassment of Church Workers* provides training for employees, volunteers, clergy,

managers, supervisors, and church leaders about sexual harassment.

Clergy of the parish have already undergone training and received the clearances required by diocesan policy.

For more information or to register, please contact Deacon Loretta Collins.



**Making our Church
Safe for All as we
Gather, Grow & Go**

ANNUAL PLEDGE DRIVE OCT 20 - NOV 3

Yes, it's that time of year again when the annual pledge drive asks us to make a commitment for the financial well-being of St. Mark's Church.

This year's theme, "Share the Vision" seeks to refocus our attention away from the usual drone of stewardship talks and efforts simply to "meet budget demands." Rather, Father Zwifka has asked us to re-vision our understanding of this important element of our life together by seeing it as an opportunity to "Share the Vision," that is, to create the conditions that are necessary for St. Mark's to share its mission and ministry with the community around us.

There are several steps in this process. First, we need to get in touch with those things that have brought us closer to the love of God and how these experiences

called us into this community of faith and love. Then, we need to see our place in the community and how we participate in the day to day proclamation of the Gospel mission in the our wider community. Finally, we need to take steps to assure that this mission and ministry continues now and into the distant future.

Our purpose, says Father Zwifka, is "boldly to reaffirm the vision we inherited" from our ancestor in the faith. To fulfill that purpose, "we need to take practical steps to make the visions of our ancestors real and tangible to people today. To do this we need resources. God uses what we give to bring his purpose about. In this way, we share in the mission of Christ to proclaim the mighty love of God for all peoples."

In his letter to the parish, Father

Zwifka simply asks: "What will *you* do for the Kingdom of God? What will *you* do to help share the vision that has brought you closer to God? How will *you* participate in God's efforts to redeem the world? **What part will you play in the continuing mission and ministry of St. Mark's?**"

Our pledge drive will begin on Sunday, **October 20th** and end on All Saints' Sunday, **November 3rd**. On All Saints Day, all will gather for a **festive Eucharist and a brunch** to follow to celebrate the spirit of generosity that marks out the special vision of St. Mark's Parish.



Raising Money and Spirituality

Raising money is one of those things most church people avoid "like the plague." Perhaps it comes from an understanding of money as "filthy lucre" or as something that leads to one of the seven deadly sins, greed.

Renowned spiritual author Henri Nouwen recently set down his observations about fundraising and the spiritual life in *A Spirituality of Fundraising*. Nouwen contends that fundraising for mission and

ministry is the most concrete way of bringing about the kingdom of God. He argues that in our culture, money is the way most people can participate in creating the conditions under which a community of faith and love can sustain and grow itself. By contributing to that effort, the contributor takes on responsibility for its work and success. It is one way in which God answers our prayer, "your kingdom come." In this context, financial contributions should not come

as a result of begging or seeking to impose guilt on others. Rather, it should stem from the willingness of community members to share the vision they have received from others by equally practical means. What we have as a parish exists because of the generosity and self-sacrifice of others. We must see our role as similar to provide for those who will come after us in the future.

Fulfilling the Mission

Through the generous commitments of parishioners over the past several years, we have been able to accomplish much. Since 2011, St. Mark's has made great strides in updating and maintaining its physical plant. Painting the church is perhaps the most obvious accomplishment, but many other efforts have made our environment warm and inviting. The parish house walls were patched and painted. Lighting fixtures were updated, the garden shed was repaired and painted. The undercroft (under the parish hall) was made "high and dry" making patching and

painting of the walls and heating fixtures possible. It is now being used regularly for Martial Arts lessons and recently provided much needed space for a luncheon with the Presiding Bishop. A new sound system helps every to hear and be heard. Many other small projects have been undertaken and completed.

Aside from the physical plant, the parish has been able to obtain and implement a whole parish Church school curriculum, provide resources for Vestry (e.g. handbooks), administrative support for Jubilee Ministries, and

salary and benefits for the rector and three part-time employees. Now that the rector is fulltime, the parish's vision for his ministry calls for an expanded outreach to the Lewistown community, increased visitation of the sick and homebound, and a pastoral presence for any who seek counsel and advice. All this and more provides the means for sharing the vision of our founders - as valid today as it was 190 years ago.

Your generous pledge makes this and more possible in our time.

Legacy Giving: What is it to Live Forever?

For the early Hebrews, living forever meant having progeny -- bearing children so that your name would "not depart from the earth." Eternal life was through your children and your children's children and so on.

After they experienced the exile in Babylon, the Israelites adopted a notion of the soul and came to believe that the soul could live on after death and some believed in the possibility of resurrection, where not only the soul would live on but the body as well would enter into some kind of afterlife. This was the origin of our Christian understanding of "life after death."

We typically don't speculate much about afterlife, whether we are on the great wheel of karma, or whether we meet Peter at the pearly gate, or whether our children are our way to

live on. The Apostle Paul considered it a mystery and a blessed hope. And many of us simply side with those who understand that the gospel is much more about "Thy Kingdom come, on earth . . ." than trying to get into some afterlife eternal real estate.

That being said, one very practical and gospel way to live on is through *legacy giving*. A legacy gift continues our influence, our intentions, our goals and our values even after we have crossed over into the mystery of eternal life. It funds "Thy Kingdom come on earth . . ." Even after we pass on, we live on.

Legacy giving to St. Mark's will allow us to offer ministries that "non-legacy giving churches" can only imagine -- concerts, lecture series, mission trips, youth activities, facility upgrades and repairs.

We must remember that we have the secure place we now have in our community in large part because of the gifts from so many faithful people before us who sacrificed and gave and passed to us this amazing parish. As we continue to benefit from their gift, let's be willing to match their faithfulness and generosity so that folks fifty, sixty and a hundred years from now will be blessed by the generous faithfulness of our time in the life of the church.

Legacy giving is one faithful way of living on.

For more information on how your legacy gift regardless of size can benefit the future of St. Mark's Church, please contact Father Zwifka to schedule a confidential conversation.

Lay Eucharistic Visitors provide vital ministry

Our church canons state that "A Eucharistic Visitor is a lay person authorized to take the Consecrated Elements in a timely manner following a Celebration of the Holy Eucharist to members of the congregation who, by reason or illness or infirmity, were unable to be present at the Celebration."

Here at St. Mark's we have three active Lay Eucharistic Visitors, or LEVs. Our LEVs, along with Father David and me, are currently visiting 12 parishioners who can no longer worship with us. In these visits we share the consecrated bread and wine, reminders that God's love and presence are always with us. The bread and wine are also reminders that God cares about our pain, discomfort and loneliness.

One of the joys of visiting with our homebound parishioners is that even though they cannot be with us in worship, they

still have gifts and stories to share with us. I have learned so much about St. Mark's history and in their stories have seen God's hand working over the years. I am reminded after many of my visits of that great cloud of witnesses who have shaped and continue to shape our parish family into who we are now. Our homebound parishioners need a connection with us to be able to share their stories and to be able to stay connected with us.

St. Mark's needs a few more Lay Eucharistic Visitors. We need kind, warm hearted persons who can visit our brothers and sisters who can't come to church. Do you have an hour or two a week to share the love of God with your fellow parishioners? If so, then contact me, Deacon



Loretta Collins, at 717-248-8327 or at 814-506-6090. If you are interested in visiting, but are not yet certain you want to take the LEV training, we would welcome you to join us in our visits to experience how comfortable you might be in this important ministry.

Deacon Loretta Collins

Scripture Readings for the month of October

Oct 6 - Pentecost 20

Lamentations 1:1-6
Psalm 137
2 Timothy 1:1-14
Luke 17:5-10

Oct 13 - Pentecost 21

Jeremiah 29:1,4-7
Psalm 66.1-11
2 Timothy 2:8-15
Luke 17:11-19

Oct 20 - Pentecost 22

Jeremiah 31:27-34
Psalm 119:97-104
2 Timothy 2:8-15
Luke 18:1-8

Oct 27 - Pentecost 23

Joel 2:23-32
Psalm 65
2 Timothy 4:6-8,16-18
Luke 18:1-8

Blessed Lord, who caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning: Grant us so to hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which you have given us in our Savior Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.



OCTOBER -- 2013



Updated ROTA

DATE	SERVICE	PRESIDER	HOMILIST	USHERS	LECTOR	ACOLYTE	CHALICE BEARER
10/06/13 20th Sunday after Pentecost	9:30 A.M. H.E. Rite II	Canon Robyn Szoke	Canon Szoke	Nancy Laub & Elta Lauver	Cynthia McKinley	SD: Blair Hannon Crucifer: Lexie Kuhns Acolyte: Phyllis Sikorsky & Mark	Deb Vaughn
10/13/13 21st Sunday after Pentecost	9:30 A.M. H.E. Rite II	Fr. Zwifka	Fr. Zwifka	Bill Wilson & Bob Wilson	Deb Vaughn	SD: Blair Hannon Acolyte: Phyllis Sikorsky & Colby Hagan Crucifer: Mark	Phyllis Sikorsky
10/20/13 22nd Sunday after Pentecost	9:30 A.M. Morning Prayer	Deacon Loretta	Blair Hannon	Fred McKinley Ralph Aitkin	Cynthia McKinley	Acolyte: Phyllis Sikorsky & Mark Kaler, Jr. Crucifer: Lexie Kuhns	NA
10/27/13 23rd Sunday after Pentecost	9:30 A.M. H.E. Rite II	Fr. Zwifka	Fr. Zwifka	Jeff & Maggie Wilson	Deb Vaughn	SD: Blair Hannon Acolyte: Phyllis Sikorsky & Colby Hagan Crucifer: Mark	Phyllis Sikorsky

St. Mark's Episcopal Church

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*The voice of the Gospel
in the Episcopal
tradition for the Juniata
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