

St. Mark's Messenger

November 2017

FATHER JOHN'S REFLECTIONS

November is an important month in the life of this parish and for me personally. When we celebrate the Feast of All Saints, I am also marking the tenth anniversary of my baptism. The connection between baptism and resurrection will always be vivid in my experience of this precious sacrament.

But November is always an especially rich month in the life of the Church. I'm not talking about Thanksgiving or deer season, though those are important events. I am not even thinking about our pork and sauerkraut feast on November 8 or our annual meeting on November 19.

Nor am I worried about Christmas shopping. This month brings our church year to its closure and begins the cycle again with Advent. We will greet a new creche at the entrance to the church and 17 beautiful figurines who will be gradually introduced during the four weeks of Advent, the 12 days of Christmas, and finally of Epiphany on January 6.

All Saints Day (November 1) commemorates the faithful who, according to the church, have achieved heavenly status. All Souls Day (November 2) is a day of remembrance for family members and the unsung saints of the world. At this time of year, I wish that I had been born into a Hispanic family because on this day we would have a celebratory meal and put food on the plate of deceased family members. We would set up shrines with their pictures. We would pray for them and know that they are praying for us and with us.

These feast days are so important because it is the only church holiday set aside to tend to our grief. We experience grief on Good Friday and Holy Saturday, but that grief is for the suffering and death of Christ. All Saints Day is for us, for remembering the people we loved, who were important to us, who made an impact on our lives and then died and left us behind during the past year. All Souls Day gives us a chance to remember ALL of the special people who shaped our lives and who have joined the great cloud of witnesses.

On November 26, we celebrate Christ the King Sunday – the last Sunday of the church year – and we begin Advent on December 3, starting the new church year. We will bid farewell to the Gospel of Matthew and become reacquainted with Mark, our patron saint.

Celebrating our ancestors in the faith, those men and women, some unknown, some esteemed, who lived and died furthering the Christian faith and nurturing ours, that is the “holy day” the church needs to hold up to the world on All Saints’ Day.

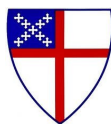
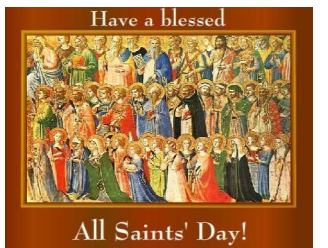
Father John

WHAT MAKES GOD SMILE?

The answer is simple: the plans you make. Robert Burns said it another way: the best-laid plans of mice and men sometimes go astray.

On Monday, September 23, my wife Kathryn had just returned from three weeks in France, and our plan was to attend to all of the tasks that need both of our attentions. One of my plans was for my service of New Ministry on November 1: it is a big moment in the life of the priest, parish, and diocese. The bishop was excited to preside, and my friend Dan Salvage (who had baptized me 10 years earlier) was preparing to preach. Those were our plans.

At 4PM, Kathryn was walking blaze in the park behind our house and suddenly had a heart attack. She was literally knocked flat. She was able to call me on her cell phone, and within 2 minutes (*continued on page 2*)



ST. MARK'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH
21 S MAIN STREET
LEWISTOWN, PA 17044

The Mission of St. Mark's

We gather to celebrate as the family of God, that we may be fed spiritually through the Sacraments and teachings of the Holy Scriptures, in order that we serve others in the love of Christ.

Saint Mark's Episcopal Church
21 South Main Street Lewistown, Pennsylvania 17044
Telephone: 717-248-8327
www.stmark-lewistown.org

The Right Rev. Dr. Audrey Scanlan, Bishop, Diocese of Central PA
The Rev. John T. Harwood, Priest
St. Mark's Vestry
Joyce Hart, Senior Warden - Fred McKinley, Junior Warden
Deb Vaughn, Clerk
Blair Hannon, Jackie Leight, Lillian Myers, Jane Smith, and
John Xanthopoulos
Deb Vaughn—Coordinator of Pastoral Ministries
Joseph Sikorsky—Treasurer

WHAT MAKES GOD SMILE? (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

I was there and the ambulance and police were on their way. Fifteen minutes later we were at Mt. Nittany Medical Center and three hours after that, she was on her way to Geisinger-Danville for major heart surgery. While the operation was successful, the health-care challenges are new ones for us, and we’ve learned a great deal about our health care system and the network of specialists (heart surgeons, cardiologists, vascular surgeons, respiratory therapists, and many others).

We were comforted and encouraged by the many expressions of love, concern, and hope as we spent more than a week in the cardiac ICU. What caused this? A family history of heart disease. Kathryn is in incredibly good shape: a jogger until she turned 66, a healthy eater, a daily exerciser—a perfect candidate for NOT having heart trouble.

But yet she did. Where was God in this?

God works through people—we are called to care for the sick, the injured, the needy. The skills and compassion of EMTs and medical staff at Mount Nittany and Geisinger—God sent them to do their work. Bishop Audrey Scanlan visited both of us before Kathryn’s surgery. Her new priest in Bellefonte, Carleton Kelley, called me daily to check on me AND Kathryn. All of these are signs of God’s presence, and they will enable Kathryn to resume the life that she had planned for retirement.

Thanks be to God.



NEEDS IN THE COMMUNITY

COAT DRIVE

First United Methodist Church needs your help! They are planning to hold a Coat Drive at FUMC on Saturday, November 4th, 2017. The goal is to provide coats for any child who needs one. They have a burden for those in need in our community and are trying to live out the call of God (Isaiah 58:7, Matthew 25:36, Ezediel 18:7, Luke 3:11).

They are looking for monetary donations or donations of new coats sizes newborn through high school or clean, gently used apparel. They can also use man power the day of the event. Contact Heidi Bracken at 724-516-5527 or Randy Hughes at 717-578-3309 if you have questions or are able to help with this activity.

COMMUNITY THANSGINGIV DINNER AND SERVICE

The Salvation Army needs help for its Community Thanksgiving Dinner and Service.

Can the churches in our community buy and cook 8-10 turkeys in preparation for the dinner? They also need pies as well as volunteers in the kitchen the night of the dinner along with servers and a clean-up crew.

Is there a piano player for the worship service afterward? Please step forward!!!

If you can step forward to assist in these needs, Darlene, who is the organizer of this activity, would be grateful.. You can call her at 717-248-8338 to let her know of your offering of turkey, pies, volunteers, and/or pianist.

PS: Pray for Darlene as she has been called to serve in Puerto Rico for the next two weeks. She’ll be without electricity and clean water during this time.

FESTIVAL OF ICE

St. Mark’s has been a participant in the Festival of Ice in Lewistown for several years and will be doing so again this year. The Festival will be held Thursday and Friday evening (November 30 and December 1) from 6:00—9:00 p.m.

St. Mark’s opens it doors every year for performances of Sacred Heart Children’s Choir and students from a local dance studio. We make available hot beverages and light (very light!) snacks.

If you are able to help with this event (basically being here and making sure beverages and snacks are available), please see Joyce.



ST. MARK’S BAZAAR, APPLE DUMPLING SALE, BREAKING BREAD TOGETHER, AND PORK AND SAUERKRAUT

Thanks to everyone who helped with these activities! They are a great deal of work for a small community, and our community appreciates very much what we are doing.

ANNUAL PORK AND SAUERKRAUT DINNER

St. Mark’s Annual Pork and Sauerkraut Dinner will be held Wednesday, November 8 from 4:30 –6:00 p.m. Tickets for the meal are \$8.50 and can be purchased by calling 717-248-8327 (Church Office) or 717-248–9903 (Cynthia McKinley). Pieces of pie will be also be available for \$1.50. Take-outs are available as well. Please support this fund-raising event. All proceeds benefit our Parishioners Outreach Ministry.



St. Mark’s Prayer List

Prayer List: Peg Alexander, Patty Attivo, Leslie Auxer, Jacqueline Benevento, Michelle Bitner, Ralph Bitner, Dennis Bossinger, Bob Briar, Lisa Briar, Linda Burger, Peggy Collins, Christie Colon, Deb Ergler, Marcia Folk, Dr. Frank Grill, Kathryn Grossman, Dolores Houser, Sara John, James Krepps, Martie Marquez, Marsha Lynch-Mock, Cynthia McKinley, Barbara McPhee, Austine James Moore, Gabriel Newman, Leslie Pitzer, Carol Potts, Vicky Shoemaker, Joseph Smith, Gwen Swisher, Jim Switzer, Laura Tate, Joe Ughetto, and Robert Wilson, Jr.

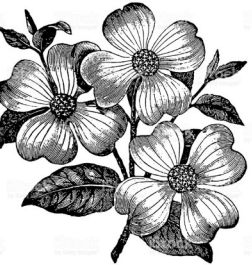
Pray for Lloyd A. Gessaman and Max Wilson who are serving out Country.

God of everlasting love, who provides all things, we pray for all people: make your way known to them, your saving power among all nations. We commend to your fatherly goodness all who are afflicted or distressed in body, mind or circumstances.; relieve them according to their needs, giving them patience in their sufferings, and deliverance from their afflictions. This we ask for the sake of Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen.

NEW ALTAR FLOWER SCHEDULE

Seeing as how we have not revised our calendar for altar flowers for quite a few years, we will be making a new schedule for 2018. There will be a sign-up sheet on Parish Hall bulletin board for you to indicate when you would like to place flowers on the altar in memory of, in honor of, or “just because”. Even if you have “always had” a certain time of the year to place flowers on the altar, it is important that you sign-up.

If it is inconvenient for you to sign-up at the Church, please call Joyce at the Church Office at 717-248-8327 or 717-315-1967.



CONTACTING FATHER JOHN

The best way is by phone: home (814-235-1198) or cell (814-571-0687). Another way is by email (jtharwood@comcast.net). While I live in State College, I am in Lewistown on Wednesdays and Sundays and frequently on Tuesdays as well. I am happy to come to your home. If you are ill or hospitalized or know some

one who needs pastoral support, please call me.

Do not worry that you are “bothering me” if you call me.



PLANNING AHEAD FOR CHRISTMAS

Each year St. Mark’s holds two Christmas Eve Services — one customarily known as the “Family Service” and a later one deemed the “Traditional Candlelight Service”. This year we will continue this tradition by holding the Family Service (will also be candlelight) at 7:00 p.m. and the Traditional Service at 11:00 p.m. Please keep these times in mind as you plan your family get-togethers.

Since Christmas Eve is on a Sunday this year, we will be having Morning Prayer that morning at 9:30 with no communion.



NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

6—BETH BIRCH	O GOD, OUR TIMES ARE IN YOUR HAND: LOOK WITH FAVOR, WE PRAY, ON YOUR SERVANT <i>N.</i> AS (S)<i>HE</i> BEGINS ANOTHER YEAR. GRANT THAT (S)<i>HE</i> MAY GROW IN WISDOM AND GRACE, AND STRENGTEN OUR TRUST IN YOUR GOODNESS ; THROUGH JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD. AMEN.
8—CAM AUXER	
27—SARA JOHN	
27—TRACY MCKEE	
29—CHARLES PHILLIPS	
30—MARSHA MOCK-LYNCH	
30—DEB DIVEN	

NEW WAYS TO CONTRIBUTE TO OUR BUDGET

Do you shop at *Amazon.com* If so, do you realize that by logging on through St. Mark’s website link (<http://www.stmark-lewistown.org/>), you can financially benefit St. Mark’s Church?

If you log onto your Amazon account through the special link on the parish homepage, a percentage of your purchase (excluding taxes and shipping) will be donated to St. Mark’s. Right now our earnings rate is 4% BUT if we can increase the traffic to Amazon.com we may get 6 or even 8%!!

There is no added cost to you. Simply go to our website at www.stmark-lewistown.org and click the link to Amazon.com. You will be taken directly to the site and everything you purchase (including Kindle books!) will be credited toward helping St. Mark’s. Easy and painless and all at no cost to you!

Another way to give back to the parish is to purchase a paver (\$95). What a wonderful way to honor or remember someone important in your life. We are all restricted in the number of words: 3 lines of engraving with maximum of 14 characters (including spaces) per line. Please see Father John or Joyce Hart if you are interested.

Finally, our beautiful columbarium is now ready for you to purchase a niche. I assure you that there is no rush to occupy the niche just because you have purchased it! The cost is \$650, and while cost should not be the deciding factor, please consider these advantages over traditional interment in a cemetery.

- No need for separate urns (self-contained urn/niche construction).
- Above ground burial of cremated remains.
- Sacred context of church’s memorial garden.
- Public space in a notable and historic location within the borough.

Please see Father John if you are interested in purchasing a niche.

BUDGET AND PROPERTY UPDATE

The new roof on the rectory should be completed in early November and we are well prepared for winter. Jim Cherry has also done a heroic job of cleaning the bell tower and making it more resistant to the pigeons who had made the bell tower into their condominium. See Jim if you want pictures.

Every member of the parish will soon receive a stewardship letter and an invitation to make a thanksgiving pledge for God’s work in this church. Please respond as generously as you are able.



MOTHER HUBBARD’S CUPBOARD, “BREAKING BREAD TOGETHER,” & FOOD FOR THE POOR

On October 24, we served almost 80 people (men, women and children, old and young alike) a delicious supper. They were grateful for the warmth of our fellowship and the chance to break bread together in a family-style meal.

In October Mother Hubbard’s Cupboard **served 386 people: 132 families, including 35 first-time individuals and 12 first-time families.**



MHC is grateful to our donors, both large and small, who enable our increasingly important work to be done. We are proud to say that every penny donated to The Cupboard goes to direct help. The generosity of St. Mark’s Episcopal Church covers all over-head and administrative costs associated with The Cupboard’s operation; the time, talents, and unflagging energy of our volunteers provide the human power necessary to carry out its mission. I was humbled to write a thank you note to someone who donated both a steer and a hog for MHC to distribute.

Time and time again, we hear amazement about the quality and quantity of The Cupboard’s work. None of it would be possible without the generosity of the people that have designated The

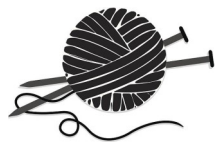
Cupboard as their opportunity to make a difference in our community.

Jesus was very specific: If you love me, feed my sheep. If you have two coats, give one away to someone who has none.

Father Bruce Torrey, an Episcopal priest from New York who visited us on October 22, thanks us for our support of Food for the Poor. Father Bruce speaks for those who have no voice – the destitute of the developing world served by Food for The Poor, an interdenominational ministry providing food, clothing, medical care, housing and economic development programs in the Caribbean and Latin America. I was grateful for the chance to talk with him at our coffee hour (thanks, Jane, for organizing this!!), and I learned a great deal about the history of the organization that Kathryn and I have supported

UPDATE ON “FOLKS OF A SEASONED AGE” AND “KNIT AND KNOT”

Michele Lasher, the leader of our exercise class, has been dealing with some issues with her eyes and feels it is not wise to conduct the class at this time. However, she hasn’t forgotten about the class and will be back in full swing (and kicking, etc.!) as soon as possible. We will let you know as soon as we can when these classes will resume. In the meantime, keep walking and being active!



The “Knit and Knot” folks have continued their charity work through the summer. We continue to make hats and other needed items for the pediatrics unit at the Geisinger Medical Center in Danville, the Adult Oncology unit, and fingerless gloves for the Lewistown and Danville Dialysis units. We invite new people who would like to learn to knit to join us in this quiet, contemplative ministry. Please call 717-953-6158 if you would like more information.