

# St. Mark's Messenger

## September 2017

### FATHER JOHN'S REFLECTIONS

September is a time of transition from summer to fall. After a sweltering August, the mornings are much cooler, and soon the leaves will begin to change: For teachers and students, classes are beginning again, and for St. Mark's we return to our normal rhythm. We will fight the Penn State football traffic during its three home games in September, and I pity the people caught in traffic jams on Seven Mountains as the road work creeps along.

There were many highlights in August. The picnic in the park was great fun, including the "silent auction" that raised more than \$100 that we will use for outreach. Perfect weather was bonus.

The community garden behind the church is producing wonderful produce that we share with folks at Mother Hubbard's cupboard.



I am looking forward to meeting my clergy colleagues in the Ministerium on September 5 so that I can better understand the challenges and opportunities of shared ministry. We look forward to "Breaking Bread Together" on September 26 at 5:00PM. I also look forward to the celebration of Goose Day (September 29).. Did you know that in the Old World, this was the day to pay your year's rent to your landlord? Many landlords also expected a goose. I hope to find a local restaurant serving my favorite poultry on this day!



May I give thanks for ending the tumultuous month of August?

Where to start? The eclipse was wonderful to see in its partial glory, and 2024 should be even better for viewers in Mifflin County. It lived up to its hype!

The spectacle of seeing neo-Nazis and white supremacists marching in Charlottesville (just 250 miles from here) was deeply disturbing. We still have many veterans who remember fighting the *real* Nazis because our government rejected all of their vicious beliefs about racial superiority (the "master race" and similar self-glorification). The Episcopal Church deplores all forms of hate speech, and I was glad that the Lewistown clergy had a service on August 27 to express our solidarity.

But even more ominous with Hurricane Harvey. One of the predictable effects of climate change is storms that are *more extreme* than usual: the extremes go in all directions (hotter/colder, dry/wet). Storms will be more violent, and Harvey exceeded all of the meteorologists' predictions and models. It was not a once in 500 or 1,000 years event: it was an unbelievable deluge. Remarkably, the loss of life has been much smaller than expected, but now we face the challenge of helping Houston, a sprawling city the size of New Jersey, rebuild. It won't be easy, quick, cheap, or painless.

As I write this newsletter, more than 32,000 people are in shelters. Of the thousands of homes and cars completely inundated or swept away, 80% did not have flood insurance. What this means is simple: "you're on your own." How many people will have the financial resources to build a new home and furnish it? What about their clothes and their cars? I don't need to tell the people of Lewistown how devastating floods can be to whole communities because I know that you have first-hand knowledge of the trauma facing thousands of men, women, and children. (Continue on page 2)



## FATHER JOHN'S REFLECTIONS (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

When the first-responders have completed their heroic work, who will be the second, third, and fourth responders? Certainly, the federal government will provide some assistance – remember those FEMA trailers from Katrina 12 years ago? – but what else is needed for families to be whole again? And whose hands will be helping?

This is where the Churches must step forward. Our church's relief and development program deserves our most generous support (<http://www.episcopalrelief.org/>).

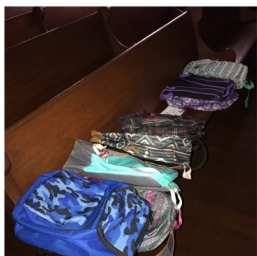
Father John+

## BACKPACK SUNDAY AND PRAYER FOR THE START OF SCHOOL: WE ARE OFF AND RUNNING!



On Sunday, August 27, we distributed back packs to 24 children who needed them for school. We were blessed to support these young people and their families, and we pray that they will have a successful, joyful year.

Always we should pray for our young people. Pray for our teachers. Pray for our schools.



"Dear God, today is N's first day of classes this year. We prayer that N's teachers will be generous, wise, and gracious. We pray for N's classmates, so that true friendships may be found for all. Especially we pray for N. Keep her safe and well. Open her heart and mind to a world of learning and may this be the first of thousands of days in which she knows the depth of your love and the constancy of your care. We pray in Jesus's name." *Amen.*



### THE MINISTRY OF MOTHER HUBBARD'S CUPBOARD: FEED MY SHEEP

Mother Hubbard's Cupboard is a resource that provides supplemental food to families in the Lewistown area. In partnership with the Central PA Food Bank, we purchase high-quality food at great prices. Each month a handful of volunteers gather at the church to unload, pack, and distribute food. A highlight in August was the fresh produce – our own farmer's market – right out of our parish garden.

**In August we served more than 391 people: 159 families, including 23 first-time families. This was a SHARP increase over July, when we served 254 people. Poverty is real and visibly present in our community.**

MHC remains deeply 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.

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.

As always, financial and in-kind donations are welcome. To make a donation, please contact us at 717 248-9383 or the parish office at 717 248-8237.

## WORSHIP AND MUSIC: ST. MARK'S NEEDS YOU!

On Sunday, July 23, you saw a new face at the altar: Alexis Kuhns. She was our chalice, and in the months ahead you will see her in other roles, including lector (reader of the lessons). I invite you to participate in worship by joining the choir, volunteering to host a coffee hour before or after our service, by answering the phone in the church office, by helping to water and weed our garden, and by inviting ONE friend or neighbor to worship with us in August.

Jesus did not use a "hard sell" as he gathered his disciples. He said: "Come and see." Let us also practice "friendship evangelism."

## 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](http://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.

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

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

## UPDATE ON FINANCES AND PROPERTY CONCERNS

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Part of stewardship is accounting for our time, treasure, and talents. Both the Property Committee (Fred McKinley, Blair Hannon, Wayne Hannon, Jim Cherry, and Lillian Myers) and the Investments/Budget Committee (Jeff Wilson, Jane Smith, Joe Sikorsky, and Joyce Hart) have been hard at work this summer. The work of the two committees is closely connected since we can't take on projects that we cannot fund.

The good news is that our property is in good shape because of the hard work and financial support of the parish. When I was in Renovo I oversaw the challenge of new roofs on *two* churches, new heat pumps in *two* churches, and a new boiler in one church. We are not facing anything so daunting here, but we have a long list

of smaller jobs and some *new* ideas for how we could improve our kitchen. We do not yet have a budget estimate for that project, but the vestry will review and prioritize our work for 2017 and 2018 in September and October. We will also adopt a budget for 2018.

We are working with the Diocese to draw regular income from our endowments (we have six funds), and that will be a big help for our financial health.

Except for Ron Lynch, I did not know personally any of the Saints – who remember the church in their wills, but I am grateful for their generosity and their foresight.

Their gifts keep on giving and help sustain the mission of this church for future generations.

## SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

4—Michele Harden Lasher  
6—Michelle Bitner  
14—Carol Henry  
15—Diann Pinkerton  
17—Evelyn Wilson  
18—Theodore Wilson  
29—Charles Phillips

**O GOD, OUR TIMES ARE IN YOUR HAND: LOOK WITH FAVOR, WE PRAY, ON YOUR SERVANT *N.* AS (S)*HE* BEGINS ANOTHER YEAR. GRANT THAT (S)*HE* MAY GROW IN WISDOM AND GRACE, AND STRENGTHEN OUR TRUST IN YOUR GOODNESS ; THROUGH JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD. AMEN.**

## ST. MARK'S PRAYER LIST

Ralph Aitkin, Peg Alexander, Patty Attivo, Leslie Auxer, Jacqueline Benevento, Michelle Bitner, Ralph Bitner, Dennis Bossinger, Bob Briar, Lisa Briar, Linda Burger, Peggy Collins, Deb Ergler, Marcia Folk, Dr. Frank Grill, Dolores Houser, Sara Johns, Mark Kumpf, James Krepps, Martie Marquez, Marsha Lynch-Mock, Cynthia McKinley, Barbara McPhee, Austin James Moore, Gabriel Newman, Adelia Pepper, Marjorie Pepper, Leslie Pitzer, Carol Potts, Vicky Shoemaker, Joseph Smith, Gwen Swisher, Jim Switzer, Laura Tate, Joe Ughetto, and Dr. James Xanthopoulos.

Lloyd A. Gessaman and Max Wilson who are serving our 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.

## Jacqueline “Jackie” S. Weitzel Passes Away

Word was recently received that Jackie Weitzel passed away Saturday, August 17, 2017 in Carlisle. Some of you may remember Jackie as her husband, the Rev. Canon William H. Weitzel, was a former rector of St. Mark's. Following is an excerpt from her obituary .

Jacqueline S. Weitzel, 95, of Carlisle, died on Saturday, August 19, 2017 at Thornwald Home in Carlisle. She was born on October 7, 1921 in Statesville, NC, and was a daughter of the late Silas Alexander Sharpe, Sr. and Lavon Blackmer Sharpe. Jackie was married to the late Rev. Canon William H. Weitzel, of Shamokin, PA, who died July 22, 1985.

Jackie graduated from high school in Salem, VA with the class of 1939. She then studied nursing and received her RN from Lewis-Gale Hospital in Roanoke, VA. She immediately volun-

teered for the Army Nursing Corps. She was a veteran of WWII and the Korean Conflict (1943-1957) having served as a Captain in the Army Nursing Corps. Richmond Army Hospital, White Sulphur Springs Hospital, France, Germany, Korea, Ft Belvoir, VA, and Tokyo Army Hospital.

After Army duties and marriage to Rev. Weitzel in Tokyo on January 16, 1957, she joined her husband as an Episcopal missionary in Japan from 1957-1965. Upon return to the United States, Jackie had worked for Lewistown Hospital, Holy Spirit Hospital, Carlisle Hospital, the Episcopal Home in Shippensburg, PA and Claremont Nursing & Rehabilitation Center. She was a member of St. John's Episcopal Church in Carlisle and where her late husband served as rector from 1975-1985.

She is survived by two sons; William

H. Weitzel, Jr. of Carlisle and his children; Elic and Morgan Weitzel and David St. John (wife, Allison) Weitzel of Ashburn, VA and their children; William, Andrew and Matthew Weitzel and one brother, Bert Wiley Sharpe of Palatka, FL. Jackie and her husband also raised two of their nephews; Doug Smith of Carlisle, and the late Bert Wiley Sharpe, Jr. She was predeceased by one brother, Silas Alexander Sharpe Jr. and one sister, Lavon Sharpe Tuthill.





## **“FOLKS OF A SEASONED AGE” AND “KNIT AND KNOT”**

Now in its sixth year, our exercise class is on vacation this summer will resume in September (the date will be announced soon). Michele Lasher is the leader, and the class meets on Tuesdays from 3:30 to 4:30 in the Parish Hall. You will be glad to know that Father John is now going to a gym 4 days per week to work on strength, cardio, and balance? I have a simple philosophy: use it or lose it. I encourage you to be as active as you can, and this group will help!

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. Father John has also received three prayer shawls that he will distribute to persons in need in our community.

We invite new people who would like to learn to knit to join us in this quiet, contemplative ministry. Please call Jackie Leight at 953-6158 for more information.



Cold weather will soon be upon us and St. Mark’s ECW is ready to warm you up! They will soon be holding their soup sales and also the Apple Fest. Keep posted for dates on these events. The ECW welcomes all women of St. Mark’s to be part of their organization. Meetings are held the first Wednesday of each month at 11:30 a.m.

### **CONTACT NAMES AND INFORMATION**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Email</b>	<b>Phone</b>	<b>Role(s)</b>
Joyce Hart	neimond2003@nmax.net	717-315-1967	Senior Warden Organist
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Deborah Vaughn	dvaughn727@comcast.net	717-437-1853	Clerk of the Vestry Pastoral Care
Jane Smith	<a href="mailto:janesmith369@comcast.net">janesmith369@comcast.net</a>	717-994-6429	Vestry
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## HOW TO CONTACT 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](mailto:jtharwood@comcast.net)).

I live in State College and will be in Lewistown on Wednesdays and Sundays, and at least one other day during the week. I am happy to come to your home. I want to have a meal with every member of the parish before the end of 2017, so please invite me!

Do not worry that you are “bothering me” if you call me. I want to know if you or a family member is in need – or if you have a concern about the parish.



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