

The Mission of St. Mark's

St. Mark's Messenger

December 2018

What a contrast: the image of Christ the King on our altar and the presence of infants at our baptismal font.

God sent his own baby son, Jesus, to be born of Mary. He would have looked very much like little Sawyer O'Brien Morrison, who is six-weeks old. After all of the centuries of prophecies about the coming of the Messiah, the Jewish people had grown impatient.

A black and white photograph of a wristwatch. The watch has a round, white dial with black Arabic numerals from 1 to 12. The brand name 'OMEGA' is printed below the 12 o'clock position, and 'OMEGA' is printed above the 6 o'clock position. There is a date window at the 3 o'clock position. The watch has a black leather strap with visible stitching. The watch is shown from a side-on perspective, highlighting its slim profile.

To prepare the people, he had sent prophets to proclaim the coming of the Lord. We will hear many of them in the next four weeks: Malachi, Micah, Zephaniah –but in the background will be the great voice of Isaiah. When John the Baptist is called to proclaim the way of the Lord, we know that the time is almost here. He is the last of these prophets and that his message repeats the promises of the earlier prophets. His message has one big difference: the Kingdom is almost here. Get ready.



As you listen to the lessons in December, keep track of all the people who were waiting, some in hope and others in dread (Herod comes to mind). Watch how people lived as they were waiting: they were not passive. Think of the magi who had been traveling East for several months to find the newborn baby. Think of Mary and Joseph who were awaiting the birth of a child promised by an angel.

Advent is not a time of repentance. Instead, we are preparing our heart for Christmas. The most important gift we can give ourselves is to set aside time for prayer. Slow down. Think about the meaning of the words in our beloved hymns for this season: “O come all ye faithful” and “Silent Night” are two that we will hear over and over again.

I am also aware that for some people, Christmas is not a happy time. If you are grieving for a loved one no longer with you, Christmas may be very painful. Or you may not have grown up in a family where the holiday season brought joy and peace, so all of the holiday cheer makes you feel down. If you would like to talk with me, please let me know and we'll find a time to meet. I have no quick fixes, but an honest conversation about this season may help.

HISTORY OF ST. MARK’S
AND THE BISHOPS WHO
HAVE SERVED US

Last month we added to the historical gallery a beautiful collection of handiwork created by the women of St. Mark’s in the early 1890s. Some of them also included their names. Think of them and their love for this church whenever you walk down the hallway.

This month we have added a large number of new items, including pictures of every bishop who has served us since 1823. In the months ahead I will tell some of their stories, beginning with Bishop Thomas White, who baptized three people at our newly completed red brick church in 1824. He drove here in his buggy from Philadelphia. Do you have any idea how long that took? I don’t. I imagine that he made other visits to parishes along the way. Whenever you see Bishop Audrey, remember that she is part of our Episcopal tradition of electing bishops. She loves US and serves us.



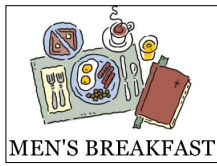
When our first church was consecrated in 1824, Bishop White signed his name on the document – it is displayed in our gallery. In the months ahead, I will provide information about the documents now on display.



ST. MARK’S MEN

THE MEN FROM ST. MARK’S CONTINUE TO MEET THE FIRST SATURDAY OF EVERY MONTH AT THE BURNHAM OIP AT 8:00 A.M. THEY MEET AGAIN ON **JANUARY 5TH, 2019.**

ALL MEN OF ST. MARK’S ARE INVITED TO JOIN THEM AND ENCOURAGED TO DO SO. IT IS A GREAT TIME OF FELLOWSHIP AND THE FOOD IS GOOD TOO!



ST. MARK’S WOMEN

THE ECW OF ST. MARK’S WILL BE HOLDING A SOUP AND SANDWICH SALE THIS COMING **FRIDAY, DECEMBER 7.** A SIGN-UP SHEET IS ON THE BULLETIN BOARD IN THE PARISH HALL AND ALSO IN THE KITCHEN FOR ANYONE WHO CAN MAKE A SALAD OR SANDWICH SPREAD. PLEASE SUPPORT THE WOMEN BY DONATING OR BY ATTENDING!



CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES

Christmas is just around the corner — we are all aware of that! We find ourselves so busy — shopping, baking, wrapping, decorating, etc. However, it is important that we find time to quiet ourselves (as best we can!) and recognize the real reason for this blessed season — to celebrate the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ.



As is customary, St. Mark’s will be holding **two services on Christmas Eve.** The “Family Service”, which is somewhat shorter in length, begins at **7:00 p.m.** The “Traditional Service” begins at **11:00 p.m.** Both services include Holy Communion and also a Candlelight Service, which is both beautiful and inspirational. The candlelight service reminds us that Christ is the “light of the world” . When we light our candles, let us see the reflection of Christ in each other’s faces, let us once again realize the *real* reason for celebrating Christmas!



You will also hear the story of how Jesus came to earth as a wee baby in Bethlehem. The story of the Bethlehem stable is so very familiar — you won’t hear anything new or different about the manger and the shepherds. When we hear the opening line, “In those days, a decree went out from Emperor Augustus....”, we know what is coming next. What we may lose sight of is that this story is not just a recollection of what happened so long ago (although that in itself is so extraordinary that is worth recalling). It is an invitation to let it happen again in US! As we re-visit Bethlehem, let the holy God “....be born in us today.” That’s one of the reasons why we worship and listen to the old, well-known tale — that the excitement of that blessed birth can be revived in each of us!

Please join us on Christmas Eve and bring your family and friends!

Hanging of the Greens

“Hanging of the Greens” will be held on **Sunday, December 23** immediately following the Worship Service. Enjoy a meal of soup and sandwiches as well



Poinsettias

As you know, the poinsettias and the wreaths that decorate the church during the Christmas Season only add more to the beauty of our Church.

If you would like to have a poinsettia placed in the Church in honor of an occasion or person or in memory of someone, please complete the form below and either place it in the offering plate or mail it to the Church Office. In this way, we can make sure we will have your occasion or person listed on our annual Christmas Flower list.



CHRISTMAS FLOWERS



_____ Keep names from previous year.

_____ Add new names/occasions (“in memory of” or “in honor of”) as listed below. Use back of form if necessary)

Requested by _____ Amount (for flower fund) _____



St. Mark's Prayer List

Patty Attivo, Cam Auxer, Jacqueline Benevento, Michelle Bitner, Ralph Bitner, Dennis Bossinger, Bob Briar, Lisa Briar, Linda Burger, Peggy Collins, Christie Colon, Lew Copenhaver, Sharon Copenhaver, Heather Creighton, Bishop Michael Curry, Deb Ergler, Marcia Folk, Dick Gibboney, Emma Grace Germak, Kathryn Grossman, Thomas Hart, Josh Hohol, Dolores Houser, Angela Kaler, James Krepps, Martie Marquez, David Moore, Marsha Lynch-Mock, Austin James Moore, Gabriel Newman, Leslie Pitzer, Carol Potts, Amy Reeder, Vicky Shoemaker, Joseph Smith, Gwen Swisher, Jim Switzer, Laura Tate, Ann Wimsatt, Robert Wilson, Jr., William Wilson, and Stella Wright.

Pray for Lloyd A. Gessaman, Christopher Wilson 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. Amen.



BAPTISMS AT ST. MARK'S

Sunday, November 25, 2018 was a special day at St. Mark's. Not only did we celebrate *Christ the King* Sunday but we also celebrated the Sacrament of Holy Baptisms. Four persons were baptized that day and as such were officially adopted by God into the Family of God ... the Church. Congratulations to all these young people! May your life be filled with the joy, love and endless blessings that come from God!



*Sophia Brynn Martinez and
Jayson Antonio Martinez*



*Sawyer O'Brien Morrison and
Avery Jane Woodring*

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

5—Ralph Bitner
6—Joyce Hart
6—Kathryn Grossman
7 - Damien Young
11—Michael Woodring
12—Barbara Gregory
19—Thomas Remy
25—Jesus of Nazareth
28—Tony Hatfield-Nicholson

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 PARTICIPATES IN FESTIVAL OF ICE

St. Mark's was pleased to host several performing groups as part of the Festival of Ice activities. Thursday evening found our Parish



*Children's Choir from
Sacred Heart School*

Hall filled with the music of the children's choirs from Sacred Heart School and also from First United Methodist.

Dance Studio 32 from Mifflintown entertained approximately 70 persons on Friday evening by per-



Dance Studio 32

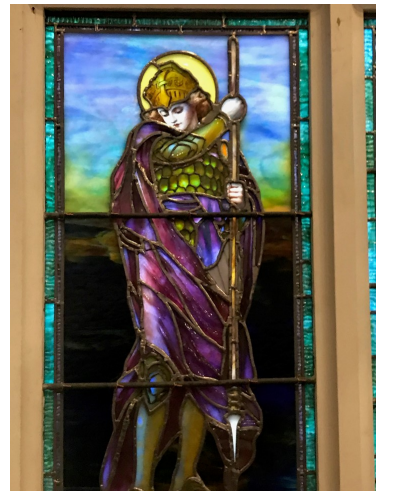
forming ballet and tap dance selections. It is great to see such talent in our communities and St. Mark's was happy to be part of sharing those talents!

PROPERTY UPDATE

The Safety Committee is making great progress on developing recommendations for becoming better stewards of our property and people. Blair Hannon has completed an inventory of our worship materials; the ushers have received new training materials. We will soon be replacing the ancient shed behind the parish house so that we can safely store our mowers, snow blowers, and other maintenance items.

But the best news is the return of our windows from Epiphany Studios. As this newsletter is being typed, the men from Epiphany Studios are re-installing our windows. We are very grateful for the generosity of Elta Lauver that has enabled us to restore them to their original splendor.

We will dedicate a memorial plaque in Elta's memory this month.



STEWARDSHIP

Nearly twenty households have pledged about \$64,000 to St. Mark's for 2019. If you have not turned in your pledge card, please do so at once.



ANNUAL MEETING

We will hold our annual meeting after our service on December 9. After reviewing the budget approved by the vestry last month, we will elect three members to vestry for three-year terms as well as our delegates to our Diocesan Convention. Each of our areas of ministry will have a written report, and Father John will share his "State of the Parish and Hopes for 2019." The meeting will last no longer than an hour.

We will also have a soup and sandwich meal. Please bring your favorite soup, fixins' for sandwiches or a dessert to share.

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

In November Mother Hubbard's Cupboard served several hundred people. Between MHC and Breaking Bread, St. Mark's provided food to nearly 400 different people.

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. We received and distributed more than 200 pounds of sausage this month.

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.

THE MINISTRY OF BREAKING BREAD TOGETHER MEALS

On November 27, we served approximately 55 people (men, women and children, old and young alike) a delicious supper of ham and green beans – a perfect meal on a cold, windy evening.. They were grateful for the warmth of our fellowship and the chance to break bread together in a family-style meal.

If you would like to help with this ministry, please come out on the fourth Tuesday of every month. To help prepare the meals, arrive between 3:00 and 3:30 p.m. We organize our servers between 5:00 and 5:15 so that we can begin serving the meal at 5:30. Please note: our next Breaking Bread Together meal will be on **Tuesday, December 18. Please note this is the *third* Tuesday of the month.**

