

St. Mark's Messenger

May 2020

FATHER JOHN'S REFLECTION

Lent and Holy Week have always stood apart in the lives of both parishes and priests, but what a doozy we had in April. Two new arrivals at St. Mark's were Mr. Zoom and Ms. Facebook Live.



Fr. Harwood's view
Sunday mornings

As with the first disciples, Holy Week was a roller coaster experience, with highs and lows coming in surprising swerves and dips: preaching to empty churches in Bellefonte and Lewistown, avoiding (not visiting) our shut-ins, learning new technologies like Facebook Live and Zoom in survival mode, and offering only takeout meals for Breaking Bread Together. The picture on the left is what I see from the altar.

When I was in Seminary, I never expected to apply for and receive a grant from the Small Business Administration for \$11,447. I had never imagined that St. Mark's was a small business, but since we were eligible and I'm a very fast typist, we received the grant. We're grateful for Kish Bank's responsiveness. This loan turns into a grant in several months when we use it to cover our payroll for two months.

Even more surprising were the outpouring of gifts to Mother Hubbard's Cupboard. The first were three Honey-baked hams from John McQueary, who owns the Framing Company in State College. But we also received \$500 checks from the Maine Mutual Group (thanks to Jeff Wilson), from the Lewistown Lodge as well as several individuals .

Many smaller checks have come from within and outside the community as well. The greatest surprise was a \$50,000 donation from FirstQuality, the largest gift that MHC has ever received.

While we had applied to FirstQuality last November for an in-kind grant (we received five pallets of paper products), I had not applied to FirstQuality for this second grant: it just came because the company liked this community and our ministry, knew its importance, and could predict that we needed assistance when so many people were suddenly unemployed. Even if some people received a stimulus check or unemployment compensation, that money will not last for very many months; we will be here when they need assistance.



Blair and Jim setting up the interim altar.

The work of the parish continues. When we resume our traditional forms of worship, you will be pleased to see an interim altar that will enable me to face you during the Eucharist. To that end, we are repurposing a large lectern whose history is unknown. Thanks to Fred McKinley's carpentry skill and Joyce's skills as a seamstress (she's making the "fair linen" required by all altars), we will have an attractive sacred space. I will consecrate it to the glory of God and as thanksgiving for the grit of our people during the pandemic.

The shutdown has been hardest on our shut-ins and our pastoral care team. Parishioners like Bill Wilson (now 94) NEED Phyllis's weekly visit – conversation and the Eucharist. He is not the only one.

On the brighter side, folks like Lynn Stricker, the Copenhavers, and Jackie Leight are now able to participate in the services just by phoning in or using the Web. As an experiment, I want to see if we can offer both Zoom and Facebook Live at the same time; if that works, then anyone can phone in to the Sunday service as well. Don't be surprised if we continue to use these technologies after regular worship resumes.

For me personally, I love the richness of Morning Prayer, a service that I had rarely led at St. Mark's. How nice to pray aloud with you the beautiful canticles and prayers. I also listen to Morning Prayer every day via Alexa (just enable the skill "Episcopal Prayer" and then say, "Alexa, Episcopal Prayer"). Thanks to Forward Movement, two priests provide the service daily.

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On a smart phone, the free app from the Church of England, "Time to Pray," provides both morning and evening prayer, including the same readings that we use at St. Mark's.

In these times, we can pray alone (of course!) in our own homes, and we can also pray with our congregation through two weekly services. Maybe it's time to consider regular services of Evening Prayer, too. There is no additional cost but huge richness for those who participate. Who would join me in a daily service of Morning Prayer? Please let me know!

When will things return to normal at St. Mark's? Bishop Audrey is working with other bishops to create guidelines and a timeline for the transition. Just this week Governor Wolf has announced his metrics and guidelines (red-yellow-green); central Pennsylvania could cautiously begin to change on May 8. In the Old Testament, the Israelites lived in Babylon for 70 years (Jeremiah, Ezra, 2 Kings). We have been "gone" only since March 22, even if it feels like 70 years.

When we return, however, we will practice ways of being safe(r) together. I hope to know more later this month.



Father John+

NEW WAYS TO WORSHIP THIS MONTH: BY THE INTERNET OR PHONE

Unable to worship in our beloved Church, we still continue our services on Sundays and Wednesdays at 10AM. You can connect easily by the Internet or a toll-free call.

You do NOT need to have an account on Facebook or Zoom to participate; a telephone will suffice. I will email you the Sunday service materials, including the readings and the music for the hymns. Go to either address below to participate by Internet.

TO PARTICIPATE BY INTERNET

Use either address below:

<https://www.facebook.com/stmarksepiscopalchurchlewistownpa/live>

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82334928109>

Meeting ID: 823 3492 8109



TO PARTICIPATE BY PHONE

By phone: +1 646 558 8656

Meeting ID: 823 3492 8109



HOME VISITATIONS AND PASTORAL NEEDS

Because of the dangers from the COVID-19 virus, we are unable to bring communion to shut-ins but are in frequent contact by phone. If there is an end-of-life situation, Father Harwood will visit in person. Please contact Father John (814-571-0687) about any pastoral concerns.



MEN'S GROUP

We will resume our breakfast meetings when the restaurants reopen.

MAY AT ST. MARK'S

May will be very busy in the life of the Church, but St. Mark's will still be hibernating at home and wearing masks when they go out. Sure, we will celebrate Mother's Day (May 10) and Memorial Day (May 25) but without the large family gatherings that we all cherish. We have two major feast days: Ascension on May 21 and Pentecost on May 31, a time when we wear red and ring bells to celebrate the birthday of the Church. Can you ring bells outside your house on this day?

Coincidentally, this will be the *FOURTH* Pentecost I have celebrated with St. Mark's!!

Mother's Day reminds us that a mother's love is precious because it is our first experience of human love. Through this love, we are reminded of God's love for us. So many passages in Scripture use female imagery to talk about divine love. Isaiah says that God will comfort us as a mother comforts her child. Jesus says that he would like to be like a mother hen who protects her chicks. Let us thank God for mothers.

Pentecost marks the dramatic appearance of the Holy Spirit. Jesus had promised that we would not be left alone; he would provide us with a counselor, guide, and advocate. The same Holy Spirit present at Christ's baptism in the River Jordan and transfiguration in the presence of Peter, James, and John now fills the room where the disciples are gathered.



Happy Mother's Day

COMMITTEE REPORTS (AUDIT, CEMETERY AND COLUMBARIUM, PASTORAL CARE, PROPERTY, AND SAFETY)

The vestry was delighted to receive a very positive audit from the **Audit Committee** (Jon Myers, chair; Sandy Jenkinson, Robin Wilson, and Patty Wagner with support from Susan Ferguson and Joyce Hart). The Parish Office has followed all recommendations of the previous annual audit.

The **Property Committee** reports that they have found a way to make our HVAC system work more efficiently, and we still hope to achieve at least a 10% reduction in our annual cost of utilities. We sold one cemetery plot but had no burials in April.

The **Pastoral Care team** is visiting by phone all of our shut-ins. All of the visitors (Blair, Deb, Phyllis, Tracey, and Father John) are eager to bring them the Eucharist once again.

The **Worship Team** (Blair, Joyce, Father John) are pleased with the interim altar that we are using now with Morning Prayer and that we will adapt for the Eucharist. Since we want to continue streaming our services, we will need to determine how best to arrange the audio-visual equipment so that worshipers are not distracted and everyone feels part of the service whether they are at home or in the pews.

When our first church was built in 1824, nobody could envision our current needs. Back

then the most complicated piece of technology was the organ. This Lewistown picture is from the 1880s. It required the organist to pump continuously (it works like a bagpipe). With only one keyboard, no foot pedals, and very few stops, the sound would have been wheezy and a bit like an accordion. No electricity was required.



Our current organ dates from 1920 and was a beautiful memorial to Dr. Hershberger.

While a temporary altar will suffice for now, we hope that someone will purchase a vintage altar that would be more in keeping with the architectural style of the church.



All come from Catholic churches that have closed or been consolidated and would fit our space and our style (Victorian, Gothic Revival). The cost is several thousand dollars. What a marvelous gift to the sacramental life of our church! See Father John if you would like to do this.



BREAKING BREAD TOGETHER

On April 28 we served a cheerful group of twenty-seven people a tasty take-out meal of honey-baked ham sandwiches, chips, and a dessert. We distributed the meal in front of the church, and all of us wore masks and gloves. We were glad to see familiar faces and to meet some new people, but it was very clear to me that many of our regulars come as much for the fellowship as for the food. They will be grateful for our return to normal, but we will use the same procedure in May.



*Where there's a will....
there's way!!!*

MOTHER HUBBARD'S CUPBOARD

In April Mother Hubbard's Cupboard served slightly fewer people than the month before, probably because people have received stimulus checks. We have implemented new safety procedures to help protect both our volunteers and our clients, distributing the food outside our building.

Hunger does not go into quarantine. Our schools have fed many poor children during the school year, and many local restaurants have distributed lunches during the shutdown. Who will feed them next month and during the summer?



*Mother Hubbard's Cupboard...
Continuing to feed the hungry.*

St. Mark's Prayer List

Prayer List: Patty Attivo, Jacqueline Benevento, Michelle Bitner, Ralph Bitner, Dennis Bossinger, Bob Briar, Lisa Briar, Linda Burger, Tyler Burris, Dottie Casner, Peggy Collins, Lew Copenhaver, Heather Creighton, Bishop Michael Curry, Amanda Ergler, Shirley Ferguson, Richard Flood, Marcia Folk, Dick Gibboney, Kathryn Grossman, Thomas Hart, Kassidy Hendricks, Josh Hohol, Dolores Houser, Angela Kaler, Bruce Kinsey, James Krepps, Martie Marquez, Pam Lawson, Hugh McKee, Marsha Lynch-Mock, Austin James Moore, David Moore, Virginia Nace, Gabriel Newman, Carol Potts, Jack Potts, Amy Reeder, Sattler, Makenzie Shearer, Vicky Shoemaker, Joseph Smith, Gwen Swisher, Laura Tate, Henry Walk, Jackie Walk, Ann Wimsatt, William Wilson, Stella Wright and Ashley.

Pray for 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. Amen.

MAY BIRTHDAYS

- 13 - Judy Kline
- 15—Dan Dillon
- 16—Joan Dippery
- 18—Anne Wimsatt
- 23—Richard Walters
- 24—Richard Flood
- 30—Jon Myers

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.



FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR ST. MARK'S

Our parish expenses continue. Just like you, we must pay for insurance, utilities, and routine repairs. We mow the cemetery lawn every two weeks; we have more than 13 acres, and it costs \$700 per mowing. We pay our sexton and housekeeper to keep our three buildings in good order; Mother Hubbard's costs continue each month, and they will rise sharply because of the economic hardship affecting so many people in coming months.

Please MAIL your checks to the church: 21 South Main Street, Lewistown, PA 17044.

You can also contribute online: <https://diocesecpa.org/stewardship/>

Just go to this secure website and scroll down to Lewistown; you'll find St. Mark's there, and you can make a onetime or on-going contribution. I tried it in April, and it worked great.



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
 Father John T. Harwood, Priest-in-Charge
St. Mark's Vestry
 Blair Hannon, Senior Warden - Hal Jenkinson, Junior Warden
 Deb Vaughn, Clerk
 Dan Dillon, Lillian Myers,
 Jane Smith, and Robin Wilson
 Deb Vaughn—Coordinator of Pastoral Ministries
 Joseph Sikorsky—Treasurer



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.

