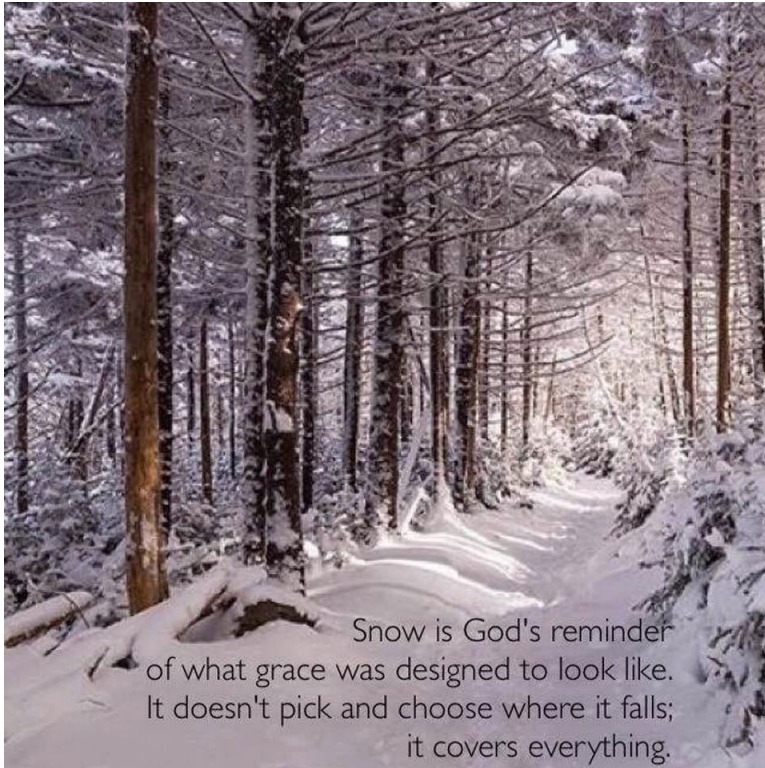


# St. Mark's Messenger

## February 2022

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For a short month, February has an astonishing number of non-church holidays. How can we forget Punxsutawney Phil on February 2, Lincoln's birthday on the 12<sup>th</sup>, Valentine's Day on the 14<sup>th</sup>, Washington's birthday (now known as President's Day) on the 19<sup>th</sup>. These are the traditional ones, but consider the new days: February 1 is National Wear Red day. The 20<sup>th</sup> is National Love Your Pet day, and two days later is National Margarita Day.

When you add in my 75th birthday and 39th anniversary, I'll have a busy month.

Despite the miserably cold January, I can assure you that Spring will be here in seven weeks. Already the days are growing longer by two minutes each day.

Right now the world is a troubling place. Congress is stalemated. Inflation makes everyone's life harder; the threat of war between Ukraine and Russia makes all of its neighbors nervous; North Korea has fired six missiles in January; the supply-chain problems plague customers and businesses, making deliveries or availability unpredictable; businesses can't hire the employees they need; and the stock market is in a swoon. I will say a word about COVID (our 500-pound gorilla) at the end of my message. If we ever needed Good News, it's now.

In the church, we continue to walk with our Lord. February continues the Epiphany season with insights about the baptism of Jesus, the calling of disciples, and

important teachings on how to live. We explore the life of Jesus (for example, his presentation in the Temple on February 2). In Luke, Jesus teaches us how to live through the Sermon on the Mount. He calls disciples, and if they had questions, reservations, or objections, we don't hear about them. The followers trusted him - and dropped their old lives (fishing). They made a leap of faith that changed them and the world. Literally and figuratively, they were shaped by faith. Just before Ash Wednesday (March 2), we celebrate the feast of the Transfiguration, when three disciples see our Lord in his full glory.

These are thrilling, challenging lessons - and incredibly timely for us to hear and heed.

A word about COVID. Kathryn and I were hoping that she would receive a new knee on February 4, but her surgery is delayed again. In the first week of February, Dr. James Martin is allowed one out-patient surgery at Mount Nittany. Some of his patients have been delayed since August. Until the number of COVID patients falls dramatically, elective surgery is very unpredictable. I encourage you all to wear N95 masks and to use the self-test kits that are now widely available. The Diocese expects all clergy to test themselves weekly - and I do.

Father John+

### **BREAKING BREAD TOGETHER, MOTHER HUBBARD'S CUPBOARD, AND OUTREACH**



How are we doing? Last year we fed 2,359 individuals and 1,275 families. We received \$47,780 in monetary donations and many food and personal care items, which allowed clients to shop off the table for what they need once a week. FirstQuality made a big contribution of paper products of all kinds. That is a big success.

In January we received a check for \$1,000 from Kish Bank and gift certificates for almost \$700 from Sharp Shopper in Belleville. Hopefully we will be able to continue that throughout 2022.

We have improved our storage area by replacing the old garage door (which had no insulation) with a new one. The garage will stay much more comfortable as a result.



On January 25, we served 26 neighbors a delicious pepperoni pizza DONATED by Pizza Hut (thanks to Lisa Harden Soccio). Last year we served almost 800 people at our meals, the vast majority of whom are not members of St. Mark's.

Jesus made it very clear: "If you love me, feed my sheep."

The people of St. Mark's do more than hear these words – we put them into action by how we serve others. I have always believed that if a church needed a letter of recommendation, we should ask our neighbors to write it.

### ALTAR FLOWERS

The signup sheet for altar flowers is on the bulletin board in the parish house. We will not have flowers for the six weeks of Lent, but that leaves 46 Sundays available to remember or honor special people or events in our lives.

### PRAYER LIST

Shirley Brown, Ralph Bitner, Bob Briar, Lew Copenhaver, Dick Flood, Wayne Hannon, Joyce Hart, Dr. Ann Harwood-Nuss, Dolores Houser, Judy Kline, Raelene Moore, Dr. Willa Silverman, Patty Wagner, Henry Walk, Jackie Walk, Evelyn Wilson, and Bill Wilson

We pray for all elected leaders, especially our president and governor.

## DESIGNING A GOOSE FOR ST. MARK'S

What should St. Mark's goose look like? The challenge is to tell our 200-year story in images. If we were the Mifflin County airport, the images would be easy to select:



airplanes. Karl Leitzel was the creator. You'll see another of his geese on Market Street.



Karl recently met with about ten folks from St. Mark's to discuss OUR ideas. We talked about the importance of the cross as a symbol of who we are, and a loaf of bread as a symbol of what we do in the community. Of course, bread is also part of our weekly communion services. We also wondered whether we could include stained glass as a symbol of our beloved church building. If

we only have four symbols, what should they be?

We will invite everyone to review Karl's sketches after we receive them. We will also start the discussions about where our goose should be located. It's important that people can see all four sides of the creature. To see other geese in the flock, see <https://www.cpartnerships.com/wild-geese-flock-together> .

### ST. MARK'S AND SHAPED BY FAITH: ST. MARK'S IN 2030 AND 2050



This eighteen-month initiative has helped all 61 parishes in our diocese understand the challenges and opportunities we face in the next decade.

The basic question for us is this: how do you envision St. Mark's in 2030? 2040? Or 2050? We turn 200 years old in 2023, and we have been changing for almost two centuries. What's coming next?

So far we have done the following tasks:

- Surveyed our communities to discover strengths and challenges, analyze results, and identify trends.
- Completed a values matrix to focus on the values and priorities of each congregation.
- Reflected Christ's call to move back into our neighborhoods, seek the places where God is already at work, and identify ways that we can join in that good work.
- Received an in-depth understanding of our parish financial and capital resources.
- Discussed congregational development models allowing parishes to view their community through a different lens and vantage point.
- Considered ways of structuring our congregations outside of the traditional model of "one church = one priest."
- Shared possibilities for increasing collaboration and sharing resources, especially with other congregations in the Altoona convocation

On February 3, St. Mark's will host the churches of the Altoona Convocation for a discussion of their plans.

## REMEMBERING FATHER PETER GREENFIELD

Father Pete served St. Mark's from 1975 to 1983 and left indelible memories of loving service to the parish and all persons in need. Can anyone identify all four people in this picture and name the occasion? Hints: one is our presiding bishop and one is our bishop.



His funeral service will be held at **St. John's, Lancaster** at **11 AM on Saturday, February 5, 2022**. Calling hours are at 10 AM. Masks are required.

This service will also be streamed to the St. John's YouTube page.

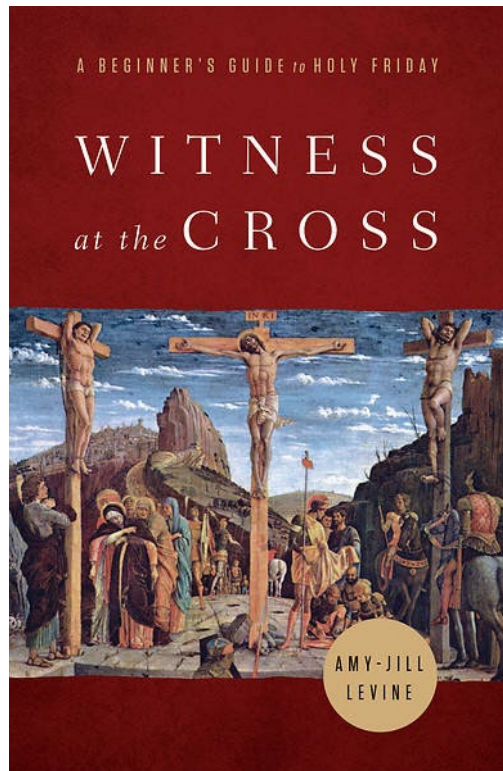
## LENT IS COMING: ASH WEDNESDAY ON MARCH 2

We celebrate Ash Wednesday on March 2.  
On Fridays at 12:15 during Lent, we will observe Stations of the Cross.

## ADULT FORUM DURING LENT



Were you there when they crucified our Lord? I invite you to join our fellow Episcopalians at St. John's-Bellefonte, St. Luke's-Altoona, St. Andrews-State College, and St. Luke's-Altoona. With so many good people gathered together, we will have new insights into the gospel of Mark. We will use the book written by Amy-Jill Levine: *Witness at the Cross: A Beginner's Guide to Holy Friday*.



**Place yourself as a witness of the cross and determine what your own testimony will be!**

Experience Holy Friday from the perspective of those who watched Jesus die: Mary his mother; the Beloved Disciple from the Gospel of John; Mary Magdalene and the other women from Galilee; the two men, usually identified as thieves, crucified with Jesus; the centurion and the soldiers; Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus. Jews and Romans, friends and strangers, the powerful and the powerless, the hopeful and the despairing.

The story of Jesus's death is not something we just read: we think about it, and we experience it; we hear the taunts of the soldiers, the priests, and the passersby even as we hear the famous

“seven last words” from the cross.

In *Witness at the Cross*, Amy-Jill Levine shows how the people at the cross each have distinct roles to play. Each Evangelist presents a distinct picture of the death of Jesus. Each portrays different individuals and groups of people at the cross, each offers different images and dialogues, and so from each, we learn how those meanings and messages cross the centuries to any who would come to the cross today.

Each Gospel has its own story to tell, all the witnesses have their own memories, and every reader comes away with a new insight. The witnesses at the Crucifixion watch Jesus die, and we watch with them, and we watch them. And we come away transformed.

We will meet on Wednesday evenings at 7PM via Zoom. Please let Father John know if you want to join the group so that we can buy enough books for everyone.

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

<p>BLAIR HANNON (3) WAYNE HANNON- (7) RALPH AITKIN-(11) ANGELA KALER-(12) JOHN HARWOOD-(16) ELIZABETH HARPER - (17) ROBERT WELHAM-(19) JANE SMITH- (20) AMY REMY- (21) SHIRLEY BROWN-( 22) ANNIVERSARY OF JOHN HARWOOD &amp; KATHRYN GROSSMAN- (26)</p>	<p><b>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 STRENGTHEN OUR TRUST IN YOUR GOODNESS; THROUGH JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD. <i>AMEN.</i></b></p>
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