

St. Mark's Messenger

March 2022

FATHER JOHN'S REFLECTIONS



A year ago our community was trapped by the wide-spread impact of COVID-19. We did NOT worship in our church at Easter but only by Zoom. How could we be faithful when so many parts of our traditional worship were missing – our church, our hymns, receiving communion from the common chalice at the altar rail? We didn't return to church until Pentecost (May 23).

That Lenten season was a time of testing and praying, of wondering where God was when more than 140 people from Mifflin County had died. Nobody needed to be reminded of their mortality.

In the ancient church, Lent was a time of intense preparation for baptism. Confirmation training was for adults and lasted for months. At the great Easter Vigil, confirmands went down into the waters of baptism in white robes and emerged as members of the Church – new people with a whole new family. They would then receive their first Eucharist and a new baptismal name. They were then full members of the church.

Confronting death and resurrection was the heart of their faith. Death does not have the final word for Jesus or for us. St. Paul proclaims words that we often use at funeral services: “If there is a physical body, there is also a spiritual body. For this perishable body must put on imperishability, and this mortal body must put on immortality.... ‘Death has been swallowed up in victory.’ Where, o death, is your victory? Where, o death, is your sting?”



Just as the season is moving from winter to spring, we move from death to life. If we are "Easter people," how then should we live now? What needs to change? How can I strengthen my faith?

We have forty days to prepare. Besides our Sunday worship, we invite you to participate in the Wednesday service for healing, the Community Lenten Services on Wednesdays at noon, and our Bible study on Wednesday evenings at 7PM (Zoom) or in the parish house on Sundays at 9AM. At Easter we will proclaim: The Lord has risen – the Lord has risen indeed.

Father John✠

DESIGNING A GOOSE FOR ST. MARK'S

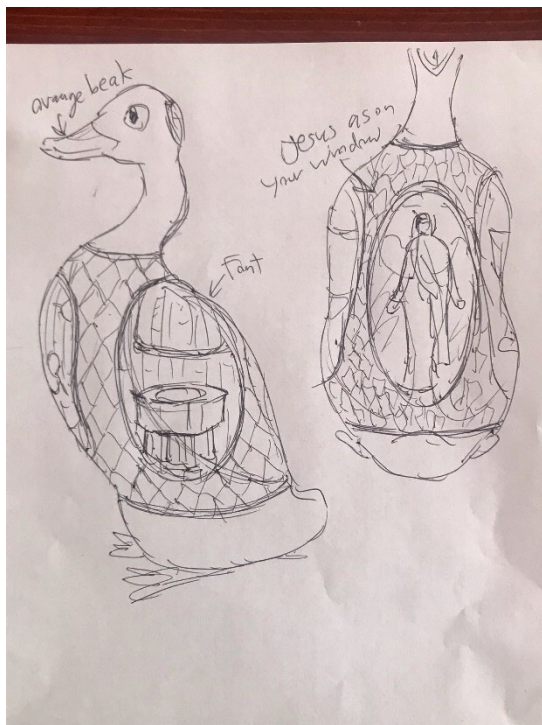
Many businesses and organizations have joined the "community geese" project (<https://www.cpartnerships.com/wild-geese-flocktogether>) led by Sam Price, who grew up at St. Mark's. His father designed our Stations of the Cross. Our church will be the first one in Lewistown to have its own goose, and we expect to receive it before the start of our bicentenary in 2023. Our goose will tell our story in images, not words.

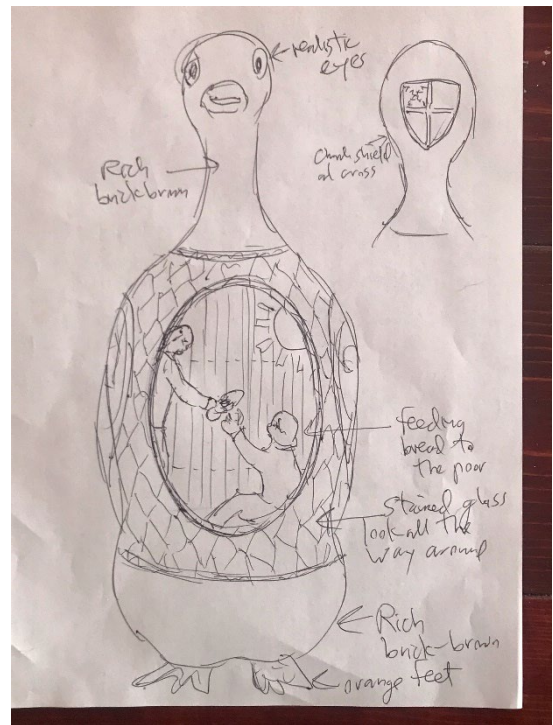
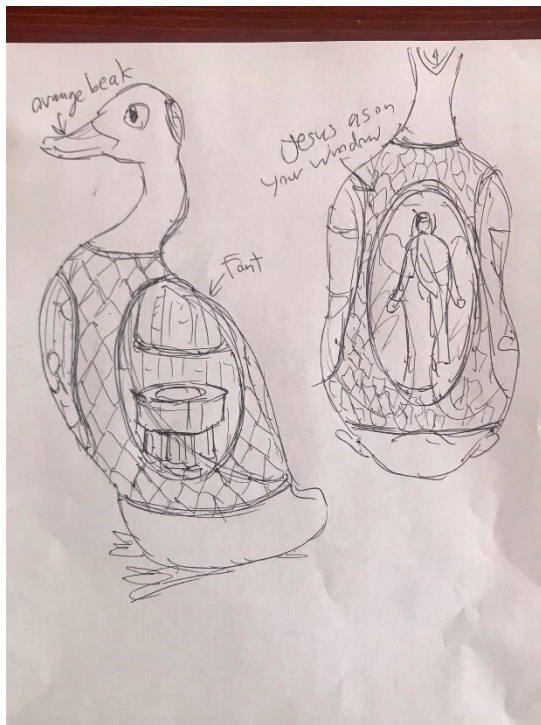
In January a dozen folks from St. Mark's met with the artist, Karl Leitzel. Here is his summary of the discussion:

I tried to incorporate the most important ideas without making it cluttered with too much. I'm proposing using the stained-glass look all the way around the main part of the body as a unifying design, almost like a body sock of stained-glass style and colors taken from your windows.

Then, within that, I have ovals with stained glass-look pictures within: Feeding bread to the poor on the front, baptismal on the left side, chalice on the right, and Jesus (from your one window) on the back. The most important unifier for the larger Christian church is Jesus.

I also show your Episcopal church shield and cross on the back of the head. The stained-glass colors and style would all be modeled after your windows. Other background areas top and bottom would be a rich brick reddish brown, with the eyes, beak, and feet bright natural colors as on my other geese.





STATIONS OF THE CROSS: WHAT WAS IT LIKE FOR JESUS ON GOOD FRIDAY?

Join us as we follow Jesus to the Cross.





Stations of the Cross will be held on Fridays at 12:15PM. Please join us for a quiet, contemplative reflection on what our Lord experienced on Good Friday. At Christmas we contemplated the baby in the manger; now it is time to see Him on the Cross.

Were you there when they crucified our Lord?

COMMUNITY LENTEN SERVICES

Join your brothers and sisters in Christ for a weekly Lenten meditation offered by five of our churches. You will be strengthened by hearing the voices of other members of our faith on Wednesdays at noon. We will not be serving lunch this year.

- March 9 - First UMC
- March 16 - Lewistown Presbyterian
- March 23 - St Mark's
- March 30 - Sacred Heart
- April 6 - St. John's Lutheran

April 15 Good Friday - Our walk will begin following the 'Stations of the Cross,' which commences at 11 AM at Sacred Heart.

RECONCILIATION OF A PENITENT



I invite you to meet with me privately anytime during Lent to participate in an ancient spiritual practice: private confession and absolution. We need both collective confession (what we say in the Eucharist) and private confession.

This is a holy, private conversation about your spiritual life, and we should find thirty minutes to talk and pray together in my office or the chapel (we will be socially distanced and masked). Please see me about a time convenient for you.

MOTHER HUBBARD’S CUPBOARD AND BREAKING BREAD TOGETHER



We are serving an increasing number of people, as you can tell by the statistics for the past month:

- Total individuals-383
- Total families- 183
- New individuals- 40
- New families- 12

In February Mother Hubbard’s Cupboard served about 80 people. On February 22 the people of St. Mark’s served about 30 people a tasty hoagie, cookie, and chips from OIP.

Time and time again, we hear amazement about the magnitude of our ministry. None of it would be possible without the generosity of the people that have designated MHC as their opportunity to make a difference in our community.

MARCH BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

2- DOROTHY HANNON 2- DEB VAUGHN 3- BOB BRIAR 7- DR. KIM KOLONICH 11- SANDY JENKINSON 13- NANCY LAUB	<p>O GOD, OUR TIMES ARE IN YOUR HAND: LOOK WITH FAVOR, WE PRAY, ON <i>N.</i> AS (<i>S</i>)<i>HE</i> BEGINS ANOTHER YEAR. GRANT THAT (<i>S</i>)<i>HE</i> MAY GROW IN WISDOM AND GRACE, AND STRENGTHEN OUR TRUST IN YOUR GOODNESS; THROUGH JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD. <i>AMEN.</i></p>
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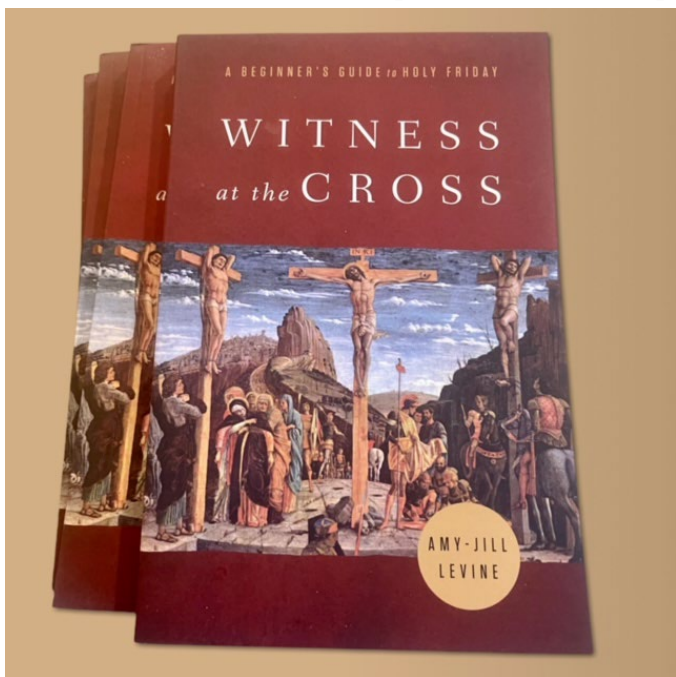
PRAYER LIST

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

ADULT FORUM RETURNS IN TWO FORMS

You can participate by Zoom or on Sundays at 9AM. **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.