

St. Mark's Messenger

August 2022

FATHER JOHN'S REFLECTIONS



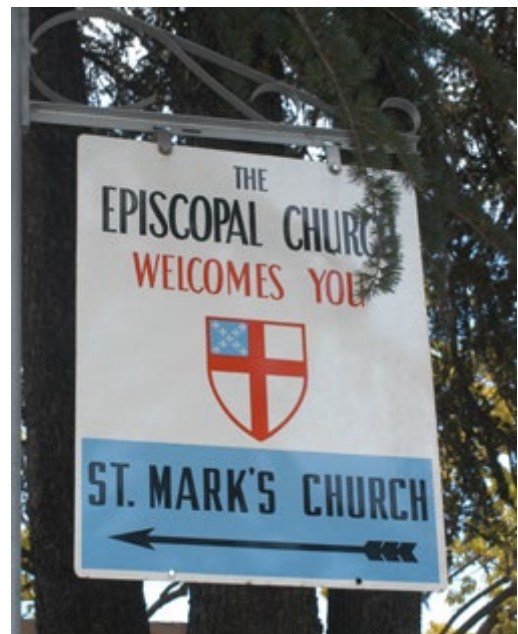
The success of the Webb telescope has produced gorgeous images of our universe.

My little brain can't grasp that these images headed our way 13 billion years ago, travelling at

the speed of light (186,000 miles per second) to reach our planet.

Earth is part of a huge galaxy called the Milky Way, which contains several billion stars and a similar number of planets. (There are more than two trillion galaxies in the whole Universe!) If you're beginning to feel awe and reverence, your heart is moving in the right way. Look around us with your eyes or your telescopes, and you will see the handiwork of God. Look with your heart, and you give thanks for being right where we are.

In our Eucharistic prayer this month, I summarize the mystery and majesty of creation in language that reminds me of the Webb's new images: God's "Spirit moved over the deep and brought all things into being: sun, moon, and



stars; earth, winds, and waters; and every living thing.” Humans are stewards of the earth, not owners. We care for the environment not just to feel good about ourselves but to be sure that future generations will inherit a glorious creation, not a steaming mess or an arid desert. We are all passengers on the same ship, or to use another metaphor, we all live on “this fragile earth, our island home.”

Bishop Audrey Scanlan is now at Canterbury Cathedral to meet with more than 600 other bishops from the Anglican communion. They will spend 10 days prayerfully considering a handful of “calls” to all of our churches

(<https://www.lambethconference.org/programme/preparing-for-the-lambeth-conference-a-lambeth-calls-study-document/>). What is the mind of the Church on such topics as the stewardship of creation? I encourage you to read the documents that our bishop will be discussing on our behalf.

What is the Lambeth Conference?



- An international meeting of Anglican bishops from 165 countries
- Discusses church and world affairs and the global mission of the Anglican Communion for the decade ahead
- Meets around every 10 years
- Convened by the Archbishop of Canterbury
- Aims to resource, inspire, and encourage Bishops in their local ministries

Another important topic is evangelism, and you will hear much more about our new efforts to share the good news that Jesus Christ is alive and well in our community. Alas, lots of people don't know it! Wherever I go in Lewistown, I bump into people who are spiritually hungry. How can I learn to "tell my story" of how I felt God's presence?

In preparation for the Diocesan conference on evangelism on October 14, I have asked members of St. Mark's (Phyllis Sikorsky, Blair Hannon, and Deb Vaughn) to tell about an experience where they felt close to God. You can hear their stories at <https://vimeo.com/showcase/9691315>

We're starting with three stories, but what happens when we have 25?

John+

PAYING OUR FAIR SHARE (PLEDGING): HOW ARE WE DOING?



Very well, thank you! About 25 households pledge to St. Mark's, and thanks to their faithfulness, we have received 72% of our pledge income in the first six months of the year. Several people have already paid their full pledge - and more.

We have also made significant gifts to help the citizens of Ukraine, our homeless shelter, and local students, who are preparing for school in August. Through our Outreach ministries, we help people facing crises with utilities or transportation.

SAFETY ISSUES: A FACT OF LIFE

God forbid that we would ever have an emergency, but St. Mark's has a Safety Plan that prepares us for such situations. Some Sunday in August we will practice for the

second time how we would exit quickly. We will provide a full explanation before we do it. Every year schools practice this exercise; we should do so as well.

As you know, we have installed security cameras, and we lock the church doors when our worship starts.



Our Safety Committee is also working on plans to make Mother Hubbard's Cupboard safe(r) for our volunteers and our guests. We will announce the details soon.

MEN'S BREAKFAST

We will dine at Michele's in Reedsville at 8AM on Saturday, August 6.

BLESSING FOR TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

Classes resume in Mifflin County on August 30. Let us pray for our teachers, students, and staff that they have a safe, joyful, and productive year. Let us also thank the students, teachers, and parents for bravely continuing classes throughout the COVID pandemic. Robin Wilson has faithfully taught Lewistown children for thirty years!

Let us pray. O Eternal God, bless all schools, colleges, universities and especially those in Mifflin County, so that they may be lively centers for sound learning, new discovery, and the pursuit of wisdom; and grant that those who teach and those who learn may find you to be the source of all truth; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

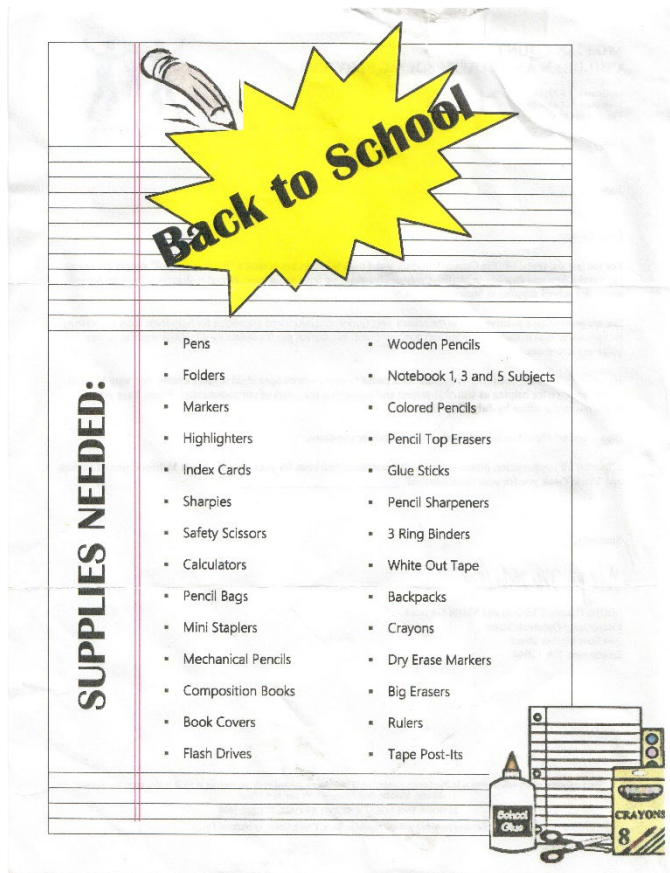
Amen.

We also pray for the safety of our students and teachers: Dear Lord, we trust in You to keep our children safe throughout this school year. We pray that they will enjoy and excel in their education. We declare Your divine covering over every child, from the crown of their heads to the soles of their feet. In this school year, we release them to You and ask that You watch over them in Jesus Name, **Amen.**

AUGUST BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

<p>7: JEFF WILSON 7: ALEXIS KUHN 8: BENJAMIN HARWOOD 10: DIANE CARTER 15: MARK REMY 21: JACKIE WALK</p>	<p>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></p>
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MOTHER HUBBARD’S CUPBOARD AND BREAKING BREAD TOGETHER / HELPING OUR STUDENTS



MHC helped feed almost 400 people in July, and on July 26, we fed forty-two of our neighbors a delicious “picnic” meal of fried chicken and macaroni. The weather was beautiful, and it was so good to see our regulars and to meet a few new people.

You should also know that we are helping students have a successful year through a backpacks ministry. St. Mark’s has donated \$1,000 to provide school supplies to needy kids. Our gift will purchase backpacks and all of the things listed in the picture. Can you guess how much a backpack with these items would cost a needy parent or grandparent?

You should also know that our Cub Scout pack continues to grow. They recently held an awards ceremony in our parish house on a Sunday afternoon. St. Mark's has worked hard to make them feel welcome.

Not far from St. Mark's is the Shelter. How heavily is it being used right now? We are currently housing 18 people (11 men and 7 women). This does not include 3 fire victims (a father and two young daughters, age 5 and 7).

Jesus was very specific: If you love me, feed my sheep.

PRAYER LIST

Please pray for our sick and shut-ins: Ginny Banks, Shirley Brown, Ralph Bitner, Bob Briar, Richard Flood, Joyce Hart, Steve Myers, Willa Silverman, Patty Wagner, Henry Walk, Jackie Walk, Evelyn Wilson, and Bill Wilson.

Ginny Banks is recovering from surgery and would appreciate cards. You can mail them to her in care of Encompass Health, 550 West College Avenue, Pleasant Gap, PA 16823

Pray also for those serving in the military as well as President Joe Biden and Governor Tom Wolf.

Pray for all members of Congress and our legislature to be guided by respect for the rights of every human being, the rule of law, and respect for the common good.

Pray for the people of Ukraine in their fight for freedom.

PROPERTY UPDATE



It is time for St. Francis to be restored to his original appearance. After decades of being outside, the statue is showing some wear and tear. Karl Leitzel, the artist who designed our goose, will restore the statue to its original condition.

We have also ordered a new sign: “The Episcopal Church Welcomes You” is a national brand found in every town with an Episcopal church. It will give our hours of worship on Wednesdays and Sundays and also provide the hours for Mother Hubbard’s Cupboard.