

St. Mark's Messenger

September 2022

FATHER JOHN'S REFLECTIONS

Ecclesiastes is one of my favorite books of the Old Testament. Compiled about five hundred years before the birth of Jesus, its goal was to provide practical advice for living wisely and well in tumultuous times and to make sense out of life when bad things happen. It also offered consolation.



Ecclesiastes reminds us, for instance, that despite the calamities of today, the sun also rises ... and life goes on.

It tells us, too, that there is a season for all things: “For everything there is a season and a time for every matter under heaven: a time to be born and a time to die; a time to plant and a time to pluck up what is planted.” September is the time for county fairs to showcase the bounty of crops and animals, of jams and produce. For 148 years people have gathered at the Grange Fair in Centre Hall to camp in tents for a week regardless of heat or rain.

September is also the time for schools, colleges, and universities to return to classes. Football fans will be delighted to have games to watch, even if it means a Penn State-Purdue game on Thursday night (!!). When the Big 10 expands to 16 teams or more, we can expect games on strange nights and odd times to accommodate West Coast teams.

At St. Mark's we will have our annual picnic on September 18 and will greet the arrival of autumn four days later. While we'll have 12 hours of day light on September 22, the days will grow shorter until winter arrives three months later. We all know the pattern: seasons help us mark time. There is a season and time for all things.

For St. Mark's, September begins our season of evangelism. I would like as many people as possible to participate in a diocesan evangelism event on October 14. The Diocese has invited Jerusalem Greer, who heads the evangelism programs of the national church, to inspire us and to build our skills and confidence. We will be gathered in Manheim, which is about 70 miles from Lewistown, for an afternoon and evening of presentations and workshops. There is even a free supper! What's not to like?



Why should you attend? Consider her session on "Community, Loneliness, and Homecoming" and ask how it applies to life in Mifflin County. Our church is surrounded by senior-housing complexes, for instance, and for more than two years, we were all socially isolated. According to a 2021 study by Cigna, loneliness and lack of meaningful connection are two of the fastest-growing health concerns in our country. This concern stretches across all communities.

For many people today, finding meaningful relational connections amid a busy modern life can be overwhelming. When you compound that reality with the effects of a multi-year global pandemic, churches, communities, and families will likely be experiencing what we call "a crisis of loneliness." This crisis knows no age barrier – it is as true for families and young adults as for our oldest parishioners.

So what can we – or should – we, as the Body of Christ, do about this? Join Jerusalem Greer, staff officer for evangelism, to explore the “59 One Anothers” of the New Testament and identify how they can help us eradicate aloneness and create authentic communities centered on Jesus and his way of love.

Evangelism is a “hot” issue for every diocese in the Anglican communion and every church in Lewistown, too. At the Lambeth Conference last month, the Archbishop of York, Stephen Cottrell, preached on the urgency of this opportunity. I've included a link here to the Evangelism Plenary from Lambeth because the sermon is great: <https://tinyurl.com/bdezbdkj>

When St. Mark's was founded 199 years ago, our first priests were called “missionary priests.” Their vocation was to preach the good news. I am convinced that in 2022, we should become a missionary parish.

Please let me know if you are able to attend this event.

Father John+

COLLECT FOR LABOR DAY

Almighty God, you have so linked our lives one with another that all we do affects, for good or ill, all other lives: So guide us in the work we do, that we may do it not self alone, but for the common good; and, as we seek a proper return for our own labor, make us mindful of the rightful aspirations of other workers, and arouse our concern for those who are out of work; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen – Collect for Labor Day, the Book of Common Prayer, p. 261

THREE COMING ATTRACTIONS

The Men's breakfast will be at Michele's in Reedsville on Saturday, September 3, at 8AM.

On September 4, our guest preacher will be the Rev. Ted Christopher, who is the chaplain for Episcopal students at Penn State.



On September 18, we will hold our church picnic after our Sunday service. Depending on the weather, we'll dine outside or in the parish house.



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

We continue to see increased demand for help from MHC. Our July numbers exceed 500 for the first time in many months.

Total individuals 509

Total families 219

New individuals 32

New families 15

To assist needy families with school-age children, St. Mark's donated \$1,000 to a backpack fund managed by Children and Youth Services.

On August 23, we provided a tasty

meal from OIP to about 40 people. Whenever we have leftover sandwiches, we distribute them through MHC.

PARISH UPDATES

To improve the safety for Mother Hubbard's Cupboard, we will keep the Water Street entrance locked. We will use a video doorbell so that we can admit persons known to us. In addition, we will soon have new signage that will clearly communicate when MHC is open.

We continue to have problems with water in the basement after heavy downpours and are investigating new solutions, including a more powerful sump pump.

Because St. Mark's lacks a janitor's closet, our janitor has a very difficult time doing his job. We are exploring ways to create such a closet. Look for recommendations next month.

The two statues of St. Francis are being repainted and will return to us in early September.

PRAYER LIST



We ask God's tender mercies and healing presence for 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.

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 and respect for the common good. Pray for the people of Ukraine in their fight for freedom.

Pray for the safety of our teachers and students in our schools this year.

SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

4—Michele Harden Lasher, 6—Michelle Bitner, 14—Carol Henry, 15—Diann Pinkerton, 17—Evelyn Wilson, 18—Theodore Wilson

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.

IN CASE OF AN EMERGENCY AT CHURCH



To improve the safety during our services, we have made several changes. First, we have installed security cameras that monitor all of the entrances to the church. The ushers can see everyone who is entering our buildings during worship. Second, we lock the doors after the service has begun. Both of these changes were recommended by security experts.

And we have had one “practice evacuation,” so it’s time for another one. Details will be announced in church.

As Robin Wilson could tell us, the schools practice several times a year the “active shooter” drill. Teachers and students are trained in how they should respond, and our Safety Committee and Bishop recommend that we do the same thing.

In September I will have information in the bulletin about the procedures, and we will discuss it before the offertory so that we can answer all your questions. And one Sunday in September, we will practice it so that all of us know what we should do.

LIVING WITH DEMENTIA: 4-PART EDUCATIONAL SERIES WITH TOOLS & RESOURCES FOR CARE PARTNERS

Join us for a dynamic, engaging, in-person series where you'll find realistic tips, reliable community resources, and practical tools to use daily in your caregiving journey. Offered in three convenient Central PA locations this fall at no cost to attendees.

WHO SHOULD ATTEND?

Primary caregivers and anyone interested in learning more or providing support to someone impacted by Alzheimer's disease or other dementias are encouraged to attend any or all events in the series.

Session 1: Understanding Dementia-Related Brain Changes
Aug. 30, Hershey; Aug. 31, Mifflintown and Bellefonte

Session 2: Understanding Behaviors as a Form of Communication
Sept. 20, Hershey; Sept. 21, Mifflintown and Bellefonte

Session 3: Resources for Dementia Caregivers
Oct. 25, Hershey; Oct. 26, Mifflintown and Bellefonte

Session 4: Planning for the Future with Dementia
Nov. 15, Hershey; Nov. 16, Mifflintown and Bellefonte

Register TODAY! Call 814-863-1048 or register online:
agefriendlycare.psu.edu/dementia

BISHOP SCANLAN'S REFLECTIONS ON THE LAMBETH CONFERENCE



Bishop Audrey recently returned from two weeks in Canterbury, England where she was one of 640 bishops of the Anglican Communion attending the once-per-decade Lambeth Conference. In her pastoral letter and blog posts found at the links below, you can read about the many vital topics addressed at the conference, how our diocese will follow up on some of these here in Central Pennsylvania, and Bishop Scanlan's personal experiences, from living in a college dormitory to attending a garden party hosted by the Archbishop of Canterbury at Lambeth

Palace, the home of Archbishops of Canterbury since the year 1200.

<https://diocesepa.org/pastoral-letter-from-bishop-scanlan-lambeth-conference-2022/>

In this picture Audrey is being greeted by Justin Welby, the Archbishop of Canterbury and the head of the Anglican Communion, and his wife, Caroline Eaton.

