

St. Mark's Messenger

March 2023

FATHER JOHN'S REFLECTIONS



full members of the church.

Baptism and resurrection? Both are part of God's plan, and Lent invites us to reflect on death and resurrection. Just as the season moves 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?



Lots of people talk about "giving up something" for Lent. I suggest that you focus on developing and practicing empathy. Right now in Turkey and Syria, more than a million people have no place to live. Empathy asks you this question: how can I help them?

If you would like a one-word summary of Matthew 25, it's empathy. (Please read the verses again: Matthew 25:31-46).

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, Stations of the Cross on Fridays at 12:15, and our Adult Forum on Sundays at 9AM.

Even more exciting is a program via Zoom that will strengthen your spiritual muscles (March 18, 6:30-8:30 pm, and Saturday, March 19, 9:30 am-noon).

Session 1 - Leading Evangelism: Finding Your Good News Niche

This workshop helps you discover the intersection of your gifts with the needs, longings, and gifts of your community. How can you find and share the Good News where you are right now?

Session 2 - Leading Evangelism: Designing your Good News Ministry

This session helps you design an event or even a ministry based on your insights from the first session. You may find ways to involve your parish (or diocese or community) in the work of evangelism. You may find ways for seekers to ask questions and explore faith, for example, or create new opportunities to share the Good News through both word and example.

The leader of the workshops is Jerusalem Greer. She is the manager for evangelism and discipleship for The Episcopal Church in the Office of Presiding Bishop Michael B. Curry. She serves on the Council of Advice for Episcopal Relief & Development and on the board of Edible Theology, an educational ministry connecting the Communion table to tables we eat at every day.



Please let Father John know if you want to participate. The church will pay the cost of your registration (\$30).

Have a blessed Lent!

Father John✠

UNIFICATION COMMITTEE UPDATE

The Unification Committee had its first meeting in Lancaster (January 26-28), and one of my tasks is to gather and evaluate information about the advantages and disadvantages of reunifying the Diocese of Central PA and the Diocese of Bethlehem. In the course of my research about the decision to divide the diocese in 1904, I've learned much about the early history of St. Mark's. For example, I know the name of the architect for our current church, Henry Congdon (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry_Martyn_Congdon). What was going on at St. Mark's about that time? Our new church held its first service on October 10, 1905.

Well, we were not using the 1928 Prayer Book YET - we had the 1892 Book of Common Prayer and a slender book of hymns. (I have a copy if you want to see these materials.) The preparation for Lent was quite rigorous. You would have heard the 10 Commandments every Sunday, for instance; today, we'll hear them on just one Sunday. We did not yet have our magnificent organ or our gorgeous altar with its five statues (Christ and the four evangelists). For the reading of Scripture, they used only the King James translation (1611).

And yet the church and Sunday school were full! We would find their liturgy and traditions very familiar because they provided the foundation for what we are doing in 2023. They did not have the “Great Vigil” of Easter in their prayer book, but I bet that they would love our service!

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. And we’ll have a light meal after the service – what’s not to like? **The first one is at St. Mark’s on Wednesday, March 1, at noon.**

RECONCILIATION OF A PENITENT



a guilt trip.

I invite you to meet with me privately any time during Lent to participate in an ancient spiritual practice: private confession and absolution. We need both collective confession (what we say in Morning Prayer as well as at the Eucharist) and private confession. The purpose is reconciliation, not

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.

MOTHER HUBBARD’S CUPBOARD AND BREAKING BREAD TOGETHER

January numbers

Total individuals- 535

Total families- 230

New individuals- 32

New families- 14

New things at MHC include a garage/storage area makeover. Thanks to everyone involved. It is absolutely wonderful. So much extra shelving. It was beautifully painted and feels so clean. We also want to thank Hal Jenkinson for setting up our new printer. We had lots of help as well when we picked up the paper goods from FirstQuality on the coldest day of the year.

We received our first delivery from the Central PA Food Bank. We purchased 1,500 pounds of food for about \$1,300 – about a dollar a pound. The quality is excellent.

Thanks to Deb Vaughn, our ordering process went smoothly. We received quite a few free items, including 20 dozen eggs.

A GOAL for 2023 is to provide lunches for needy school kids in Lewistown throughout the summer. More on this soon.

Beginning in February, the meals for Breaking Bread Together will be held in the parish house for the first time since late 2020. So many people come to the meals not just for food but for fellowship.

MARCH BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

2- DOROTHY HANNON 2- DEB VAUGHN 3- BOB BRIAR 7- KIM KOLONICH 11- SANDY JENKINSON 13- NANCY LAUB	O GOD, OUR TIMES ARE IN YOUR HAND: LOOK WITH FAVOR, WE PRAY, ON <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>
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PRAYER LIST

We pray for those celebrating birthdays and anniversaries this month; and we pray especially for Ralph Bitner, Bob Briar, Richard Flood, Carole Mease, Steve Myers, Willa Silverman, Lynn Stricker, Patty Wagner, Evelyn Wilson, and Bill Wilson.