

St. Mark's Messenger

April 2023

FATHER JOHN'S REFLECTIONS



What a roller coaster ride from Ash Wednesday to Easter. Holy Week intensifies the journey as we go from the jubilation of Palm Sunday to the despair of Good Friday -- and finally to the Easter Vigil. Our Lenten journey takes us from ashes to glory, from the bleakness of Good Friday to the jubilation of Easter.

Let's face it: "no cross, no crown" -- in other words, we can't know the true joy of Easter without witnessing the agony of the cross, which we experience most fully during the Three Great Days (Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday).

The season has changed from winter to spring. We are moving from death to life.

At Easter we will proclaim in one voice throughout the world: The Lord is risen -- the Lord is risen indeed. Alleluia, alleluia!

But we can't get to Easter without going through Good Friday. We need to feel Christ's agony and the deep distress of his family and followers. Think of those who were at the foot of the cross and those who carried his body to the tomb.

We will get to Easter, but let us not rush it. You will know when it's time.

Have a blessed Eastertide!



Father John✠

HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE (APRIL 2-9): THE THREE GREAT DAYS

Between Palm Sunday and Easter, we have Three Great Days. The three liturgies occur only once a year. They unfold over three days, making one extended Eucharist. What starts on Thursday is not complete until Saturday night.



Holy Week at St. Mark's

Maundy Thursday: 6PM

Good Friday: 3PM

Easter Vigil: 6PM

Easter: 10AM

THE
Episcopal
CHURCH



welcomes you

St. Mark's Episcopal Church
21 South Main Street • Lewistown, PA

On Maundy Thursday, we will strip the altar and empty the tabernacle of reserved bread and wine. It will be empty until Easter with no covering on the altar. We depart from the service in silence – I will not dismiss you.

On Good Friday I will wear a black stole for the only time each year. The bread and wine will be distributed from the reserved sacrament. The long reading of the Passion gospel will have multiple readers as we have had the last three Sundays. We will participate in the community Stations of the Cross at 11AM (Sacred Heart) and then carry the cross throughout the downtown.

At the Great Vigil on Saturday evening, we will light our new Paschal Candle, which will burn until Pentecost. It is lit only for baptisms and funerals throughout the year. The four lengthy readings from the Old and New Testament provide context for the death and resurrection of Our Lord – we hear the story of salvation. We will return the “missing” elements from our Lenten liturgies – the Gloria, for instance, and the “alleluias.”

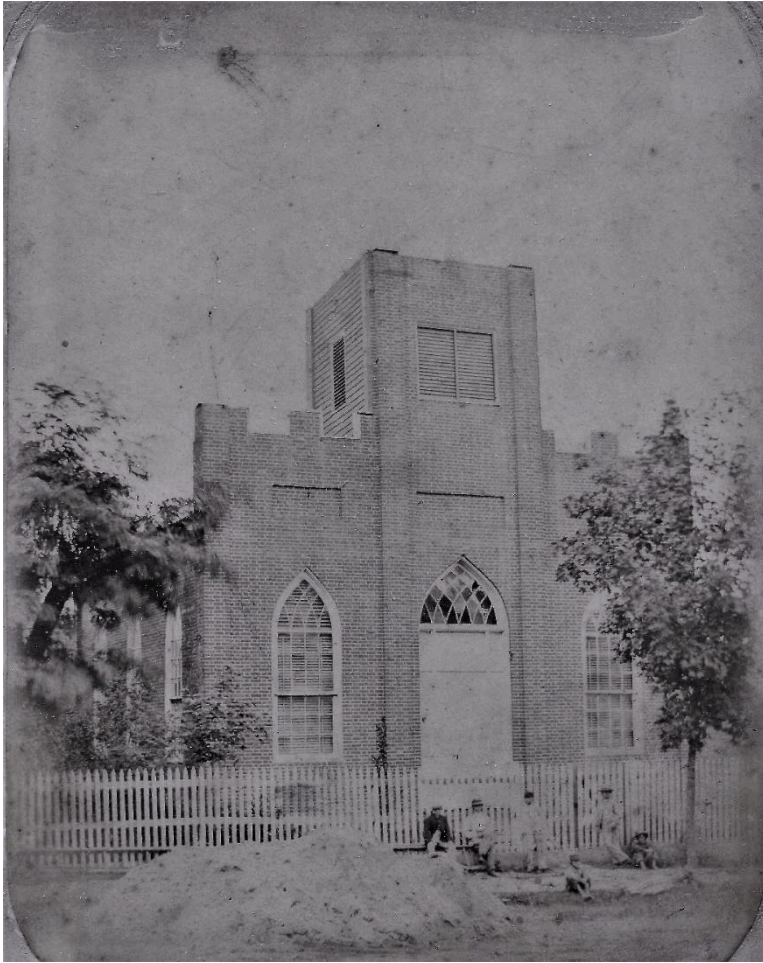
Flowers return to the altar – Easter lilies and poinsettias, and you will smell incense.

For Episcopalians, these three services are holy days of obligation ~ please worship at the church if you are able.

EASTER FLOWERS

Please let the Church Office know before April 2 if you wish to purchase Easter flowers.

HISTORICAL NOTE: WHAT WAS ST. MARK'S LIKE IN 1825?



The first person baptized at St. Mark's in October 1824 was a woman born in 1790. On March 12, 2023, I baptized James Hamilton Darling. Just imagine these lives connected by one sacrament administered in the same church.

What was the parish like 200 years ago? The following report was submitted to Bishop White in 1825-26 by the Rev. Robert Piggott, the third priest at St. Mark's. What do you find most surprising besides the British spelling?

“The present Rector having but recently accepted this charge, has not as yet obtained a complete list of the members belonging to the congregation. The number ascertained previous to his departure for this Convention, was 26 families, of whom 61 were adults and 29 children -- total

90 souls and upward.

When we consider how small the number of professing Episcopalians was at the time of Mr. Nash's arrival in March, 1823, being but four individuals; and contrast it with the number now belonging to our communion, we may justly exclaim in the language of inspiration, ‘what hath God wrought!’

The services of the church are regularly attended by large and remarkably attentive congregations. The number of communicants has not been ascertained: baptisms during the last year, previous to my settlement, 4 adults, 9 children- total 13.

There is a flourishing Sunday school attached to the church, under the direction of the Rector, in which from 40 upwards of 60 scholars attend, who are instructed by five teachers. **It now consists of 50 scholars, 15 of whom are coloured children.**”

The very grainy picture above was taken in 1864 and shows the appearance of the first church. Some of its bricks were used in the construction of our current church, which was completed in 1894. The font and the small altar we now use for communion were also part of the first church. If you look at our current altar on Maundy Thursday or Good Friday you can see a marble slab that was part of the first altar (which they called the communion table).



MOTHER HUBBARD'S CUPBOARD AND BREAKING BREAD TOGETHER

Our numbers continue to rise steadily. The elimination of extra money for food in the SNAP program puts increased pressure on people living at or near the poverty line.

February numbers

Total individuals- 560

Total families- 231

New individuals- 24

New families- 12

New things at MHC include an additional refrigerator, which will help us as we distribute more and more fresh food.

A GOAL for 2023 is to provide lunches for needy school kids in Lewistown

throughout the summer.

On March 28 our Breaking Bread Together ministry served a delicious meal of spaghetti and meatballs. Sharon's sauce was a big hit, and so was Jeff's homemade bread. Our guests enjoyed both the fellowship and the meal.

TWO MUSICAL REASONS TO LOVE ST. MARK'S: JOANNE AND KALEY

Do you need a reminder? These videos were produced by John Xanthopolous and are available to the whole world via the Web: <https://tinyurl.com/ynxhrw24> . They are only two minutes long but illustrate in two minutes the beauty of worship. In this video, Kaley's hymn is "Amazing Grace": <https://tinyurl.com/yc44cxcs>

You can also see Kaley perform in Penn State's opera, "The Dialogue of the Carmelites" (<https://www.youtube.com/live/jJmn5CoK3Ys?feature=share>).



FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR ST. MARK'S

Just like you, we pay for insurance (\$12,000), utilities (\$20,000), and routine repairs on three buildings that are more than 100 years old (\$15,000). Soon we will need to mow the 12-acre cemetery lawn - the cost will be about \$16,000

annually.

We know that we need a handicapped-accessible bathroom as well as a janitor's closet. We pay our sexton and housekeeper to keep our three buildings in good order. Especially at Easter, it is important to remember the church's needs. Please MAIL or BRING your checks to the church.

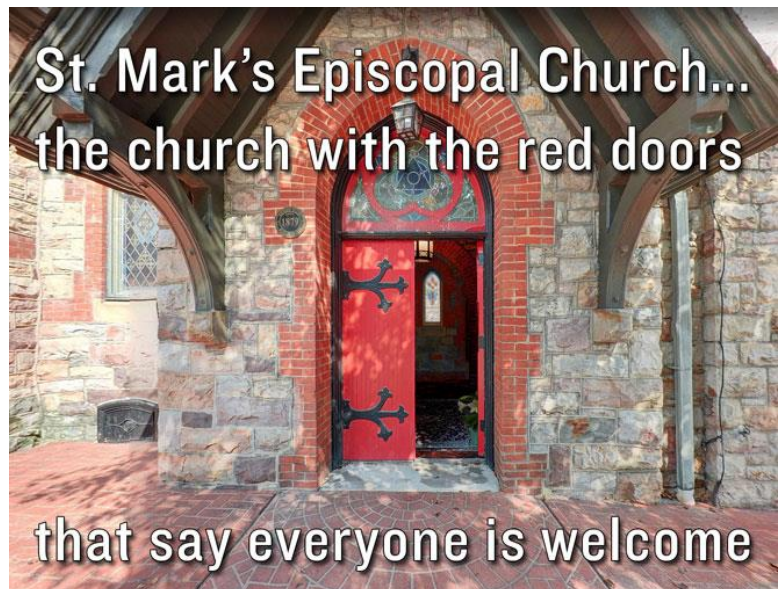
If you are behind on our pledge, please try to catch up. If you are able to contribute more than your pledge, we will be grateful.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE AN ACOLYTE, CHALICER, OR READER?

Acolyte help make the liturgy work beautifully. There are many different roles: lighting the candles, processing with the cross, communing people with the chalice, ringing the sanctus bells, and assisting with incense. When you serve in this role at the altar, you experience the service in a new, rich way. Don't worry that "I don't know what to do."

We will have a training program, and it will be fun to learn the "ins and outs" of worship. We need several people so that we have a regular rotation as we do for the readers and ushers.

Readers help bring our Scriptures to life. We hear the word of God in the voices of our neighbors. Would you like to read lessons during our service?



Please let Father John know if you are interested.

WE PRAY FOR

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

APRIL BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

<p>3-Elizabeth Harwood and Christina Dixon, 6-Robin Wilson, 7-John Stewart, 7- Kaylee Blewett, 11-Kelly Crawford, 14- Max Wilson, 19-Elizabeth Cvejkus, 22- Patricia Wilt, 25-St. Mark, 26-Zanica Kaler</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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TRIP TO THE HOLY LAND IN MARCH 2024

Pastor Stephanie Rupert serves Grace United Methodist church in Lewistown and will be leading a trip to the Holy Land next March. If you are interested in making the trip or learning more about it, please contact her (srupert@susumc.org or 717-248-5311).



SOUP SALE

The ECW's soup sales were a big hit, and we're grateful to all who supported them by working in the kitchen and by buying them. Truly, this is a labor of love that also raises funds for our church (more than \$600 so far this year).

TRANSITION FOR SUSAN FERGUSON

Susan became our office manager and bookkeeper in 1988 and worked full-time in this role for eight years and part-time for several more years. In 2015 she returned as our part-time bookkeeper and since 2020 took on the role of office manager after Joyce Hart retired. She has decided to relinquish her responsibilities at St. Mark's after Easter. We are grateful for all that Susan has done for St. Mark's for almost 35 years.