

# ST. MARK'S MESSENGER

## OCTOBER 2023

### FATHER JOHN'S REFLECTIONS



As I look back at the past month, the lyrics of a popular song from the 60's come to mind: "Try to remember the kind of September, / When life was slow and oh so mellow. / Try to remember the kind of September, / When grass was green and grain was yellow." The song emphasizes the importance of remembering and celebrating special moments. For me, September will always be the month that my beloved sister Ann died - but also the month when Kathryn and I took our first vacation in France since 2017. How to balance the sad and the joyful?

At St. Mark's I'll always remember the parish picnic that the McKees hosted so graciously. It was so much fun to have a picnic with friends from church. You can be sure that when Jesus returns, he will probably show up at a church picnic like ours: a

small group of people genuinely enjoying each other's company and GREAT FOOD on a beautiful fall afternoon.

October will be filled with highlights, including the blessing of our beloved pets on October 8. On October 11 St. Mark's will host the leadership council of the Chamber of Commerce, and I will present a history of the church. On October 20-21 Blair and I will represent St. Mark's at the Diocesan convention in State College and will hear about a possible reunification with the Diocese of Bethlehem. Held at the Penn Stater, the convention will be full of Episcopalians who love to sing our favorite hymns. Yes, you can be sure that Penn State does not have a home game that weekend! You can participate in the Saturday session at NO cost, though you do have to register. Who wants to join us?

Father John+

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### IS THE PANDEMIC OVER?

Yes, the pandemic is over, but COVID is still with us. My wife and granddaughter had a

mild case in late September, and so did Deb Vaughn. Geisinger and Mt. Nittany now require all of their staff to mask. The vestry and I encourage you to take all the precautions that you can, including getting your booster and flu shots. If you feel more comfortable wearing a mask in church, please do so.

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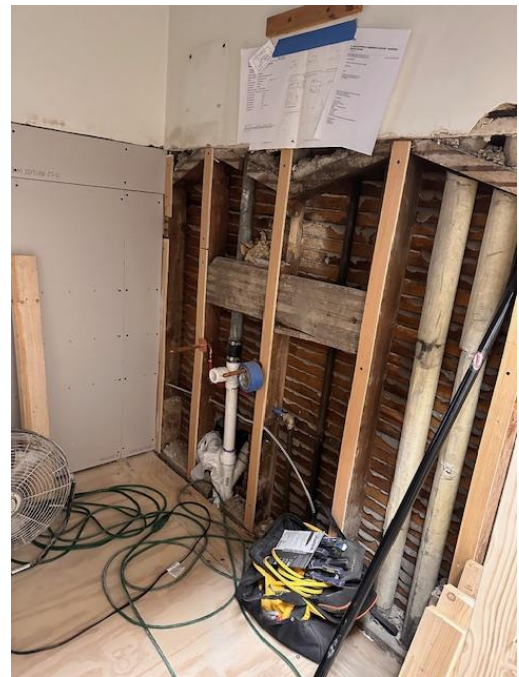
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## PROPERTY UPDATE



We have dramatically improved the appearance and efficiency of Mother Hubbard's Cupboard by renovating its space. Fresh paint, new shelves, and a new counter and floor make the area much more inviting and functional.

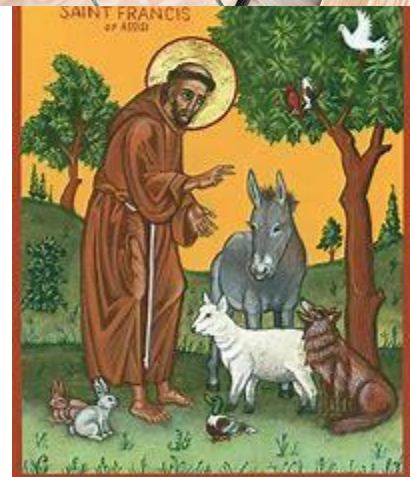
Our new, ADA-accessible bathroom will soon be complete. It will have many features that make it attractive and usable for people with different needs, including a parent who needs to change a child's diaper. If someone is in a wheelchair, the bathroom will be fully accessible. The new wall and floor covering will also make the space easier to clean.



## THE BLESSING OF OUR PETS

We will mark the feast of St. Francis of Assisi with a service of blessing and thanksgiving for pets following our service on October 8.

Bring your pets to our St. Francis Memorial Garden at noon. If you prefer for me to visit with you and your pet at home, please let me know. If the weather is bad, we'll hold our brief service in the parish house.



## MOTHER HUBBARD'S CUPBOARD AND BREAKING BREAD TOGETHER

In August we served 566 people, including 212 new individuals and 93 new families. Twenty percent were seniors and thirty percent were children. For Breaking Bread Together Jeff Baumgardner baked many delicious loaves of bread for sandwiches, and we provided home-made chicken corn soup and dessert to go with it.

## TOYS FOR TOTS: CHRISTMAS IS COMING SOON (DECEMBER 9-16)



Here's a shocker: we will distribute toys to needy families in about ten weeks at the Community Recreation Building. Thanks to the generosity of the borough manager, we have the building for a whole week and will not be charged a fee. But for our volunteers, it's a lot of work to retrieve our left-over gifts from the Nittany Mall and to unload the pallets that will be delivered that week.

Please put the dates on your calendar. I suspect even larger number of people will need our assistance this year than in the past, so we will need lots of volunteers to make the event special.

## PRAYER REQUESTS

We pray for those celebrating birthdays and anniversaries this month; and we pray especially for Ralph Bitner, Sharon Copenhaver, Mary Daily, Ron Diven, Tony Hatfield-Nicholson, Doris McKee, Carole Mease, Steve Myers, Willa Silverman, Lynn Stricker, Patty Wagner, Evelyn Wilson, and Bill Wilson.

We pray especially for all people whose lives have been disrupted by extreme weather events as well as the people of Ukraine. 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 state legislature to be guided by respect for the rights of every human being and respect for the common good.

Pray that candidates for public office will be truthful and courageous in defending the principles of justice, our tradition of democratic values, and commitment to free and fair

elections.

## **PLANNED GIVING: STEWARDSHIP FOR THE FUTURE**

When we celebrate All Saints Day on November 6, we are reminded of the continuing presence of the saints in our lives. Look around at the beauty of our church and the richness of our ministries. What we have is a gift from those who came before us and loved this church deeply. Now imagine our church in 2123, a mere century from now. We'll never know the congregation or priest or bishop personally, but they will be part of us if we support them now.

Have you remembered St. Mark's in your will? I have. About 68% of Americans do not have a will, a health-care proxy, or a durable power of attorney. You will do your family a big favor by writing down your intentions.

## **OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES**

2—Connie Knepp, 7—Cynthia McKinley and Emily Zylstra 10—Sharon Copenhaver, 11—Alice Woodring, 18—Catherine Pinkerton, 19—Anniversary of Father John's ordination to the priesthood, 21—Maxwell Remy, 22—Billie Gay Snook, 24—Consecration of St. Mark's church in 1824 27—Dee Calhoun, 31—Bill Wilson

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| St. Mark's Episcopal Church<br>21 South Main Street<br>Lewistown, PA 17044 |
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