

St. Mark's Messenger

December 2023

FATHER JOHN'S REFLECTIONS



And now we are in Advent. Where has the year gone? And how will we deal with our busy lives in December? Life was hardly calm and peaceful when our Lord was born.

As you listen to the lessons in December, keep track of all the people in the stories who also were busy, some waiting in hope and others in dread (Herod comes to mind). Watch how people lived as they were waiting; please note that they were not passive.

Think of the magi, who had been traveling for several months to find the newborn baby. Think of Mary and Joseph, who were awaiting the birth of a child promised by an angel and would make an 80-mile trip by donkey at the end of Mary's pregnancy. (Imagine that!)

Ready, set, go. The ticking clock is the heartbeat of God. Can you hear it? And that is where we come in: preparing *our* hearts for the coming of Christ.

Advent is a time of preparation, not repentance. The most important gift we can give ourselves is to set aside time for prayer.

Slow down.

But when Christmas arrives, celebrate!!! Merry Christmas and peace to you.

Father John+

FESTIVAL OF ICE

This joyful event returns to St. Mark's on Friday, December 1, at 7PM. Come and enjoy the evening with our neighbors in the community.

CHRISTMAS WORSHIP SCHEDULE



Our Christmas Eve service will be on Sunday, December 24, at 7PM. Our Sunday morning service will celebrate Morning Prayer.

THE GREENING OF THE CHURCH

Please help us decorate the church for Christmas after our service on December 17. Many hands will make the job go quickly. We will enjoy a light lunch after our work is done.

Even if you're not able to help physically, your presence at the lunch will be festive.

MOTHER HUBBARD'S CUPBOARD, BREAKING BREAD TOGETHER, AND TOYS FOR TOTS

On November 28, we served a post-Thanksgiving feast of fried chicken, potatoes, salad, and home-made cookies. For Thanksgiving MHC distributed both hams and turkeys. In October we provided food to 689 individuals (243 families; 59 new individuals and 23 new families). Many of the families we help with food also participate in Toys for Tots.

TOYS FOR TOTS: WE NEED YOUR HELP!!!

To bring joy to several hundred families and nearly 500 children when we distribute toys during the week of December 9-16, we will need lots of help. Even Santa has lots of elves. We will be working again this year in the Community Recreation Building (108 Montgomery Avenue), a beautiful facility that is fully accessible.

We need you to help and to bring an able-bodied neighbor or friend. This should be an easy "ask": will you help us brighten the lives of needy children? Please let Father John know if you can help!



ANNUAL MEETING

We will hold our brief annual meeting on January 14 immediately after the service. After reviewing the budget approved by the vestry in December, we will elect our delegate to our Diocesan Convention and two members to vestry. Each of our committees and areas of ministry will have a written report, and Father John will distribute them before the meeting.

The meeting will last no longer than 30 minutes. Following the meeting we will have a light meal in the parish house.

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, Susan Ferguson, Cynthia McKinley, Tony Hatfield-Nicholson, Doris McKee, Carole Mease, Steve Myers, Lynn Stricker, Patty Wagner, Evelyn Wilson, and Bill Wilson.

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

<p>Joe and Phyllis Sikorsky - 1st (44rd anniversary) Ralph Bitner—5th Dr. Ricardo Carter—6th Kathryn Grossman—6th Michael Woodring—11th Jesus of Nazareth—25th Mary Beth Pietropaolo—25th Tony Hatfield-Nicholson—28th</p>	<p>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.</p>
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PLEASE LET THE CHURCH OFFICE KNOW ABOUT YOUR CHRISTMAS LIST

CHRISTMAS FLOWERS



_____ Keep names from previous year.

_____ Add new names/occasions (“in memory of” or “in honor of”) as listed below. (Use back of card, if necessary)

Requested by _____

Amount (for Flower Fund) \$ _____

St. Mark’s Episcopal Church
21 South Main Street
Lewistown, PA 17044