

St. Mark's Messenger

February 2024



Calendars are funny things. For the first time in four years, February will have an extra day. As a bonus, we are combining one of our traditional secular events, Valentine's Day, with one of our most sacred, Ash Wednesday. Yes, I fully intend to surprise my wife with flowers – and then take her to church with me for ashes. Happy Lent!

In the ancient church, Lent was a time of intense preparation for baptism. Confirmation training was for



adults and lasted for months. At the great Easter Vigil, confirmands went down into the waters of baptism in white robes and emerged as members of the Church – new people with a whole new family. Then they would

receive their first Eucharist and a new baptismal name. becoming full members of the church.



In today's church, we confirm people in a different way, but the goal is the same. When Bishop Audrey visits us on the first Sunday in Lent, she will confirm two new members, Susan and Jeff Baumgardner, who have been active members of our parish for almost two years. We will all renew our baptismal promises. Two hundred years ago Bishop William White did two things when he came to St.

Mark's for the first time: he consecrated our first church and confirmed 27 new members.

Then or now, we grow one Christian at a time. Let us give thanks for our new confirmands.

Just as the season is moving from winter to spring, we move from death to life. If we are "Easter people," how should we live now? What needs to change? How can we strengthen our faith? We have forty days to explore our answers.

P.S. Have a happy Valentine's Day, too!

Father John✠

ASH WEDNESDAY AND STATIONS OF THE CROSS

We will hold our service at 5PM on February 14. We will have Stations of the Cross on Fridays at 12:15 during Lent. Our first service will be on February 16.

BISHOP SCANLAN'S VISITATION



We are delighted that our bishop will preach and preside at our service on February 18. We will have time to greet her following the service as we enjoy a meal together.

SPECIAL BLESSINGS

The Episcopal Church celebrates blessings for many of life's passages. Who needs a blessing for something new or important, including pets or a new home? For recovery from an illness? For beginning a job? For retiring? For reaching a significant birthday or

anniversary (one that ends in 0 or 5)? **Let us all congratulate Fred and Cynthia on their 60th anniversary (February 15).**

OUTREACH MINISTRIES IN 2023

In 2023 Mother Hubbard’s Cupboard fed 3,139 families, a total of 8,045 individuals. This is the largest number MHC ever fed. We have also switched to the Central Pa food bank and Aldi’s for our food purchases, saving a great deal of money. MHC received \$55,001.69 in monetary donations as well as many gifts of food, toiletries, and paper products.

In our “Breaking Bread Together” program, we provided a tasty meal to about 500 people. During COVID all of the meals were take-out only, but we are now able to offer the fellowship of a sit-down meal.

We continue to support our Cub Scout Troop #1823 as well as Toys for Tots, which helped more than 280 families and about 610 children.

RECONCILIATION OF A PENITENT



I invite you to meet with me privately anytime during Lent to participate in an ancient spiritual practice: private confession and absolution. We need both collective confession (what we say in the Eucharist) and private confession.

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. Please see me about a time convenient for you. What is this like? See the *Book of Common Prayer* (pp. 449-52).

VESTRY NEWS

Our officers for 2024 will be Tracey McKee (Senior Warden), Hal Jenkinson (Junior Warden), Dan Dillon (Treasurer), and Deb Vaughn (Clerk). We were delighted to

receive a gift of \$40,000 from the estate of Virginia Banks for our endowment fund. The Property Committee is prioritizing possible improvements for 2024: purchasing pew cushions; enhancing the appearance of the floor in the parish house; replacing soffit, gutters, and the aged basement door; and professionally cleaning our stonework.

PRAYER LIST

We pray for those celebrating birthdays and anniversaries this month as well as for Ralph Bitner, Sharon Copenhaver, Mary Daily, Susan Ferguson, Shirley Mancino, Cynthia McKinley, Tony Hatfield-Nicholson, Doris McKee, Carole Mease, Lauren Schwiebert, Lynn Stricker, Patty Wagner, and Evelyn Wilson.

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

BLAIR HANNON (3), WAYNE HANNON- (7), RALPH AITKIN-(11), 41ST ANNIVERSARY OF JON AND LILLIAN MYERS, ANGELA KALER-(12), 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF FRED AND CYNTHIA MCKINLEY (15), JOHN HARWOOD-(16), ROBERT WELHAM-(19), JANE SMITH- (20), 41ST ANNIVERSARY OF JOHN HARWOOD & KATHRYN GROSSMAN- (26)

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