

St. Mark's Messenger

June 2025

FATHER JOHN'S REFLECTIONS

We've made it: summer is truly here. Because of the mild spring, the berries will be early; because of the wet spring, corn will be late. Truly, we will be able to enjoy the fruit of the earth when the farmers' markets begin to share all that God has provided. Even the garden behind the church is beautiful!

On Wednesday mornings, I always stop at an Amish Farmers' Market not far from Belleville. The families have worked so hard to produce an astonishing variety of fruits, vegetables, honey, butter, and baked goods. Surrounded by their kids and not far from their buggies, the women are always friendly and helpful.

But what do we know about their lives outside of the markets? How much do they



know about our world, and what do they think of us, "the English?" **On June 1 at 2PM, please come to St. Mark's to hear Molly Bourg share her extensive knowledge of our Amish neighbors in Kish Valley. Bring a friend or two!**

Outside of our parish, the Diocese of Central Pennsylvania and the Diocese of Bethlehem are working hard to become the Diocese of the Susquehanna on January 1, 2026. I hope that you are watching the weekly videos by Bishops Nichols and Scanlan. They have agreed that Bishop Audrey will serve as bishop of the new diocese until her retirement in 2027; Bishop Kevin will then serve as bishop until his retirement in 2030. Keep us in your prayers.



We will celebrate Pentecost **on June 8**. When the Holy Spirit fell upon the 120 followers of Jesus, they had an intense religious experience, but they didn't have clear marching orders. They had to invent the church; they didn't inherit it. This means that they had to discern how to worship, how to serve their community, and how to pay their bills. And yes, they had to figure out how to keep churches connected: this is why the Episcopal Church today has parishes, dioceses, and provinces as well as deacons, priests, and bishops.

The disciples were sent out from Jerusalem (their comfort zone) to Judea and then to Samaria (their non-comfort zone). What is the Holy Spirit nudging us to reimagine about our parish after Pentecost 2025? How can we move out of our comfort zones to share the Good News?

On a personal note, I begin my ninth year at St. Mark's on Pentecost, 2025, because my first Sunday with you was Pentecost 2017. Is nine years the record? No, your longest-serving

rector was Father William Heakes (1910-24). Father Bill Weitzel (1968-75) and Father Pete Greenfield (1975-83) served seven and eight years respectively. I am so grateful to serve God and the people of St. Mark's. **Father John**✂

PROPERTY UPDATES

We are very much looking forward to the arrival of our pew cushions in June. We are also looking forward to the installation of a new safety railing on the stairs leading from the stage into the parish house. Another small project is installing a more attractive curtain on the stage. We have also installed a new fan above the stove in the kitchen, which we hope will reduce the smoke when we cook Smash burgers for our "Memorial Day" picnic at BBT. Chef Pete will give it a test drive and let us know how it works.

MUSICAL HIGHLIGHTS THIS SUMMER

This summer Joanne Yang will visit her family in Taiwan, so we will have a guest pianist, Carolyn Carr, and we will sing many of your favorite hymns. If you have requests, please let Father John know.

On Sunday, July 13, at 2PM James Eldreth's "swing band" will present a concert of Frank Sinatra favorites.

On Sunday, August 3, at 2PM, Wenli Wang, a doctoral student in piano at Penn State, will provide a concert of classical and popular music. Our piano is being tuned in late May, so be ready to hear it sing.

On Sunday, September 7, two faculty from Penn State will present a concert. I do not yet have their selections, but it will be wonderful to have live music. Please invite a friend!

MOTHER HUBBARD'S CUPBOARD AND BREAKING BREAD TOGETHER

Our numbers have increased sharply since January. We know that economic uncertainty and rising prices on *some* products have increased the stress levels for some people. We are particularly concerned about school kids after classes end because the schools provide both breakfast and lunch. What happens to kids in the summer?

January	February	March	April	May	June
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440	391	484	510		
July	August	September	October	November	December

Things are going well. Merf radio had their Cantucky derby food drive for MHC on May 3rd at Weis Market. They collected a sizable amount of food to help fill our table for a few weeks. We are very fortunate to have such community support.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR ST. MARK'S

You will receive in early July your pledge statement for the first half of the year. If you are not current on your pledge, will you please make every effort to catch up? If you do not think that you will be able to meet your pledge, please see Father John. If you are current, then thank you for your faithfulness. St. Mark's is supported by about 25 households. Every contribution matters. If you are able to give extra, please do so. It makes a big difference.



PRAYER LIST

We pray for Myra Bannon, Judy Clare, Mary Daily, Shirley Mancino, Tony Hatfield-Nicholson, Doris McKee, Carole Mease, Lynn Stricker, Patty Wagner, and Evelyn Wilson.

JUNE BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

10: Joe Sikorsky; 20: 54th Anniversary of Charles and Dawn Phillips; 20: Anniversary of Jeff and Susan Baumgardner 22: John Michael Aitkin; 30: Susan Beers

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