

# St. Mark's Messenger

## November 2025

### ANNUAL GIVING LETTER

From our founding in 1823—when a handful of brave souls made the first pledges to build the original Episcopal church in Mifflin County—St. Mark's has stood as a living witness to God's abundance and the power of generosity. Every brick, every hymn, every meal shared over the centuries has been made possible by people who gave joyfully from the heart.



That same spirit still shines in 2026.

Our church thrives not only on dollars and cents but on the colorful, Spirit-filled tapestry of who we are together—cooking and cleaning, planning and praying, singing and serving. Whether you stir soup in the kitchen, manage numbers for the vestry, serve as a reader or member of the altar guild, or haul boxes for Toys for Tots, you make St. Mark's the kind of church that radiates love and laughter in equal measure.

Kathryn and I double tithe to two congregations—St. Mark's and St. John's, Bellefonte—because we believe deeply in Jesus' call to care for our neighbors and to honor God's mission in our communities. We give not from obligation but from gratitude. The truth is, we can't outgive God.

Now, some FAQs: Is St. Mark's poor? Not at all! Are we challenged? Certainly. We have lost our four largest pledges in the past few years. Our bills have gone up: insurance, heating, office and cleaning supplies, and food—all up about 3%. When I came to St. Mark's in 2017, our insurance premium was \$8,000; this year it is \$16,000. Yet with your help, we can meet

every challenge. With a few more pledges (and a few more generous ones), we'll balance our budget and also support beloved ministries like the Shelter and Episcopal Relief & Development. We will also sustain our outreach programs to this community.

### Ten Reasons to Pledge Generously to St. Mark's in 2026

1. Because God's love is too good to keep to yourself.
2. Because 30% of our members not only worship each week but attend an Adult Forum.
3. Because the Lewistown community depends on St. Mark's to host community events like the Ice Festival—and needs your support to keep our bell ringing on Sundays.
4. Because Mother Hubbard's Cupboard warms hearts (and stomachs).
5. Because music, worship, and community still move souls, one Sunday at a time.
6. Because every pledge says, "Count me in!" for faith, hope, and belonging.
7. Because generations before us built St. Mark's by pledging—even when times were uncertain.
8. Because you believe in a church that **welcomes absolutely everyone**.
9. Because giving transforms not just the church—but also the giver.
10. Because joy shared multiplies—and generosity always brings joy.

Our annual income hovers around \$160,000, and almost all of that goes straight into mission, ministry, and maintaining our sacred space. Twenty-five households currently make pledges—together supplying half our income. If each household upped their pledge just a bit, or if several new families joined the effort, we'd move from "just enough" to "*abundantly overflowing*."

Your pledge ensures that light still pours through our stained glass, bellies are fed, prayers are lifted, and love keeps spilling out our red doors into the world.

Please return your pledge card by **Sunday, November 17th**—and do it with a smile, knowing you're part of a two-century legacy of generosity and grace. Faithfully and gratefully,

Father John+

### SAFE CHURCH TRAINING

Join us on Sunday, November 9 (1-4PM), for training of vestry members, parish leaders, Sunday School teachers, youth leaders, Eucharistic visitors, and all who minister with children, youth, or

vulnerable adults, including Mother Hubbard's Cupboard. Safe Church Training helps us: Recognize and prevent abuse or misconduct Protect children, youth, and the elderly in our ministries Build trust and accountability in our communities Ensure our churches are safe,



welcoming, and responsible places for all. Let's work together to keep our churches places of safety, love, and respect for all God's people.

### FIRST SUNDAY PRESENTATION: CHANGES IN MEDICARE AND SERVICES FOR SENIORS



#### Medicare Help and Hope: *Local Answers for 2026*

Sunday November 2, at 2 pm

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

After the talk there will be refreshments in the Parish House. We will take up a collection to benefit our community food bank.

Questions?  
rector@stmark-lewistown.org  
or 814-571-0687



Puzzled about changes to Medicare and/or your health insurance policy? PA MEDI is your trusted, go-to resource. It's a free program from the Pennsylvania Department of Aging that offers confidential help from trained, certified counselors—never salespeople. They'll sit down with you to explain your options, compare plans, and make sure you're getting the coverage and savings you deserve. During Medicare Open Enrollment, they can help you join, switch, or review plans like Medicare Advantage or prescription drug coverage, and check if you qualify for programs like PACE/PACENET or Extra Help.

Right here in our community, PA MEDI operates through the Mifflin-Juniata Regional Services branch of The Care Network—people who know you, care about you, and want to help you make the most of every day.

Need a ride? CARS offers safe, door-to-door shared rides for just about any destination—doctor visits, grocery stores, community events, or a friend's house. It's a simple way to get where you want to go without the

hassle.

Looking for support or advice? The Mifflin-Juniata Area Agency on Aging is here to help with information and referral services, health and wellness programs, home and community-based care, long-term living options, and protective services. Whatever life stage you're in, our caring staff can connect you with the right resources.

### MOTHER HUBBARD'S CUPBOARD AND "BREAKING BREAD TOGETHER"

In September we helped 536 people. We are now gearing up for Thanksgiving dinner, including turkeys. We also fed nearly 80 guests at Breaking Bread Together, the largest crowd in several years. Very large changes are coming to the food stamp program (SNAP), and many more people will find it difficult to have sufficient food.

## PROPERTY UPDATE

The Property Committee has taken a comprehensive look at all of our property needs and is prioritizing them. St. Mark's has three roofs and two furnaces; we have lots of gutters that need to be replaced, and the exterior hasn't been painted in decades. We can't do everything all at once, but we need to have a plan to preserve the fabulous gift of this church from our ancestors.

## NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES AND PRAYER REQUESTS

6—Beth Birch, 17—Mark Kaler, 27—Tracey McKee, 29—Charles Phillips, 30—Debra Diven

We pray for Myra Bannon, Judy Clare, Larry Lasher, Shirley Mancino, Tony Hatfield-Nicholson, Doris McKee, Deacon Carole Mease, Paula Saylor, Lynn Stricker, Bob Welham, and Evelyn Wilson.

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