

St. Mark's Messenger

February 2026

FATHER JOHN'S REFLECTIONS

What a wonderful year 2025 turned out to be at St. Mark's! Our life together was full of quiet faithfulness, generous creativity, and a deep sense of belonging. Through worship, outreach, and fellowship, we wove another bright thread into the fabric of our common life in Christ.

Our worship life remained strong and steady, centered on the Sunday and Wednesday Eucharists and enlivened by special services throughout the year. Four people were confirmed, two were received, and two were baptized—milestones that filled our hearts with joy. We also celebrated Tracey's licensing as a worship leader, with Jeff and Deb soon to follow!

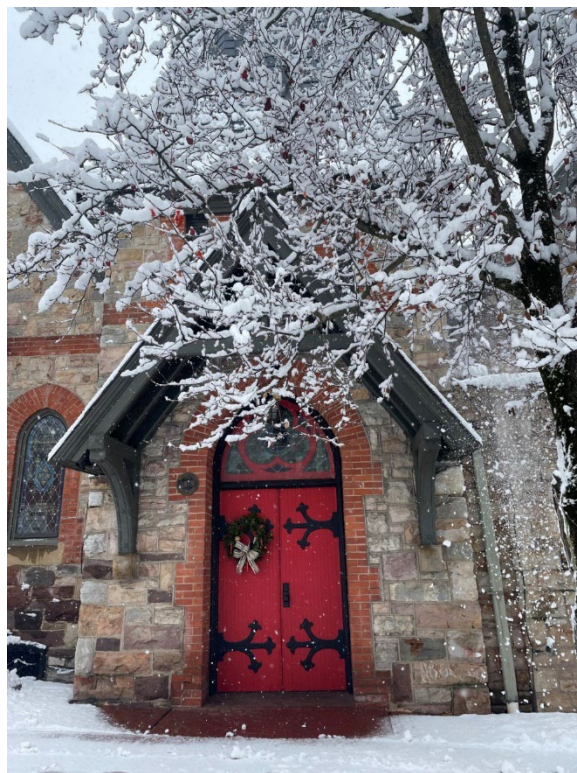
Outreach was truly inspiring. Mother Hubbard's Cupboard and Breaking Bread Together served more than 6,400 people—an astonishing testament to the love and dedication of volunteers who pour heart and hands into feeding our neighbors. MHC enjoys deep, loving support from this community through donations of money, food, and time.

Fellowship thrived, too, from cheerful coffee hours to concerts, community events, and a wonderful Toys for Tots drive helping about 700 children. In January we gave away more than 50 winter coats to people who needed them.

Thanks to the strength of our endowment funds and the generosity of twenty-five households, we have a balanced budget. Our Property Committee has identified the most high-priority items that need attention. In 2025 we improved comfort (pew cushions), beauty (a new piano), and safety (handrail leading into the parish house from the church). In 2026 we need to address roofing issues.

We even had drone videos of our property, including our sanctuary at Christmas (<https://tinyurl.com/4m3muyw3>), where you will love Kaley's rendition of "Silent Night." At our Annual Meeting we elected three newish members of St. Mark's to leadership positions: Susan Baumgardner, Ashlyn Kuhns, and Rob Smith. We thank Blair Hannon, Dan Dillon, and Robin Wilson for their years of service.

May 2026 bring us ever closer to the grace and mercy of God's Kingdom on earth.



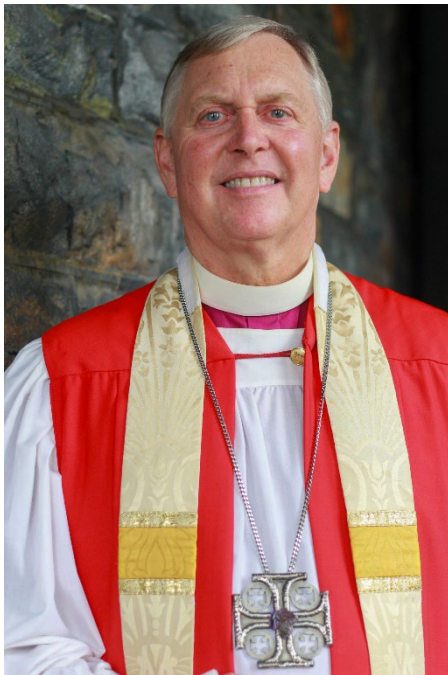
ORGAN RECITAL ON FEBRUARY 1

You are invited to an organ recital by Penn State music professor Mark Ferraguto on Sunday, Feb. 1, at 2 p.m. The program will feature an array of music ranging from Baroque to jazz, performed on our Casavant Frères pipe organ.

Did you know that our organ was built by one of the world's leading concert organ builders? Casavant instruments are featured in major venues such as the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., and Maison symphonique Place des Arts in Montreal. It has been lovingly maintained since its installation in 1925.



VISIT BY BISHOP KEVIN NICHOLS



Bishop Nichols will make his first to St. Mark's on February 15, the Feast of the Transfiguration. He will be eager to learn about our parish, so please give him a warm welcome.

The Rt. Rev. Kevin D. Nichols was appointed Assistant Bishop of the Diocese of the Susquehanna on October 18, 2025. He was appointed by Bishop Scanlan immediately following her election to serve as Bishop of the new diocese. He will be put forth for election as the next Bishop when Bishop Audrey retires in October of 2027.

Bishop Nichols was ordained and consecrated as the IX Bishop of Bethlehem on September 15, 2018. He began his ministry as a bi-vocational priest, serving a small rural parish while working full-time as an account manager and management trainer for Sealed Air Corporation, a packaging company. A former Roman Catholic priest who received his Master of Divinity degree from St. Mary's Seminary and University in Baltimore, he was received into the Episcopal priesthood in 1999 and has served as Rector of St. Stephen's in Pittsfield, New Hampshire, and St. Andrew's in Hopkinton, New Hampshire.

Bishop Nichols' wife, Patti, is a licensed clinical social worker. They have four adult children, and five grandchildren.

LENT BEGINS ON FEBRUARY 18

We will hold our Ash Wednesday services at 10AM in the chapel and at 5PM in the church. Father John will also offer ashes to people who visit Mother Hubbard's Cupboard. Who will you invite to worship with you during Lent? We will pray the Stations of the Cross on Fridays at noon. At Christmas we contemplated the baby in the manger; now it is time to see Him on the Cross.



AMERICA 250: PRESENTATION ON DORCAS BUCHANAN (FEBRUARY 22)

If you grew up in Mifflin County, you were probably taught that Dorcas Buchanan was the first European woman to settle in the Shawnee village that would become Lewistown. Born in Ireland in 1711, she helped her husband, Arthur, run a tavern and trading post there.

But did you know that this courageous colonial trailblazer:

- Was an eyewitness to the French & Indian War, narrowly escaping death from marauding war parties?
- Lost one son during the Revolution and saw another become an honored militia officer?
- Broke gender barriers as an independent businesswoman and land owner?
- Traded with Shawnee and Lenape in their languages and knew the Mingo leader, Chief Logan?
- Was celebrated statewide as a champion hunter?
- Lost her vision in middle age, only to have it restored before her death at 93?
- May have met President Washington during the Whiskey Rebellion?

Retired Harrisburg journalist Cate Barron has been using her well-honed reporting skills to scour archives, local histories, and genealogies for stories about the Founding Mother of Lewistown. She'll separate the facts from the folklore surrounding her hometown's heroine in a presentation at 2PM on Sunday, Feb. 22, at St. Mark's.

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).

PRAYER LIST

We pray for Myra Bannon, Judy Clare, Wade Colyer, Larry Lasher, Shirley Mancino, Karen Nielsen, Tony Hatfield-Nicholson, Doris McKee, Deacon Carole Mease, Susan Morse, Lynn Stricker, Nancy Vickers, Bob Welham, and Evelyn Wilson.

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

3: BLAIR HANNON

11: RALPH AITKIN,

12: ANGELA KALER,

14: LANE KUHN

16: JOHN HARWOOD

20: JANE SMITH

7: WAYNE HANNON

43RD ANNIVERSARY OF ROB AND CAROL SMITH

43RD ANNIVERSARY OF JON AND LILLIAN

15: 62ST ANNIVERSARY OF FRED AND CYNTHIA

19: BOB WELHAM

26: 43RD ANNIVERSARY OF JOHN AND KATHRYN

St. Mark's Episcopal Church

21 South Main Street

Lewistown, PA 17044