

St. Mark's Messenger

March 2026

FATHER JOHN'S REFLECTIONS

THE SEASON OF LENT IS one of the most meaningful and hopeful chapters of the Church year. While Lent is often thought of as a "serious" time, its roots are filled with happiness, renewal, and community. It's not so much about giving things up as it is about making room—for God, for grace, and for new life.

Lent has been part of Christian practice since the earliest days of the Church. The word Lent comes from an Old English term meaning springtime, which is quite fitting—it's a season of spiritual "spring cleaning," when we clear away the clutter in our hearts to make way for resurrection joy.

Originally, Lent was a time when new Christians prepared for baptism at Easter, and the whole community joined them in prayer, fasting, and learning. Over time, it became a shared season of reflection for everyone, reminding us of Jesus' forty days in the wilderness and inviting us to draw closer to God.

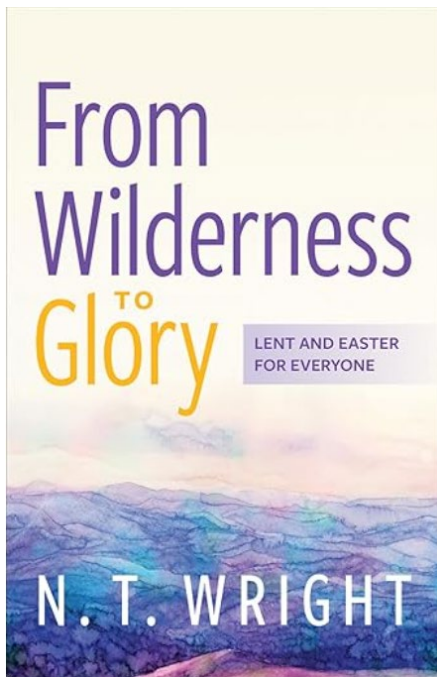
Today, Lent calls us to grow in faith through prayer, generosity, and simplicity. Some people take on a new spiritual practice, others volunteer or give up a small comfort to create space for gratitude. However we observe it, Lent is less about rules and more about relationship—our relationship with God, with our neighbors, and with our own souls.

So as the "purple season" begins, let's open our hearts with the expectation of spring: something new is growing, quietly and steadily, in each of us. By the time Easter morning dawns, we'll be ready to welcome the light with full and joyful hearts.

When Bishop Kevin Nichols visited us in February, he asked some pointed questions about empathy. Has the world become kinder or gentler since the time when Jesus walked this earth? If you look at what's happening in Ukraine, Gaza, Iran, Venezuela, Sudan, and several American cities, you may well wonder.



St Mark's Episcopal Church



Dear friends, who is our neighbor? This is a question of empathy – of what’s in our hearts. Lent invites us to reflect not on our neighbors or our nation but on ourselves. We have forty days to prepare for Easter, and St. Mark’s offers some old AND new ways to help you on your journey. Besides our Sunday worship, we invite you to participate in the Wednesday service for healing at 10AM followed by an optional Adult Forum. We pray the Stations of the Cross on Fridays at noon and have a second Adult Forum on Sundays at 9AM. We are reading N.T. Wright’s daily reflections, *From Wilderness to Glory: Lent and Easter for Everyone*.

Do you have 10 minutes each day to spend in Scripture and reflection? Let Father John know if you’d like a copy. Father John✠

MUSIC AT ST. MARK’S IN MARCH

Please invite a friend to join American country classic songs with the “Level Best” Barbershop Quartet from State College. These four singers are part of the Nittany Knights Barbershop Chorus now in its 60th year. The concert is on March 1 at 2PM.

Barbershop quartet singing emerged in late 19th-century American barbershops, especially among African-American men harmonizing on spirituals, folk, and popular songs while they waited their turn. The style flourished in the early 1900s with professional and amateur quartets, then was consciously “revived” and codified in the late 1930s through organizations like the Barbershop Harmony Society.

Its distinctive sound comes from unaccompanied four-part close harmony—lead on melody, tenor above, bass below, and baritone filling out the chord on nearly every melody note.



LEVEL BEST

Barbershop Quartet



Sunday, March 1, 2026 at 2pm
at St. Mark’s,
21 South Main Street,
Lewistown, PA

I Believe in Music

Dream Lover

Crazy Little Thing Called Love

Sweatheart of Sigma Chi

Edelweiss

Cruising Down the River

Dear Hearts and Gentle People

Edelweiss

Cruising Down the River

Dear Hearts and Gentle People

After the concert there will be refreshments in the Parish House.
We will take up a collection to benefit our Shelter.

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

THE *Episcopal* CHURCH 

MOTHER HUBBARD'S CUPBOARD AND BREAKING BREAD TOGETHER

In January MHC helped 507 people with food (last January the number was 440). In addition, BBT provides a home-cooked meal to lots of neighbors. Thanks to Chef Pete and all of the great crew of helpers for another wonderful meal and time of hospitality.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS: WHAT WAS IT LIKE FOR JESUS ON GOOD FRIDAY?

Join us as we follow Jesus to the Cross. Stations of the Cross will be held on Fridays at noon. Please join us for a quiet, contemplative reflection on what our Lord experienced on Good Friday. At Christmas we contemplated the baby in the manger; now it is time to see Him on the Cross. Were you there when they crucified our Lord?

RECONCILIATION OF A PENITENT

I invite you to meet with me privately any time during Lent to participate in an ancient spiritual practice: private confession and absolution. We need both collective confession (what we say in Morning Prayer as well as at the Eucharist) and private confession. The purpose is reconciliation, not a guilt trip.

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.

WHERE THERE'S A WILL THERE'S OUR WAY



There's nothing like a dab of dust on your forehead to make you remember your own mortality. Yes, we are dust and to dust we shall return. But how can we have a positive, meaningful impact on our world even after we die? Having a will is a good start.

Look around at the beauty of our church and the richness of our ministries. What we have is a gift from those who came before us and who loved this church deeply. Remember that no living member paid a dollar for the construction

of our first church (1824) or our current one (1895).

Nor did we pay for the cemetery, the parish house, the rectory, the beautiful windows or the organ – not a penny. All of these are gifts from our ancestors, and we have an

obligation to preserve and sustain them for future generations. **More than half of our operating income comes from our endowment funds.** Every dollar in our endowment came from **someone's will.** Someone made a decision to support this church.

Have you remembered St. Mark's in yours?

MARCH BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

2: DOROTHY HANNON AND DEB VAUGHN; 7: DR. KIM KOLONICH; 11: SANDY JENKINSON AND CAROL SMITH; 13: NANCY LAUB; 18: CAROLE MEASE AND PETE CARRY; 19: LYNN CONKLIN

PRAYER LIST

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

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