

St. Mark's Messenger

April 2026

FATHER JOHN'S REFLECTIONS



What a roller coaster ride from Ash Wednesday to Easter.

Holy Week intensifies the journey as we go from the jubilation of Palm Sunday to the despair of Good Friday and Holy Saturday- and finally to Easter morning. Our Lenten journey takes us from ashes to glory, from the bleakness of Good Friday to the radiance of Easter.

Let's face it: "no cross, no crown" - in other words, we can't know the true joy of Easter without witnessing the agony of the cross, which we experience most fully during the Three Great Days (Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday).

The season has changed from winter to spring. We are moving from death to life.

At Easter we will proclaim in one voice throughout the world: The Lord is risen - the Lord is risen indeed. Alleluia, alleluia!

But we can't get to Easter without going through Good Friday. We need to feel Christ's agony and the deep distress of his family and followers. Think of those who were at the foot of the cross and those who carried his body to the tomb.

We will get to Easter, but let us not rush it. You will know when it's time.

Have a blessed Eastertide!

Father John✠



HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE (APRIL 3-5): THE THREE GREAT DAYS

Between Palm Sunday and Easter, we have Three Great Days. The three liturgies occur only once a year. What starts on Thursday is not complete on Easter morning.

On Maundy Thursday **at 7PM**, we will strip the altar and empty the tabernacle of reserved bread and wine. It will be empty until Easter with no covering on the altar. We depart from the service in silence - I will not dismiss you (BCP, p. 274).

On Good Friday **at noon** I wear a black stole for the only time this year. The bread and wine will be distributed from the reserved sacrament. The long reading of the Passion gospel will have multiple readers as we have had the last three Sundays (BCP, p.276).

On Holy Saturday **at noon**, a brief, stark service of the Word marks the time when Jesus' body lay in the tomb and he descended to the dead. The service begins and ends in silence, centers



*Holy Week at
St. Mark's*

Maundy Thursday at 7PM
Good Friday at Noon
Holy Saturday at Noon
Easter at 10AM



welcomes you

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

on Scripture (including the burial of Jesus), and offers collects that express waiting and grief in hope of the resurrection. In many ways the service EXTENDS the Stations of the Cross, especially the 14th station (Christ is put into the tomb, BCP, p. 283)

For Episcopalians, these three services are holy days of obligation ~ please worship at the church if you are able.

DORCAS BUCHANAN ROCKS

Our speaker on March 15 drew a standing-room-only crowd of 140 people. Dorcas's life was a synopsis of the colonial experience and perhaps the women's experience in the colonial era. As I drove home, I realized that some of St. Mark's earliest members would have KNOWN Dorcas. We are all part of the American experience and experiment.

MUSIC AT ST. MARK'S: KALEY'S CONCERT (APRIL 12)

Kaley needs no introduction or picture. You will love hearing her sing a wide variety of music not from our hymnal. Her accompanist, Jonah, Glunt, is a rockstar who perhaps will do his own concert later this year.

The concert is on Sunday, April 12, at 2PM and will benefit the Shelter.

MOTHER HUBBARD'S CUPBOARD AND BREAKING BREAD TOGETHER

In February we helped 385 people at MHC and served a hearty pork meal to 52 on March 24. We are distributing updates.

PROPERTY UPDATE

Look forward to exciting news about a new altar with walnut from Sharon Copenhaver's homestead. Jon and Hal have helped to design a perfect way for us to use the original altar from 1823. We are a people who honor our past, preserve our history, and move creatively into God's future.

NEW WAYS TO PROVIDE SUPPORT FOR ST. MARK'S

<p>Stock or other investments</p>	<p>You may share appreciated stock or other securities to support the ministry of St. Mark's. This kind of gift can offer tax advantages; your financial advisor can help you explore whether this is a good option for you.</p>

Gifts from an IRA	If you are age 70½ or older, you can ask your IRA custodian to send a qualified charitable (QCD) check. This gift (up to the allowed annual limit) does not count as taxable income and can satisfy your required minimum distribution. Four households pay their pledge this way, including Father John. Trust me, it's easy.
Remembering St. Mark's in your will	After you have provided for your loved ones, you may choose to name St. Mark's in your will or estate plans. Your attorney can help you include a simple bequest for "St. Mark's Episcopal Church" so that your generosity continues to bless others in years to come. Father John has done this for both of his churches.
Life insurance gifts	You may be able to name St. Mark's as a beneficiary of a life insurance policy, donate a policy you no longer need, or consider a new policy to benefit the parish. Your insurance professional can help you review what is possible. Father John has done this.
Income-for-life gifts	Charitable Gift Annuities and Charitable Remainder Trusts can provide you (or someone you choose) with income for life while also supporting St. Mark's. These are more specialized gifts; a trusted financial or legal advisor can help you discern whether they are right for you.
Donor-advised funds	If you have a Donor-Advised Fund, you can recommend grants to St. Mark's to support our worship, outreach, and ministries. This can be a meaningful way to plan your giving and leave a lasting legacy.
Want to talk more?	If you would like to explore any of these possibilities, please speak with Father John.

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.

APRIL BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

3-Elizabeth Harwood and Christina Dixon, 5-Edie Swenk, 6-Robin Wilson, 7-John Stewart, 7-Kaylee Blewett, 11-Kelly Crawford, 14-Cindy Totura & Max Wilson, 19-Elizabeth Cvejkus, 22-Patricia Wilt, 25-St. Mark, 26-Zanica Kaler, 28-Ashlyn Kuhns	O GOD, OUR TIMES ARE IN YOUR HAND: LOOK WITH FAVOR, WE PRAY, ON YOUR SERVANT <i>N.</i> AS (S)<i>HE</i> BEGINS ANOTHER YEAR. GRANT THAT (S)<i>HE</i> MAY GROW IN WISDOM AND GRACE, AND STRENGTHEN OUR TRUST IN YOUR GOODNESS ; THROUGH JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD. <i>AMEN.</i>
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Lewistown, PA 17044
