

St. Mark's Messenger

March 2018

FATHER JOHN'S REFLECTION

It certainly looks like March will come in like a lion. If we can have days in the high 60s in February, surely winter is almost over. Right? Don't count on it. While I am thrilled to see the days grow longer and the temperatures turn warmer, I know that just around the corner may be a big surprise. Do you remember the "storm of the century" (March 12-14, 1993)? It dropped nearly three feet of snow on Pennsylvania. Lord, have mercy upon us!

OK, so it's Lent. "What are you giving up for Lent?" I know that you have heard that question, and in some ways, it's good to be more intentional about how we live. But there's not just "giving up"; there's doing more as well. The season invites us to reflect on how we're living and grow closer to God. It is not a time to punish ourselves.

What does that have to do with faith? As I find myself working on our taxes this month, I notice where we have spent our money. We tithe both to St. Mark's and St. John's-Bellefonte, and it's easy to count money. How is my spiritual life? How am I doing? And how could I do better?

One of my favorite ads on TV asks, "What's in your wallet?" The meaning is that if you don't have their brand of credit card (I don't!), then I've made a mistake.

The church is asking: what's really in your heart? Where is your real treasure?

Our Lenten journey will move from ashes to glory, but we cannot reach Easter without going through Good Friday. In the ancient church, Lent was a time of intense preparation for baptism. Confirmation training was for adults and lasted for months. At the great Easter Vigil, confirmands would go down into the waters of baptism in white robes and emerge as members of the Church – new people with a whole new family. They would then be received for their first Eucharist.

Fast forward 2,000 years. We no longer have a separate room (the baptistery) for baptizing new members. We baptize infants, and I very much look forward to a baptism this month.

Let's face it: "no cross, no crown" – in other words, we can't know the true joy of Easter without having first known the agony of the cross, which we experience most fully during the Three Sacred Days (Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday). The beautiful window in our narthex (the entrance to the church) illustrates the "cross and crown" in a vivid red color.



"The Cross and the Crown"

Death does not have the final word for Jesus or for us. St. Paul proclaims words that we often use at funeral services: "If there is a physical body, there is also a spiritual body. For this perishable body must put on imperishability, and this mortal body must put on immortality.... Then the saying that is written will be fulfilled: 'Death has been swallowed up in victory.' Where, o death, is your victory? Where, o death, is your sting?"

The season is changing from winter to spring. We are moving from the old covenant to the New Covenant, from death to life.

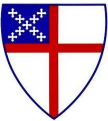
At Easter we will proclaim: The Lord has risen – the Lord has risen indeed.

John+



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The Right Rev. Dr. Audrey Scanlan, Bishop, Diocese of Central PA
The Rev. John T. Harwood, Priest
St. Mark's Vestry
Joyce Hart, Senior Warden - Fred McKinley, Junior Warden
Deb Vaughn, Clerk
Blair Hammon, Jackie Leight, Lillian Myers, Jane Smith, and Elizabeth Harper
Deb Vaughn—Coordinator of Pastoral Ministries
Joseph Stigorsky—Treasurer



ST. MARK'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH
21 S MAIN STREET
LEWISTOWN, PA 17044

The Mission of St. Mark's

We gather to celebrate as the family of God, that we may be fed spiritually through the Sacraments and teachings of the Holy Scriptures, in order that we serve others in the love of Christ.

SCHEDULE FOR HOLY WEEK

We will join the worldwide Anglican communion in observing Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and the Great Easter Vigil as well as service of Easter on Easter Sunday. These services will be held as follows:

- **Maundy Thursday**, March 29—Service at St. Mark’s at 7:00 p.m. The Chapel will be open for meditation after this Service.
- **Good Friday**, March 30—Community Observance of Stations of the Cross. This event begins at Sacred Heart Church in Lewistown at 11:00 a.m. for observance of Stations of the Cross. Then a walk is scheduled through town in which participants stop at various places and prayers are offered
- **Good Friday**, March 30 - Service at St. Mark’s at 7:00 p.m.
- **Easter Vigil**, March 31—Service at St. Mark’s at 7:00 p.m. A celebration with wine and cheese will be held in the Parish Hall following this Service. This is wonderful opportunity for reflection of what Christ experienced for *our*
- **Easter Sunday, April 1**—Service at St. Mark’s at 10:00 a.m. The Adult Forum will *not* meet on Easter morning.

Attendance at these services is very important for the life of this church and your spiritual welfare. On Ash Wednesday this year, we had only 17 people. Last Easter we had 57 people at our service, but only 13 at Maundy Thursday and 10 at our Good Friday service. Dear friends, Holy Week is the most sacred week of the Christian year.

We need you to contribute to the life of this parish!

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. ² Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. Romans 12:1-2

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. In the Episcopal Church, we call this pastoral rite the “Reconciliation of a Penitent (BCP, pp. 447-52); Lutherans call it the “Individual Confession and Forgiveness”; Roman Catholics call it confession. Many Protestants think of the practice as “Roman Catholic” and not in our tradition, but this is incorrect. Both Martin Luther and Archbishop Cranmer thought that confession was essential to spiritual health. We need both collective confession (what we say in the Eucharist) and private confession.

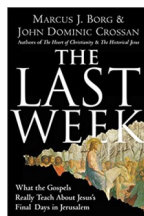
Regardless of the name, this is a holy, private conversation about your spiritual life, and we should find thirty minutes to talk and pray together in my office or the chapel. Please see me about a time convenient for you.

BIBLE STUDY ON WEDNESDAY MORNING AT 9AM

Bible Study continues on Wednesday mornings at 9AM in my office. You cannot tell the story if you don’t know it. Bring a friend or a neighbor or an acquaintance, young or old, who would like to understand the Bible.

LENTEN DEVOTIONS – JOIN US FOR THE LENTEN STUDY GROUP AND STATIONS OF THE CROSS

We are holding a Lenten Study group that focuses on the events of Holy Week in the book of Mark. What REALLY happened? We are discussing a book by two contemporary Biblical scholars, but we read only one chapter each week. It is not too late to join this group! See Fr. Harwood if you would like a book to get started or just show up Wednesday morning and he will see you get one.



Stations of the Cross are held on Fridays at 12:15PM in the church.



CULTIVATE THE ‘GRATITUDE ATTITUDE’

In a few weeks Dan Dillon, a new parishioner, will move into his new house, and we will share in a house blessing. The church has developed special prayers and services for all the occasions of life. Do you want a blessing before you start a medical procedure or because you are discouraged with your health? Do you want a blessing as you make a transition in your life? Is this the year to renew your marriage vows?



Still a handsome couple!!

Last month Kathryn and I renewed our vows as we celebrated our 35th anniversary. The pictures from 1983 and 2018 are fun to compare, but the love that is shared is the bigger story. Deacon Alex Dyakiw led us in this simple service.

Let us count our blessings – and add to them. Cultivating an “attitude of gratitude” is just about the best gift you can make to yourself in 2018!



KEEPING THINGS UP-TO-DATE

Please keep the Church Office informed on revisions to our Prayer Lists and also our birthday/anniversary list. If you know of someone whose “date” is not listed, let Joyce know.

At this time, we are unsure of how to contact Anne Wimsatt. She has been discharged from Ohesson Manor and we would like to keep in contact with her.



HOME VISITATIONS AND PASTORAL NEEDS

If you find yourself in need of a pastoral visit at home or in a hospital, please let me know. I am always happy to visit you in your home. But are there shut-ins I do not know about? Who else in our community needs a visit or is facing a hard time? Please let me know.

Are there other pastoral needs? Would you like to renew your marriage vows? Would you like to talk with me about baptism or confirmation? There are many adults who “missed” this chance when they were young, but as I know from personal experience (I was baptized at the age of 60!), it is never too late for baptism. Please invite me to talk with you or someone you know.

The best way is by phone: home (814-235-1198) or cell (814-571-0687). Another way is by email (jtharwood@comcast.net). While I live in State College, I am in Lewistown on Wednesdays and Sundays and frequently on Tuesdays as well. I am happy to come to your home. If you are ill or hospitalized or know someone who needs pastoral support, please call me.

Do not worry that you are “bothering me” if you call me.

Therefore He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them. — Hebrews 7:25

MARCH BIRTHDAYS

- DEB VAUGHN—2ND
- DOTTIE HANNON—2ND
- ROBERT BRIAR—3RD
- NANCY LAUB—13TH

O GOD, OUR TIMES ARE IN YOUR HAND: LOOK WITH FAVOR, WE PRAY, ON YOUR SERVANT *N.* AS (*S*)*H*E BEGINS ANOTHER YEAR. GRANT THAT (*S*)*H*E MAY GROW IN WISDOM AND GRACE, AND STRENGTHEN OUR TRUST IN YOUR GOODNESS; THROUGH JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD. AMEN.

A NEW FEATURE OF "THE MESSENGER": WHY SHOULD I GO TO CHURCH? WHY DO I GO TO ST. MARK'S?

We are living in a post-Christian society, which means that a very large percentage of Americans do not attend any church even if they had been raised in the church. While St. Mark's has 140+ baptized members, we have only 50 active communicants. For us to become vibrant, we will need to "tell our story" to others. I have invited Bob Welham to share his story with you, and in future months, I will ask others to talk about your experience with this church. If you are willing to volunteer, please let Father John know.

To all my sisters and brother in Christ at St. Mark's Episcopal Church.

At the request of Fr. Harwood, I am writing this short essay for the March issue of the St. Mark's Messenger.

I was baptized in January 1943 at Grace Episcopal Church in Merchantville, New Jersey. In February of the same year I was confirmed at the same church. And later in that year I was taught to be acolyte by Fr. Richards, our Rector. I was in eighth grade at the time, and served at 7 AM weekday services, which was followed by a wonderful breakfast at the Richard's home next to the church. School was just a block away. What a great way to start the day.

I moved to Penfield Downs, a suburb of Philadelphia, the next year where I continued to serve at a local Episcopal church as an acolyte.

There followed Junior High School, Haverford High School, University of Pennsylvania, and being an officer in the United States Navy for three years. I attended church during this period of my life, but not on a regular basis.

I met my wife, Susan Robinson, during my time in the Navy; we were married, and after I was discharged, we returned to Lewistown. It didn't take too long for me to become a member of Saint Mark's Episcopal Church. Fr. Peter Greenfield was the first priest who got me serving at the altar and reading the lessons. My wife and three children were all confirmed at St. Mark's, our two daughters were married at St. Mark's, and all nine of our grandchildren have been baptized at St. Mark's.

That's enough background. It was about my 40th birthday that the Holy Spirit must have hit me. I was in my early 40s and started thinking that I had maybe another 40 or so years to live and then an Eternity to live, but where????? This thought changed my life.

I read in the Book of Common Prayer: *Thou shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, body, and soul.* That is the first and Great Commandment; the second is: *That shall love your neighbor as yourself.*

With those thoughts in mind, I started attending church on a regular basis, both in Lewistown and Venice, FL and most importantly, reading the Daily Office Lectionary each day as it appears in The Book of Common Prayer starting on page 934. We Episcopalians are blessed to have such a wonderful book, and I heartily recommend that you study it.

Members at Saint Mark's are blessed with a new chance to learn, at the new Adult Forums each Sunday Morning between 9 and 9:45 AM. The Sunday Worship Service starts at 10 AM. And for those who are able, we have a wonderful Wednesday morning service each week at 10 AM.

I look forward to seeing all of you while attending church each Sunday when I return to Lewistown about the first of May.

Faithfully yours,

Robert M. Welham

St. Mark's Prayer List

Peg Alexander, Patty Attivo, Leslie Auxer, Jacqueline Benevento, Michelle Bitner, Ralph Bitner, Dennis Bossinger, Bob Briar, Lisa Briar, Linda Burger, Peggy Collins, Christie Colon, Deb Ergler, Marcia Folk, Emma Grace Germak, Kathryn Grossman, Thomas Hart, Dolores Houser, Sara Johns, James Krepps, Martie Marquez, Marsha Lynch-Mock, Cynthia McKinley, Austin James Moore, Gabriel Newman, Leslie Pitzer, Amy Reeder, Vicky Shoemaker, Joseph Smith, Gwen Swisher, Laura Tate, William T. Wagner, Ann Wimsatt, Robert Wilson, Jr. and Stella Wright.

Pray for Lloyd A. Gessaman, Christopher Wilson and Max Wilson who are serving out Country.

God of everlasting love, who provides all things, we pray for all people: make your way known to them, your saving power among all nations. We commend to your fatherly goodness all who are afflicted or distressed in body, mind or circumstances.; relieve them according to their needs, giving them patience in their sufferings, and deliverance from their afflictions. This we ask for the sake of Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen.

PRESERVING THE HISTORY OF ST. MARK'S FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

St. Mark's began its life in the 1820s. We have a hand-written letter of incorporation dated 1824 that we would like to display in our new gallery, which will be the hallway you enter from Water Street. We have pictures of the construction of the "new St. Mark's church" in the late 1880s, and we have pictures of church life from more than a century ago. Imagine my surprise when I found this photo of the flood of 1879 in the files.



Flood of 1879

We need your help in two ways to make this project successful. First, we need your financial support so that we can frame our documents with acid-free matting. We need to create a "safe" environment for paper documents like letters and newspapers, most of which are very yellowed and fragile. The documents are stored in the kind of album that many families have for photographs – we need to preserve them in the right environment, and this will require an investment of time and materials. We will need to purchase track lighting and materials for hanging the pictures properly.

We also need YOUR contributions to our history. We need YOUR photographs of church life and church events. In the "olden days," St. Mark's had pageants and plays and concerts in the parish hall. Who captured these events? We will make copies of what you share so that you can retain the originals.

Please make out your checks to St. Mark's with the subject line "History of Church."

MOTHER HUBBARD'S CUPBOARD

In February, Mother Hubbard's Cupboard served 95 families. This includes 250 individuals, 11 first-time families, and 25 first-time individuals (adults and children).

BREAKING BREAD TOGETHER

In February, the people of St. Mark's invited 63 people to share a delicious meal of meat loaf the fixins'. This was truly Pennsylvania comfort food.



EPISCOPAL CHURCH WOMEN INVITE YOU TO PARTICIPATE IN "YARD SALE"

St. Mark's ECW is putting a new "twist" to their April Chicken and Corn Soup sale. There will also be a "yard sale" in which you can purchase a space in the Parish Hall for \$10 and set up your own yard sale. This is ideal for those of us who don't have a huge amount of items to sell. Because it is indoors, there's no worry about the weather or setting up a canopy! If you are interested in having a space at this yard sale, please see Cynthia McKinley. This event will be held **Friday, April 6.**



KITCHEN RENOVATION CONTINUES

LIKE MANY PROJECTS IN OUR HOUSES, ONE THING BRINGS ON ANOTHER, OUR REPLACEMENT OF THE SINK WITH A TRIPLE SINK HAS LED TO MORE CHANGES. ST. MARK'S SEXTON, JIM CHERRY, ONCE AGAIN HAS "STEPPED UP TO THE PLATE" AND NOT ONLY INSTALLED THE KITCHEN SINK, BUT ALSO HAS PAINTED THE KITCHEN AND CUPBOARDS, PUT ON NEW COUNTERTOPS, AND REMOVED THE OLD RADIATOR AND REPLACED IT WITH A MORE MODERN WALL HEATER. THIS LAST CHANGE HAS ALLOWED THE RELOCATION OF THE REFRIGERATOR AND FREEZER AND GIVEN US MORE ROOM TO MOVE AROUND WHEN WORKING IN THE KITCHEN. IF YOU HAVEN'T SEEN THE KITCHEN LATELY, TAKE A MINUTE OR TWO AND CHECK IT OUT.

GOOD JOB, JIM AND PROPERTY COMMITTEE!!!



Above: Picture from February



Right: Current pictures of kitchen

