

St. Mark's Messenger

August 2026

FATHER JOHN'S REFLECTIONS

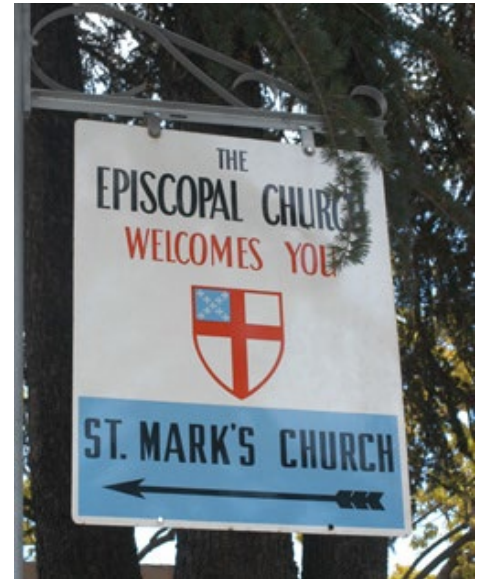
July was an astonishing month. Headlines lurched from “explosive diarrhea” to “the weather is code purple,” and suddenly we were worrying about things we had never imagined. I am reminded how inter-dependent we all are, lives linked in ways we rarely see. What happens in the woods of Ontario and Minnesota shapes how people breathe in Mifflin County – smoke drifting south, lungs tightening, neighbors checking air-quality reports and stepping outside with caution.

August arrives, carrying county fairs and the familiar rituals of going back to school. New notebooks. Fresh pencils. Nervous students at bus stops. MCSD classes begin August 31; Penn State students return August 24, filling town with cars, moving trucks, and families saying goodbye in parking lots. The Nittany Lions open their football season against the Marshall University Thundering Herd on September 5, and the roads will be packed with fans streaming toward the stadium. And yes, that game lands on Labor Day weekend. Brace yourself.

August is a time for new beginnings and fresh starts – for trying again, starting over, beginning something hopeful. One of the most exciting initiatives in our Diocese is Invite-Welcome-Connect, a new program designed to renew parish life and stir us toward hospitality ([Invite-Welcome-Connect](#)). St. Mark's is one of ten parishes, large and small, in the pilot group, learning as we go and sharing ideas along the way.

Tracey McKee will lead our efforts, ably supported by the entire vestry and by active members of the parish who want to see St. Mark's grow in welcome and witness. Please let **Father John** know if you would like to join this effort by Sunday, August 9; it is a small time-commitment with a big impact on our parish.

Guided by Jesus' call to “go and make disciples of all nations,” this program offers a practical, hopeful path for churches that long to open their doors wider, listen more deeply, and share good news with joy.



Music at St Mark's
Sunday, August 2, 2026 at 2pm
 21 South Main Street, Lewistown, PA

An afternoon of music with acclaimed vocalist
Josh Evert
accompanied by Jonah Glunt.



From the rich poetry of
 Ralph Vaughan Williams' *Songs of Travel*
 and Franz Schubert's *Dichterliebe*,
 to cherished Sinatra classics like
Fly Me to the Moon and *My Way*,
 the program offers something for
 every music lover. The concert
 concludes with the timeless prayer,
The Lord's Prayer.

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

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

THE *Episcopal* CHURCH 

I will be delighted to welcome Joanne Yang back from Taiwan on August 30, returning with stories and experiences from her summer abroad. Our new soloist, Nic Stark, comes home from Vienna on August 9, bringing fresh energy and music to our services. Over the course of the summer, we will have enjoyed the gifts of three new pianists and two new singers, each one offering their talent, each one shaping our common song.

August begins with a great concert by Josh Evert and Jonah Glunt. Please plan to join us – and bring a friend – to enjoy the music, refreshments, and fellowship in our blessedly air-conditioned church, where hearts and voices can be lifted without worrying about the heat.

Father John+

ST. MARK'S SUMMER PICNIC ON AUGUST 23

Summer invites us to linger a little longer together. Please join us for a picnic following our service on August 23. We will provide fried chicken and drinks; you are invited to bring a covered dish if you wish (a sign-up sheet will be in the kitchen), but this is not required. Most important of all: come. Sit at a table, share a meal, laugh with friends, meet someone new, and enjoy a relaxed time of fellowship together.



A PRAYER FOR TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

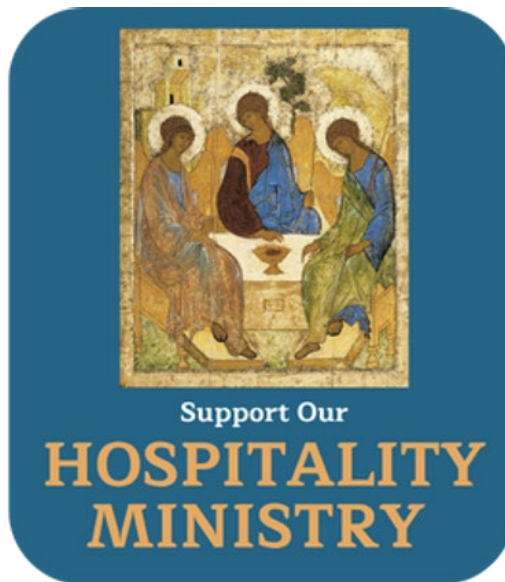
The end of August marks a turning of the year. Since MCS D classes begin on August 31, we will be praying especially for our schools – for classrooms being cleaned, buses being checked, lessons being planned.

“O Eternal God, bless all schools, colleges, and universities, and especially those in Mifflin County, so that they may be lively centers for sound learning, new discovery, and the pursuit of wisdom; and grant that those who teach and those who learn may find you to be the source of all truth; through Jesus Christ our Lord.” **Amen.**

We also pray for the safety of our students and teachers, traveling, studying, teaching, guiding. At our July meeting, the vestry voted to give \$300 to the Children and Youth Services department to purchase backpacks and school supplies for children in need. National surveys indicate that it will cost at least \$75 per child for supplies – notebooks, folders, crayons, markers, pens, calculators, books. A sobering figure. A hopeful opportunity to help.

HOSPITALITY TEAM INVITES YOU

Some of the most important ministry in a congregation happens in the first thirty seconds after someone walks through the door. A smile. A greeting. A simple “we’re glad you’re here.”



Are you interested in a rewarding role in the church that fits easily into your schedule yet offers real joy and accomplishment? Are you looking for a way to share your time and talents in service to our parish family? Are you comfortable greeting and chatting with new faces at our Sunday or Wednesday services? If so, we would love to have you in this new group!

What the Hospitality Group does

- Organizes and provides refreshments for scheduled parish events, setting tables and brewing coffee.
- Plans and hosts Coffee Hour after church, creating space for conversation and connection.
- Greets people at the door so newcomers are welcomed and noticed right away.
- Signs up for a week or a month at a time to help cover upcoming events, making participation flexible.
- Assists with simple clean-up after gatherings.
- Shares information about ways to get involved in parish life and the wider community.
- Brings an open mind, a listening ear, and a willingness to work as a team.

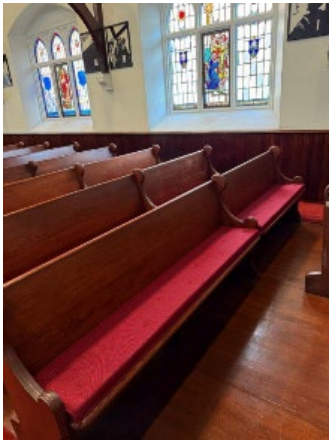
Together, we can deepen the warm welcome St. Mark’s already offers and help newcomers feel at home from their very first visit – invited, greeted, remembered by name.

Interested? Please contact **Deb Vaughn** or **Tracey McKee** before Sunday, August 9.

MOTHER HUBBARD’S CUPBOARD AND BREAKING BREAD TOGETHER

We continue to serve a high number of clients (585 in June), including many new families. We also distributed supplemental food to 80 families with school kids. On July 28 we served a hearty meal to our neighbors via Breaking Bread Together.

PROPERTY UPDATE



We will soon replace some aged windows in Mother Hubbard's Cupboard and do our annual "turning and rotating" of the pew cushions. Can you believe that we have had them for one year this month? Just as we do the "greening of the church" in December, we'll do the flipping of the cushions in July. We also hope that the roofing repairs will be underway.

PRAYER LIST

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

AUGUST BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

August 4: Jeff and Robin Wilson (#42); 7: Alexis Kuhns; 8: Benjamin Harwood; 15: Mark Remy; 27: Michelle Bitner

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